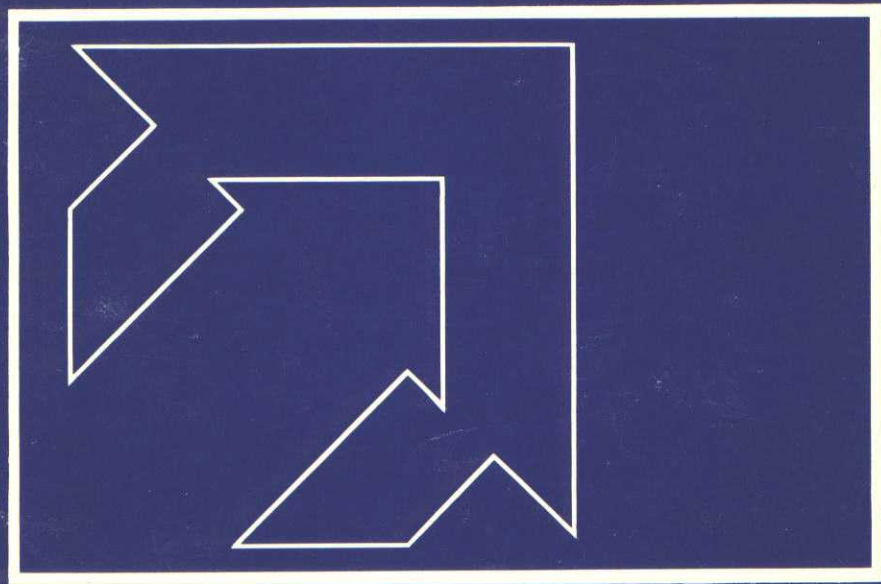


# *Cuba*

*Internal and  
International Affairs*

*edited by*

*Jorge I. Domínguez*



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Written under the auspices of the center for  
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## *Foreign Policy*

### *The Limits of Success*

WILLIAM M. LEOGRANDE

Cuba's revolutionary leadership has long seen itself as a leader and spokesman for the nations of the Third World, and Cuba's policy toward those states has always been an active one. Yet despite the boldness and even stubborn independence that Cuba has exhibited in this aspect of its foreign policy, there is no denying the fact that Cuba's vital national interests have not usually been at stake in its relations with the Third World. In both an economic and a military sense, Cuba's national security has been a function of its relations with the superpowers—its nearly constant relationship of hostility with the United States and its close friendship with the Soviet Union. Any effort to assess Cuban policy toward the Third World must therefore be undertaken within the context of this larger and more important constellation of relations.

Since 1959, the first and foremost objective of all Cuban foreign policy has been the survival of the revolution. There have been other objectives, to be sure, but all have necessarily been subordinate to survival.<sup>1</sup> During the first decade of the revolution, these secondary goals received attention and resources in direct proportion to their contribution toward guaranteeing security. Survival has had both an economic and a military dimension. The deterioration of the U.S.-Cuban

relations in the early 1960s, followed by U.S. efforts to strangle the revolution economically and subvert it militarily, left the Cuban leadership no alternative but to seek a strong outside protector.<sup>2</sup> The Soviet Union assumed this role, reluctantly at first but later with relish. Cuban security came to depend upon Soviet economic and military assistance.<sup>3</sup> With the prospect of improved U.S.-Cuban relations remote during the 1960s, it was essential for Cuba to maintain its close relations with the Soviet Union, even though the Cubans sometimes harbored doubts about the trustworthiness of the USSR.<sup>4</sup>

The Cubans' dilemma was well illustrated in the months following the 1962 missile crisis. The Soviet Union's willingness to resolve the crisis without consulting the Cuban leadership, and to resolve it at Cuban expense (i.e., the missiles that Cuba regarded as a deterrent to U.S. attack were withdrawn), damaged Cuban-Soviet relations severely. Cuba's resulting skepticism over Soviet commitment to the island led the Cuban leadership to seek security by escaping its position as a focal point of the Cold War. Cuba began, cautiously, to explore the possibility of rapprochement with the United States. These initiatives aborted after the assassination of President Kennedy, leaving Cuba with no realistic alternative but to repair its connection with the Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup>

Cuba's efforts to cast itself as a leader in the Third World have made an important contribution to Cuba's major foreign policy objective of surviving on the "front-line" of the East-West conflict. Just as Yugoslavia sought Third World leadership as protection from Soviet retribution for Tito's deviation from Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy, Cuba has sought similar prominence as protection from attack by the United States or abandonment by the Soviet Union. Cuba's dependence on the USSR has meant that Cuba's Third World activism could not be "bloc neutral," but by creating a constituency in the Third World, Cuba could nevertheless raise the diplomatic cost to both superpowers for policies unfavorable to Cuba.

To be sure, the ideological convictions of Cuba's leaders, especially Fidel Castro and Ché Guevara, were a key ingredient of Cuba's activism in the Third World. During the 1960s especially, Cuba felt a close affinity for national liberation struggles that resembled the struggle against Batista. Cuba's closest (if not most important) friends have always been progressive, radically nationalist states that came into being as the result of antiimperialist revolutions—e.g., Algeria, Ghana, Vietnam, Angola, Nicaragua—or in the case of Allende's Chile, an antiimperialist regime resulting from electoral triumph. Yet Cuba's identification with such states has *not* been contingent upon their adopting a Marxist-Leninist model of politics and society. In its search for international allies, Cuba, from the outset, cast its net beyond just the members of the socialist camp.

### **CUBAN INTERNATIONALISM: FROM ROMANTIC TO PRAGMATIC**

Initially, Cuba's attitude toward the Third World was embodied in a romantic and relatively unsophisticated policy aimed at expanding the family of revolutionary states among the underdeveloped nations. Cuba provided material as well as political assistance to guerrilla movements in both Africa and Latin America; it sought to create a new revolutionary international at the Tricontinental Conference; and it sought to forge a "third force" (with Vietnam and North Korea) within the socialist camp to promote a more militant strain of proletarian internationalism.<sup>6</sup> These actions produced serious strains in Cuba's relationship with the Soviet Union; Cuba's activism included not-too-veiled criticism of the Soviets' policy of peaceful coexistence, and also complicated the Soviets' efforts to reduce tensions with the United States.

The gap between Cuban and Soviet views of the world was most clearly visible in Cuba's position within the Non-aligned

Movement. At a time when the majority of the non-aligned nations were committed to reducing world tensions, Cuba was denouncing peaceful coexistence as a fraud because it implicitly undercut the legitimacy of aiding national liberation struggles, and because it seemed to sacrifice the interests of small states on the altar of superpower accord. There could be no peaceful coexistence, Cuba argued, between imperialism and its victims, no coexistence or peace between the superpowers alone unless it was matched by coexistence between large states and small ones.<sup>7</sup>

Paradoxically, Cuba's efforts to export revolution in the 1960s were largely defensive in nature. Early in the decade, the United States mounted a successful campaign within the Organization of American States to isolate Cuba economically and diplomatically. Cuba's promotion of revolution in Latin America was primarily an attempt to break out of this isolation by helping to create other revolutionary governments in the Western Hemisphere. Cuba's relations with Mexico demonstrate quite clearly that when Cuba was able to maintain normal state-to-state relations with its neighbors, it was willing to forego efforts to overthrow them.<sup>8</sup>

The insurrectionary efforts of the 1960s met with little success. Few Latin American guerrilla movements proved to be any match for the counterinsurgency forces deployed against them under the security assistance programs of the Alliance for Progress. When Ché Guevara was killed in Bolivia while trying to create a foco for continental guerrilla war, Cuba began to reevaluate the whole foco theory of revolution.<sup>9</sup> By 1969, Cuba had for all practical purposes abandoned the policy of providing material support indiscriminately to any guerrilla movement, no matter how small and ineffectual.

For several years, no new policy emerged to replace the defunct strategy of exporting revolution. From 1968 to 1972, Cuba turned inward, preoccupied with the drive to produce ten million tons of sugar in 1970. This retreat from the foreign involvements of the previous decade was so startling that it led one commentator to describe Cuba's domestic preoccupation as "socialism in one island."<sup>10</sup> When Cuba reemerged on the

world scene in 1972, its foreign policy was considerably changed.

Though the guerrilla movements which Cuba had supported had failed to achieve any measure of success through armed struggle, the left in several Latin American countries had made striking advances through unexpected and unorthodox methods which Cuba had always disparaged. In Chile, the Popular Unity electoral coalition of communists and socialists had won the 1970 election; in Peru, the military government appeared to be enacting a revolution from above; and in Argentina, the Peronist left had returned from the political wilderness through the election of Hector Campora. All three of these nations broke the OAS sanctions against Cuba by re-establishing diplomatic and economic ties with the island. They were joined in short order by several of the English-speaking islands in the Caribbean. In the new international climate of détente, even the conservative regimes of Latin America showed a willingness to normalize relations with Cuba. Newly independent nations in the English-speaking Caribbean were also in the forefront of supporting Cuba's reintegration into hemispheric affairs. Not having been targets of Cuba's earlier efforts to export revolution, these states were less fearful of Cuban subversion and historically less politically dependent upon the United States. Indeed, several of the Caribbean states were themselves ruled by left-leaning populist governments which attracted a certain measure of animosity from Washington.<sup>11</sup>

As a consequence of such favorable developments, Cuba adopted a new Hemispheric policy which was much more conciliatory and tolerant of ideological diversity. Rather than seeking to break out of its isolation by revolution, Cuba sought to do so by diplomacy, establishing normal state-to-state relations with whatever governments were willing to do so. Naturally, the success of this strategy precluded Cuba from providing significant amounts of aid to guerrilla movements as it had in the 1960s. While Cuba continued to provide a safe haven for Latin America's revolutionaries, its program of arms assistance came to a virtual halt.<sup>12</sup>

Cuba's conciliatory approach to its neighbors had considerable success initially. The OAS sanctions were eroded by a steady stream of states that restored relations with Cuba, until the sanctions were finally relaxed in 1975. Even Cuba's archenemy, the United States, appeared willing to renew normal diplomatic and economic ties, and secret negotiations between the two states were begun in 1974.<sup>13</sup>

The early 1970s were also successful years for Cuba in its relations with the Soviet Union. In the fields of both domestic and foreign policy, Cuban practice shifted toward the views of the USSR, thus eliminating the major friction points that had strained relations in the previous decade. Outside Latin America, Cuba moved to a position of prominence in the Movement of Non-aligned Nations—in part because of Cuba's willingness to cooperate with even nonrevolutionary members of the Third World on issues of common interest, and in part because the movement itself was becoming more radical, especially in the field of international economics.<sup>14</sup> As Cuba emerged as a leader of the movement, Cuba's value to the Soviet Union as a broker between the Third World and the socialist camp increased tremendously.

In 1975-76, Cuba dispatched some 36,000 combat troops to help the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) defeat its rivals and their international allies (Zaire, South Africa, and the United States).<sup>15</sup> There is considerable evidence to suggest that this involvement was first and foremost a Cuban initiative.<sup>16</sup> It is nevertheless clear that Cuba could not have undertaken such a massive foreign military commitment without the logistical support of the Soviet Union. The joint Cuban-Soviet operation in Angola cemented their bilateral relations and led to substantial increases in Soviet economic and military aid to the island.<sup>17</sup> Within the Third World, Cuba's role in Angola was widely hailed as an example of selfless internationalism in defense of a Third World nation under imperialist assault.<sup>18</sup> Shortly thereafter, Cuba was selected as the site for the Sixth Summit of the Non-aligned Nations, and hence as the chairman of the movement from 1979 to 1982.

In 1978, another joint military venture was mounted by Cuba and the USSR, this time in Ethiopia. Once again, nearly 20,000 Cuban troops were deployed to help defend a fraternal government under attack, in this case by Somalia. This time, however, the operation stimulated more concern than praise among Cuba's growing Third World constituency. For many non-aligned states, Cuba's Ethiopian involvement looked too much like a geopolitical favor done for the Soviet Union.

At a meeting of the Organization of African Unity held during the summer of 1978, Nigerian head of state Olusegun Obasanjo warned the Cubans "not to overstay their welcome . . . lest they run the risk of being dubbed a new imperialist presence."<sup>19</sup> Shortly thereafter, moderates and conservatives within the Non-aligned Movement voiced similar criticisms. Yugoslavian President Josef Broz Tito accused Cuba of introducing "new forms of colonial presence or bloc dependence in Africa," and Egypt launched a campaign to move the site of the Sixth Non-aligned Summit away from Cuba on the same grounds.<sup>20</sup>

Though Cuba's critics were harsh, they were few in number. Widespread opposition to Somali aggression among Third World nations made most of them hesitant to attack Cuba openly. Still, it was becoming clear that Cuba's role as broker between the Third World and the socialist camp contained dangers as well as benefits.

In many ways, the Havana Summit of the Non-aligned Movement represented both the apogee of Cuban influence within the Third World and the beginning of its decline. While it marked the beginning of Cuba's term as chairman of the Non-aligned Movement, the Summit itself did not go as well as Cuba had hoped.<sup>21</sup> Two issues dominated the proceedings, and both concerned how closely the Third World was prepared to lean toward the socialist camp. The first was explicit: Would the movement abandon its traditional stance of "bloc neutrality" and adopt instead the thesis of a "natural alliance" between the underdeveloped world and the socialist camp? The natural alliance thesis was advocated by the radical states, led by Cuba, while bloc neutrality was defended by the moderates,

led by Egypt and Yugoslavia. This issue was only obliquely addressed at the Summit itself because the Cubans discovered early in the preparatory process that a majority of the member states were opposed to changing the movement's traditional "bloc neutral" stance. Nevertheless, it was the underlying theme in the major addresses given by Cuba's Fidel Castro, Yugoslavia's Josef Tito, and Tanzania's Julius Nyerere.<sup>22</sup> The movement's refusal to adopt the Cuban view of non-alignment's antiimperialist content constituted an important blow to Cuba's authority at the very moment Cuba assumed the chairmanship of the movement.

The second issue taken up at the Summit was more openly divisive: Should the movement recognize the Heng Samrin government of Cambodia even though it had been installed with the aid of Vietnamese troops, or should Pol Pot's representatives retain Cambodia's chair? The credentials fight was bitter, and it was aggravated by the fact that the whole issue of the movement's attitude toward the Soviet Union was implicitly involved in it. Vietnam had ousted the Pol Pot regime with Soviet aid; to the moderates within the Non-aligned Movement, this amounted to bloc interference in the internal affairs of a non-aligned state. Cuba, which had itself recognized the new Cambodian regime, led the battle on this issue as well and used every advantage possible from its position as host of the summit. Nevertheless, the best result which Cuba could obtain was a compromise in which neither the Heng Samrin nor the Pol Pot government would be given Cambodia's seat. This partial victory was won at great cost, as many delegations complained about the Cubans' manipulation of arrangements and began to wonder openly if Cuba could be trusted, as chairman of the movement, to accurately reflect its consensus when it deviated from Cuban preferences.<sup>23</sup>

The deep political cleavage between radical and moderate members of the Non-aligned Movement reached its most explicit expression at the Havana Summit. It was only through the efforts of a middle group (more moderate than Cuba but more radical than Yugoslavia) led by Tanzania that the meeting managed to achieve political compromises which

avoided an open schism. Political differences were also mitigated somewhat by the non-aligned nations' virtual unanimity on economic issues. The New International Economic Order (NIEO), devised by the non-aligned states in the early 1970s, had made little progress toward becoming a reality. With little dissent, the Havana Summit placed the blame for this obstruction squarely on the developed Western nations. When Castro addressed the United Nations General Assembly in October, 1979 to report on the results of the Sixth Summit, he was careful to stress the unity of the movement by emphasizing this economic theme rather than focusing on the more divisive political issues. By carefully pledging to carry out the will of the movement as expressed in the Final Declaration, he also sought to allay any fears that Cuba might use the chairmanship to push the movement further to the left than the consensus of the summit would allow.<sup>24</sup>

Overall, the Havana Summit was not the great political victory Cuba had hoped for, but neither was it a clear setback. The Final Declaration was more radical in substance than the declarations of previous summits, but the movement's consensus was still obviously less radical than Cuba would have preferred. The Cubans pushed that consensus right to the limit at the summit, but with only partial success and at the cost of aggravating the suspicions of the moderates.

The Havana Summit highlighted a central dilemma of contemporary Cuban foreign policy. While Cuba successfully bolstered its relations with both the Soviet Union *and* the Third World during the 1970s, it has yet to devise an effective strategy for managing the tension inherent in these two sets of relations. Cuban foreign policy has a dual identity; Cuba sees itself as both a member of the Third World and a member of the socialist camp. Both identities have their roots in the early years of the revolution, but it was not until the 1970s that Cuba's standing with either of these constituencies was sufficiently high to allow it to act as a broker between them—an enviable position. Cuba perceives no inherent contradiction in its dual role, since the leaders of the revolution have long been on record as believing that socialism is a precondition for real

development in the Third World, along with the demise of neocolonialism. Cuba's long-term strategy seems to be aimed at reducing the political distance between its two primary constituencies. Witness Cuba's advocacy of the "natural alliance" thesis, which Cuba sees as having potential benefits for each, and which would obviously enhance Cuba's influence with both.

For Cuba, the danger in the brokerage role it has set out for itself lies in the potential for conflict between the non-aligned nations and the socialist camp, particularly the Soviet Union. When such conflicts develop, Cuba is forced, however reluctantly, to take sides. By having to choose between its two constituencies, Cuba inevitably damages its standing with one of them, which then ironically reduces its value to the other. This dangerous dynamic operated most clearly over the issue of Afghanistan.

While the issue of Ethiopia and Cambodia raised some suspicions within the Third World about Cuba's relationship with the Soviet Union, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan proved devastating for Cuba. Coming within only a few months of the Havana Summit, the invasion demolished the notion that the Soviets were "natural allies" of the Third World; indeed, it was the first unequivocal case of the Soviet Union intervening in a putatively non-aligned nation to defend its own vision of national security. Not surprisingly, the invasion was widely condemned by the Third World. Its first ramification for Cuba was the loss of the United Nations Security Council election, which Cuba had been contesting with Colombia. Led by Nigeria and India, the non-aligned nations themselves engineered a compromise in which Mexico was elected after Cuba's withdrawal.<sup>25</sup>

Cuba tried as best it could not to alienate either the Third World or the Soviet Union over the issue of Afghanistan. The U.N. General Assembly resolution calling for the withdrawal of all foreign (i.e., Soviet) troops, however, forced Cuba to declare itself. Cuba's choice was made all the more painful by the fact that the resolution was authored by a group of non-aligned states. Cuba ultimately voted against the resolution,

explaining that it did so because it would never side with imperialism against a member of the socialist camp. But the Cuban representative uttered not a word in defense of the Soviet intervention. It was a full year before Cuba formally endorsed the Soviet action.<sup>26</sup>

In the field of international economics, Cuba's role as broker between the Third World and the socialist camp has been less prone to conflict. Soviet economic relations with the Third World are much less extensive than are those of the Western nations, thus providing less reason for bitter conflict between the Soviets and the underdeveloped states. And rhetorically, at least, the Soviets have been generally supportive of the demands of the NIEO.<sup>27</sup> There are, of course, differences between Soviet international economic policy and the demands of the Third World, and these resulted in some sharp criticism of Soviet policy at the 4th and 5th UNCTAD meetings in 1976 and 1979. But on the whole, these differences have not been irreconcilable, and the Soviets have shown some limited willingness to compromise.<sup>28</sup>

This situation makes Cuba's position as broker ideal. The Cubans have made the most of it by themselves adopting compromise positions between the views of the NIEO advocates and the Soviets, while urging both parties to recognize the importance of cooperation.<sup>29</sup> The only real limitation on Cuban effectiveness in this policy sphere is the fact that the Soviets provide such limited economic aid to the Third World, apart from close allies such as Cuba. The Soviet Union has neither the intention nor the economic capability to add a significant number of countries to the ranks of such preferred recipients. There is, then, a real limit to how economically helpful the Soviet Union can or will be to the Third World, a limit which constrains Cuba's ability to take maximum advantage from its role as broker on these issues. Nevertheless, international economic issues have proven to be laden with fewer pitfalls for Cuba than have political issues.

The same can be said of Cuba's foreign economic assistance programs in contrast to its military aid programs. Throughout the 1970s, but especially in the latter half of the decade, Cuba

allocated increasing resources to economic assistance programs for friendly governments.<sup>30</sup> The bulk of this aid, in the form of skilled personnel, was targeted to Cuba's closest allies—Angola, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Manley's Jamaica, Grenada, and Nicaragua. But smaller programs were established in a much wider range of nations in both Africa and Latin America.

These aid programs serve a variety of functions. They presumably improve bilateral relations between Cuba and the recipient states, thus increasing Cuba's overall standing internationally. They reinforce the importance in principle of socialist states providing aid to progressive underdeveloped nations—a principle which is essential to Cuba's own economy in its relations with the Soviet Union. When the recipients of Cuban aid are financially strong (e.g., Angola, Iraq, Algeria) because of petroleum revenues, Cuba receives payment for the skilled personnel sent abroad—an export of human capital in exchange for hard currencies, which helps to ease Cuba's trade imbalance with the West. Finally, Cuba's economic aid missions presumably open the door to broad trade relations with the recipients.

This last objective is especially important for Cuba's efforts to reduce its own economic dependence on the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, little real diversification of Cuban international economic relations has resulted. There are both structural and contextual reasons for this failure. The structural limits are the obvious ones: Most underdeveloped nations do not produce the manufactured goods (especially capital goods) which constitute the bulk of Cuban imports. The utility of barter trade is thus very much restricted. At the same time, most underdeveloped nations face the same hard currency shortages that Cuba faces and cannot therefore afford to sustain any significant imbalance in their trade with Cuba any more than Cuba could. The contextual problems result from Cuba's recent economic weakness, which has exacerbated the normal scarcity of hard currency. Internal economic difficulties have produced an intensified dependence on trade credits and assistance from the Soviet Union, wiping out most of the gains in diversification which Cuba made in the mid-1970s.

The upshot of this is that Cuba's economic relations with the Third World remain very marginal, accounting for only 15-20 percent of trade with *non-communist* trading partners in the years since 1975, and a minuscule 4-7 percent of total Cuban trade.<sup>31</sup> Given the formidable obstacles to future diversification, it is unlikely that Cuba's economic assistance programs, however successful, can overcome them.

### CUBA IN ITS OWN BACKYARD

Cuba's policy in the Western Hemisphere has had a distinctly different dynamic in recent years than its policies further afield. In the Third World generally and in Africa specifically, Cuba's influence derives largely from the brokerage role described above. In Latin America, however, this brokerage role is of limited value. Latin American states are generally less active than other Third World states in the global institutions of non-alignment, and few of Cuba's neighbors want or need Cuba to act as an intermediary in their bilateral relations with the Soviet Union. Argentina's growing commercial relationship with the USSR is a prime example of Cuba's irrelevance in this regard.

In fact, Cuba's relationship with the Soviet Union is probably a negative factor in its relations with Latin America, for it revives all the old charges of hemispheric penetration by international communism which were used to justify Cuba's isolation in the 1960s. Finally, Cuban policy in "its own backyard" is of limited interest to the Soviet Union, which recognizes that the Western Hemisphere is a U.S. sphere of influence of only marginal geopolitical importance to the USSR. Thus, while Cuba enjoys greater freedom to set its own policy toward Latin America, it can expect only limited help from its Soviet allies.

Cuba's efforts to improve its diplomatic position in the Western Hemisphere began running into setbacks at the same time as Cuba's difficulties within the Non-aligned Movement were escalating. In Latin America, the sight of Cuban soldiers trooping off to Africa rekindled the fears of the late 1960s.

Cuba seemed to be once again willing (and now much more able) to pursue an activist foreign policy of promoting revolution. Though none of the governments of Latin America went so far as to break relations with Cuba as a result of events in Angola or Ethiopia, the process of reintegrating Cuba into the inter-American community slowed perceptibly. The Carter Administration, of course, abandoned its intention to normalize relations after Ethiopia, and resumed a high level of verbal hostility toward Cuba, as epitomized in the 1978 "Shaba II" crisis and the 1979 Soviet "combat brigade" crisis.<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, in 1979 Cuba's position in the hemisphere was probably as strong as it had been at any time since the revolution. In the Caribbean, Cuba had managed to expand its influence with several key states, the most important being Jamaica and Guyana. The principal instrument of Cuban policy in the Caribbean was (and continues to be) economic assistance, mostly in the form of human capital—skilled workers and technicians who work in such fields as construction, education, and health. Though Cuban aid is relatively small, it has been effective, both because it fills a resource gap which financial assistance from the developed nations cannot fill, and because it is, at the same time, "people-to-people" aid.<sup>33</sup>

The emergence of "Caribbean socialism" in Jamaica, Guyana, and Grenada gave Cuba a group of states with at least some ideological affinity for Cuba's own development model. These were the states to which most Cuban aid was directed, and Cuba's success in establishing cordial relations with them led to a flurry of concern in the United States that the Cubans were going to turn the Caribbean into a "Red Lake."

The victory of Edward Seaga's Jamaican Labor Party in 1980 was obviously a severe blow to Cuba's efforts to expand its influence in the region. Jamaica had been Cuba's most consistent friend in the Caribbean since the election of Michael Manley in 1972. While Manley's radical populism was a far cry from Cuban Marxism-Leninism, Cuba and Jamaica stood in close agreement on a variety of international issues; Manley took an active role in the Non-aligned Move-

ment, generally siding with Cuba and the other radical states. When Cuba's intervention in Angola led to a cooling of relations with a number of governments in the Hemisphere, Manley declared, "We regard Cuban assistance to Angola as honorable and in the best interests of all those who care for African freedom."<sup>34</sup>

As the largest of the English-speaking islands, Jamaica has historically been a political bellwether for the Caribbean. Manley's move to establish close relations with Cuba was widely regarded as foreshadowing a general increase in Cuban influence, though the actual increase proved to be less dramatic. Seaga's victory over Manley deprives Cuba of its most important Caribbean friend and reflects a new conservative trend in the region which, with the exception of Grenada, has reduced Cuban influence considerably.

The new revolutionary government in Grenada, tiny as it is, now stands as Cuba's one remaining close friend among the English-speaking states. The ouster of Eric Gairy by Maurice Bishop's socialist New Jewel Movement in March 1980 was heralded by Cuba as a revolutionary breakthrough in the region. When Bishop requested military aid to defend the island against any attempt to return Gairy to power, Cuba responded immediately by providing light arms and a few dozen military advisors.<sup>35</sup>

The sudden blossoming of Cuba's relationship with Grenada worried the United States, which warned Bishop that a close relationship with Cuba would prejudice his relations with Washington. The Grenadans reacted acrimoniously, and diplomatic relations with the United States have been deteriorating ever since. The rhetoric of the New Jewel Movement has been staunchly "anti-imperialist," and Grenada has ostentatiously sided with the socialist camp internationally. For example, Grenada was the only nonsocialist country to side with the socialist bloc in opposing the UN resolution condemning the Soviet Union for its intervention in Afghanistan.<sup>36</sup>

Cuba's economic aid program to Grenada has been of far greater concern to Washington than the New Jewel Move-

ment's rhetorical sallies against Washington. Cuba has provided construction workers and heavy equipment to help build a major airport in Grenada. Bishop's government portrays the project as a means of stimulating tourism, thus diversifying the island's spice economy. Washington worries that the airport has potential military value for the transport of Cuban troops abroad.<sup>37</sup>

If 1979 marked the peak of Cuban influence in the Caribbean, the situation in Latin America was similar. At the beginning of the year, Cuba joined with Mexico, Venezuela, Costa Rica, and Panama to help the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) depose the Somoza government in Nicaragua, despite frantic U.S. efforts to prevent the guerrillas from triumphing.<sup>38</sup> Cuba had supported the revolutionaries of the Sandinista Front since the movement's founding in the late 1960s. Not surprisingly, Cuba has enjoyed excellent relations with the revolutionary government in Nicaragua. Within days of Somoza's downfall, Cuba pledged to help rebuild Nicaragua's war-torn economy. Several thousand Cuban advisors and technicians have been dispatched to Nicaragua to work in the fields of construction, health, education, economy, and security.<sup>39</sup>

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Cuban-Nicaraguan relationship has been Fidel Castro's role as advisor to the National Directorate of the FSLN. As the Nicaraguans search for a viable political and economic structure, Castro has cautioned moderation. The Cuban economy paid a heavy price for its rapid transition to socialism in the early 1960s, a price which in some ways it has yet to recoup. The exodus of the technically skilled middle class, the animosity of the United States, the dependence on the Soviet Union, and the Hemispheric isolation of the island have all contributed to the current difficulties being experienced by the Cuban economy. Castro has reportedly been advising the Nicaraguans to avoid Cuba's mistakes by maintaining a moderate economic policy that retains a private sector, a cordial relationship with the United States, and the confidence of the international financial

community.<sup>40</sup> In short, Cuba has urged Nicaragua to avoid becoming a focal point in a new Cold War, thus enmeshing itself in the same dilemmas of international politics that Cuba has been grappling with for the past two decades. But Cuba's advocacy of moderation has apparently not extended to the issue of aiding insurgents in El Salvador.

The Nicaraguan revolution, along with the growing revolutionary movements in El Salvador and Guatemala, have produced a significant shift in Cuba's hemispheric policy. The main reason for Cuba's abandonment of its 1960s policy of "exporting revolution" was the failure of that policy. The inability of Cuban-sponsored guerrillas to gain any major successes in the 1960s convinced the Cubans that Latin America was simply not ripe for revolution. The uprisings in Nicaragua's cities in September 1978, even though they failed to unseat Somoza, were so massive that they persuaded the Cubans to reassess their opinion of Nicaragua's revolutionary potential. Cuba's leaders seemed to conclude that they had underestimated the strength of the left in the northern tier of Central America—in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. In late 1978, Cuba began once again to provide material aid to the guerrilla movements in those countries.<sup>41</sup> The Sandinistas were the first beneficiaries of this new policy.

Nevertheless, Cuban aid to Nicaragua was relatively circumscribed for a number of reasons.<sup>42</sup> Foremost was the fear that a major Cuban involvement would provide the United States with an excuse to intervene on Somoza's side. Cuba was also cautious lest it undo the progress it had made in the 1970s by pursuing a diplomatic strategy to end its Hemispheric isolation. Finally, other Latin American states were willing to provide the bulk of supplies to the FSLN, so there was no pressing need for massive aid from Cuba, although some aid was certainly provided.

A year later, in El Salvador, it was more difficult for Cuba to maintain a low profile on its support for the guerrilla movement. While Somoza had faced nearly universal opposition in Latin America, the civilian-military coalition government in El Salvador was able to maintain considerably more legitimacy.

Only Mexico, Nicaragua, and Cuba were unequivocal in their support for the Salvadoran left. Nevertheless, Cuban aid to the guerrillas during 1979 and early 1980 followed the Nicaraguan precedent quite closely. Cuba's most significant contributions were in the form of political advice rather than arms.

For a variety of reasons, Cuban policy seems to have changed in late 1980. Internationally, Ronald Reagan had won the U.S. presidential elections and was promising to pursue a "hardline" against Cuba and leftist guerrillas in Central America. Within El Salvador, the left was preparing a "final offensive" that would sweep them to victory before Reagan could escalate U.S. military aid to the Salvadoran government. It appears that Cuba, in cooperation with Nicaragua, expanded its material aid to the Salvadoran left in the months after Reagan's election.<sup>43</sup> When the Salvadoran left's "final offensive" in January 1981 failed to topple the government, both Cuba and Nicaragua seemed to return to their earlier strategy of providing mostly political rather than military assistance. The United States has charged that Cuban and Nicaraguan arms transfers to the Salvadoran left increased once again in mid-1981, but both Cuba and Nicaragua have denied the charges.<sup>44</sup>

Cuba's willingness to once again provide significant aid to Latin American guerrillas is not simply a return to the romantic policies of the late 1960s. Cuban aid has been much more selectively targeted since the Nicaraguan revolution, flowing almost exclusively to movements with a strong political base and a realistic opportunity to come to power. (Cuban links to Colombia's M-19 movement is the one possible exception.) Nevertheless, Cuba's renewed activism in Latin America, combined with the Reagan Administration's efforts to reisolate Cuba within the Hemisphere, have damaged Cuban efforts to maintain normal state-to-state relations with its Latin American neighbors. Within the past year, Costa Rica and Colombia have both severed diplomatic ties with Cuba, and its relations with Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, and Panama have deteriorated. Only Mexico has been willing to extend its relations with Cuba despite U.S. hostility.<sup>45</sup>

A key event in the deterioration of Cuba's relations with several of its neighbors was the occupation of the Peruvian embassy by Cuban refugees in 1980. The crisis was touched off in April when a busful of Cubans crashed their way into the grounds of the Peruvian embassy in Havana to seek political asylum.<sup>46</sup> This was only the latest in a series of such incidents which had already engaged both Venezuela and Peru in a dispute with the Cuban government over their willingness to grant asylum to Cuban refugees breaking into their embassy compounds. Cuba held that such refugees were no more than common criminals, ineligible for asylum. When the incident at the Peruvian embassy resulted in the death of a Cuban security guard, the Cuban government simply withdrew security from the grounds and announced that anyone wishing to leave Cuba should proceed to the embassy. To everyone's surprise, some 10,000 Cubans arrived seeking emigration.

The embarrassment for Cuba was intense, and the negotiations with Peru, Venezuela, and Costa Rica which followed damaged Cuban relations with all three states. Shortly after the embassy incident, Venezuela announced its intention to release several Cuban exiles who were allegedly responsible for the 1976 sabotage of a Cubana airlines flight that exploded after leaving Barbados, killing everyone aboard. Cuba denounced the planned release in terms reminiscent of the 1960s, and Venezuela came close to severing relations.<sup>47</sup> The repercussions of Cuba's antagonism toward Peru and Venezuela were substantial, since it was primarily the Andean states that were among the most vocal advocates during the 1970s of reintegrating Cuba into the inter-American system. The massive exodus of Cubans to the United States via Mariel, which followed in the weeks after the embassy incident, served to further damage Cuban prestige in the hemisphere and to pose yet another sore point in Cuba's relations with the United States.

### **Cuban Foreign Policy in the 1980s**

As the Cuban communist party approached its Second Congress in December 1980, Cuban foreign policy toward the

Third World was markedly more sophisticated and nuanced than it had been a decade before. The instruments of economic aid, military aid, and diplomatic activity were being used in varying configurations in five principal arenas: Africa and the Middle East, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, and the Non-aligned Movement. Yet despite this sophistication and despite the advances made in the 1970s, Cuba was facing serious difficulties in virtually all of these arenas. In Africa, some 30,000 Cuban combat troops were still on the ground in Angola and Ethiopia, with little hope for significant withdrawals in the near future. Despite the Soviet Union's willingness to underwrite much of the cost of these expeditions, they were by no means cost-free for Cuba, either economically or politically.<sup>48</sup> In the Non-aligned Movement, Cuba has been unable to enhance its standing through its performance as chairman. Forced to take a low profile because of its controversial views, Cuba has done little more than try (unsuccessfully) to mediate the Iran-Iraq war.<sup>49</sup> The movement as a whole continues to implicitly repudiate Cuba's policy preferences by calling for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan and Cambodia.

The contradictions between the interests of the Third World and those of the Soviet Union have become more acute, thus greatly complicating Cuba's chosen role as broker between these two constituencies and placing a clear (if temporary) limit on Cuba's global prestige. In Latin America, Cuba's disputes with Venezuela, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, and Costa Rica, combined with the growing hostility of the United States, have ended any hope that Cuba can improve its diplomatic position within the hemisphere in the near future. In the Caribbean, Manley's defeat by Seaga has put a quick end to any prospect for a major increase in Cuban influence within that region. Even in Central America, where the victory of the Nicaraguan revolution has given Cuba a close friend, the war in El Salvador is posing new difficulties for Cuban foreign policy.

As the decade of the 1980s gets underway, Cuban foreign policy faces four principal dilemmas: (1) How can Cuba best

guarantee its own security as the Cold War intensifies and as the Reagan administration singles out Cuba as a special target in its campaign against international communism? (2) How can Cuba effectively manage its role as broker between the Soviet Union and the non-aligned countries when the Third World is discovering that it can have sharp differences with the policies of the Soviet Union? (3) How can Cuba continue to aid revolutionaries in Latin America while simultaneously regaining the momentum toward normalization of relations with its Latin neighbors? (4) How can Cuba reconcile its activist foreign policy with the need to concentrate attention and resources on internal economic and political difficulties?

Events of the past year suggest that Cuba may have exhausted its ability to make diplomatic gains in Latin America and the Caribbean through a policy of conciliation. While Cuba can be expected to continue its search for normal state-to-state relations in these regions, it is certainly possible that it may return to a more militant policy in the Western Hemisphere—both as a response to the growing insurrection in Central America and as a calculated decision that the conciliatory strategy has reached the limits of its effectiveness.<sup>50</sup> The prospects for a more militant policy may be enhanced to the extent that Cuba can adopt such a policy while maintaining its cordial relationship with Mexico, a relationship that has tremendously important economic potential for Cuba.<sup>51</sup> Thus far, Mexico has been willing to stand by Cuba's efforts to aid the revolutionary government in Nicaragua and the guerrillas in El Salvador.

In Africa, Cuban troops will remain in Angola and Ethiopia until the security of those regimes can be guaranteed without Cuban military aid, but considering the costs of those involvements, it is extremely unlikely that Cuba would undertake any additional commitments on this scale.

The greatest international challenge to Cuba in the immediate future comes once again from the United States. The election of Ronald Reagan and the resurgence of the Cold War has again placed Cuba at the focal point of East-West conflict. Indeed, it is ironic that Cuba's successes abroad, especially in

Angola and Ethiopia, were in large measure responsible for U.S. disillusionment with détente. The rhetoric of the Reagan administration clearly casts Cuba as the most dangerous "proxy" of the Soviet Union, and the one which the new administration is most intent upon containing.

Whatever the actual intentions of the Reagan administration, Cuba must view it as a profound security threat. On several occasions during the campaign, Reagan suggested a naval blockade of Cuba in retribution for the Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan—even though Cuba had not yet even endorsed the intervention. Since the inauguration, the threat of a blockade or some other military action has been repeated as a way to end the insurrection in El Salvador—by "going to the source."<sup>52</sup> No doubt the principal aim of these threats is to intimidate Cuba into reducing its support for revolutionary movements abroad, and perhaps even reducing its general activism in foreign affairs. If this is indeed the Reagan administration's strategy, it has not been well conceived. Cuba is much stronger militarily today than it was in the 1960s, and it has already begun to enhance its defenses in response to U.S. threats. Militias, which were disbanded in the mid-1960s, are being organized once again to defend the island from large-scale attack, and the regular armed forces have been restructured to enable them to better fight a quasi-guerrilla war.<sup>53</sup> While these preparations may seem overdrawn, given the implausibility of an actual U.S. military assault on Cuba, they underline the Cubans' determination to stand firm in the face of threats, serious or not.

Moreover, the historic tendency of the Cuban leadership, and of Fidel Castro especially, has been to respond to threats with defiance. Neither economic nor military sanctions succeeded in the 1960s in persuading the Cubans to abandon their policy of exporting revolution. This tendency was also in evidence at the Second Congress; Castro's report gave the most explicit endorsement of armed struggle in Latin America from a Cuban official in many years.<sup>54</sup>

Nor is Reagan's policy of hostility toward Cuba likely to weaken Cuba's links with the Soviet Union. Quite the contrary.

By portraying Cuba as a Soviet puppet and threatening action against Cuba for events over which Cuba has little or no control, the United States gives Cuba no real incentive to alter its behavior. If Cuba is to be held responsible for Soviet actions half a world away, Cuban security can best be guaranteed if Cuba *moves closer* to the Soviet Union, thereby increasing the likelihood that the Soviets will come to Cuba's defense in times of crisis. This was well illustrated by the fact that Castro, in his report to the Second Party Congress endorsed, for the first time, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan—precisely the issue over which Reagan had threatened to blockade the island. Castro also offered the Soviets a thinly veiled endorsement, before the fact, of any Soviet intervention in Poland.<sup>55</sup> The quid pro quo was not long in coming. Speaking on the Polish crisis at the Czechoslovakian Party Congress, President Brezhnev went out of his way to warn the United States that Cuba is “an inseparable part” of the Socialist camp.<sup>56</sup>

Given the limits of the possible for Cuba, both in Latin America and beyond, Cuba's response to the Reagan administration's hostility and the new Cold War is unlikely to entail any profound shift in basic Cuban policy. For Cuba, there are no easy gains left to be made abroad, either in Africa or the Western Hemisphere. The advances of the 1970s must still be consolidated (e.g., in Africa and the Non-aligned Movement), and in some cases may erode (e.g., Latin America). Except in Latin America itself (and perhaps even there), the Reagan administration can do little to reverse the successes of the last decade of Cuban foreign policy.

The principal effect of U.S. hostility can only be to shift Cuba's priority once again to its relations with the superpowers. In this realm, U.S. efforts are most likely to be counterproductive, pushing Cuba into ever closer accord with the Soviet Union, even on issues (such as Eritrea and Afghanistan) where differences have persisted. Since the Reagan administration seems intent upon treating Cuba as a Soviet proxy, even on issues that involve little or no Cuban-Soviet cooperation (e.g., Cuban policy in Latin America), it is positively dangerous for Cuba *not* to coordinate its policy even

more closely with the Soviet Union. Cuba can no longer afford even minor divergences.

## NOTES

1. On the general objectives of Cuban foreign policy, see Carmelo Mesa-Lago, *Cuba in the 1970s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press); Jorge I. Domínguez, "Cuban foreign policy," *Foreign Affairs* 57, 1 (Summer, 1978), pp. 83-108; Edward Gonzalez, "Complexities of Cuban foreign policy," *Problems of Communism* 26 (November-December 1977), pp. 1-15; and William M. LeoGrande, *Cuba's Policy in Africa, 1959-1980* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1980).
2. For a detailed discussion of U.S.-Cuban relations in the 1960s, see Lynn D. Bender, *The Politics of Hostility* (Hato Rey: Inter-American University Press, 1975).
3. Jacques Levesque, *The USSR and the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Praeger, 1978) offers the best chronicle of Soviet attitudes toward Cuba.
4. On Cuban doubts about Soviet reliability in the 1960s, see D. Bruce Jackson, *Castro, the Kremlin, and Communism in Latin America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969).
5. On Cuban policy after the missile crisis, see Bender, *op. cit.* and Andrés Sáurez, *Cuba: Castroism and Communism, 1959-1966* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967).
6. On Cuban aid to guerrillas in Latin America, see Ernesto F. Betancourt, "Exporting the revolution to Latin America," in *Revolutionary Change in Cuba*, Carmelo Mesa-Lago, ed., (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974), pp. 105-126; to guerrillas and governments elsewhere, see LeoGrande, *op. cit.*; William J. Durch, "The Cuban military in Africa and the Middle East," *Studies in Comparative Communism* II (Spring/Summer, 1978), pp. 34-74; and Nelson Valdes, "Revolutionary solidarity in Angola," in *Cuba in the World*, Cole Blasier and Carmelo Mesa-Lago, eds., (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1979), pp. 87-118.
7. See the speeches by Cuban representatives to the non-aligned summits of 1961 and 1964 in *The Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-aligned Countries* (Belgrade, 1961); (Cairo, 1964).
8. On Cuba's willingness to enter into state-to-state relations even during its most militant years, see Jorge I. Domínguez, *op. cit.*
9. On Cuba's reevaluation of the "export of revolution" strategy, see Jackson, *op. cit.*
10. James Petras, "Socialism in one island: a decade of Cuban revolutionary government," *Politics and Society* 1, 3 (February 1971), pp. 203-224.
11. On Cuban relations with the Caribbean, see Ronald E. Jones, "Cuba and the English-speaking Caribbean," in *Cuba in the World*, Blasier and Mesa-Lago, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 131-146; and "The new Cuban presence in the Caribbean," *Caribbean Review* 9, 1 (Winter, 1980).

12. "Statement of Wayne Smith, Department of State," *Impact of Cuban-Soviet Ties in the Western Hemisphere: Hearings*, U.S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs, 95th Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978).

13. Mesa-Lago, *Cuba in the 1970s*, op. cit.

14. For a fuller discussion of Cuba's role in the Non-aligned Movement, see William M. LeoGrande, "The evolution of nonalignment," *Problems of Communism* (January-February 1980), pp. 35-52.

15. The figure of 36,000 troops, nearly twice the estimates made by U.S. intelligence, was cited by Fidel Castro in a secret speech to the Cuban National Assembly in December 1979.

16. On the nature of the Cuban-Soviet partnership in Africa, see LeoGrande, *Cuba's Policy in Africa*, op. cit. For a somewhat different view, see Jiri Valenta, "The Cuban-Soviet intervention in Angola, 1975," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 11 (Spring-Summer, 1978), pp. 1-24.

17. "Statement of Martin J. Scheira, Defense Intelligence Agency," *Impact of Cuban-Soviet Ties in the Western Hemisphere: Hearings*, U.S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs, 96th Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980).

18. The final declaration of the 1976 Summit Meeting of Non-aligned Heads of State congratulated Cuba for assisting Angola in "frustrating the expansionist and colonialist strategy of South Africa's racist regime and its allies." Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Middle East and North Africa* (FBIS: Washington, DC), August 23, 1976.

19. Quoted in *The New York Times*, July 20, 1978.

20. Coverage of the Non-aligned Ministerial Conference in Belgrade, *The New York Times*, July 26, 29, 30, and 31, 1978.

21. LeoGrande, "The evolution of nonalignment," op. cit.

22. For the texts, see *Addresses Delivered at the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Nonaligned Countries* (Havana, 1980).

23. For a summary of complaints on Cuba's handling of the summit, see *The New York Times*, September 12, 1979.

24. For the text of Castro's speech to the United Nations, see *Granma Weekly Review*, October, 1979.

25. These maneuvers are described in *The Washington Post*, January 11, 1980.

26. *The New York Times*, December 22, 1980.

27. Toby Trister Gati, "The Soviet Union and the north-south dialogue," *Orbis* (Summer 1980), pp. 241-270.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Compare, for example, the Soviet and NIEO positions summarized by Gati, *ibid.*, and the Cuban position set forth by Castro at the United Nations, op. cit.

30. For an excellent survey of such programs, see Susan Eckstein, "Socialist internationalism, the capitalist world economy and the Cuban Revolution." Prepared for the annual meetings of the International Studies Association, Philadelphia, March 8-21, 1981.

31. National Foreign Assessment Center, *The Cuban Economy: A Statistical Review* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1981).

32. These crises are reviewed in detail in LeoGrande, *Cuba's Policy in Africa, 1959-1980*, op. cit.

33. For further details on Cuban aid and involvement in the Caribbean, see "The new Cuban presence in the Caribbean," *op. cit.*; and *The Impact of Cuban-Soviet Ties in the Western Hemisphere: Hearings* (1980), *op. cit.*

34. Ronald Jones, *op. cit.*

35. *The Impact of Cuban-Soviet Ties in the Western Hemisphere: Hearings* (1980), *op. cit.*

36. The Washington Post, September 29, 1980.

37. *Ibid.*

38. The Washington Post, June 18, 1979.

39. "Statement of Randolph Pherson, Central Intelligence Agency," *Impact of Cuban-Soviet Ties in the Western Hemisphere: Hearings* (1980) *op. cit.* p. 46.

40. The New York Times, July 6, 1981; The Washington Post, November 2, 1980.

41. "Statement of Martin Scheina, Defense Intelligence Agency," *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

42. For a more extended treatment of Cuban aid to the Nicaraguan insurgents, see William M. LeoGrande, "Cuba and Nicaragua: from the Somozas to the Sandinistas," *Caribbean Review* 9, 1 (Winter 1980), pp. 11-15.

43. The equivocal phraseology here is intentional. The celebrated State Department White Paper, "Communist interference in El Salvador," purported to document a massive increase in Cuban arms aid to the Salvadoran left. However, the questionable nature of the White Paper's evidence leaves considerable doubt as to just how extensive Cuban and Nicaraguan aid actually was.

44. The Washington Post, March 12, 1981; The New York Times, December 13, 1981.

45. Cuba's relations with Mexico have been especially good in the past few years. At the conclusion of a meeting between Castro and Mexican President José López Portillo in August 1980, Mexico endorsed Cuba's demands for an end to the U.S. embargo and the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Guantánamo Naval Base (The New York Times August 4, 1980). In February 1981, Mexico and Cuba signed a broad energy agreement (The Washington Post, February 8, 1980) and later that month Portillo described Cuba as the Latin American nation "most dear" to Mexico (The New York Times, February 21, 1981).

46. The Washington Post, April 11, 1980.

47. *Ibid.*

48. On the costs of Cuban internationalism, see Eckstein, *op. cit.*; LeoGrande, *Cuba's Policy in Africa, 1959-1980*, *op. cit.*; and Sergio Roca, "Economic aspects of Cuban involvement in Africa," *Cuban Studies* 10, 2 (July, 1980), pp. 55-79.

49. The Washington Post, November 14, 1980.

50. This sort of a return to militancy was hinted at in Castro's speech to the Second Congress of the Cuban Communist Party, titled "Main report to the Second Congress" (New York: Center for Cuban Studies, 1981), pp. 37-45.

51. *Ibid.*

52. See the interview with White House Chief of Staff Edwin Meese, reported in The New York Times, February 23, 1981.

53. Fidel Castro, *op. cit.*

54. *Ibid.*

55. *Ibid.*

56. The Washington Post, April 8, 1981.