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Cuban Exiles and U.S. Foreign Policy

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

CUBAN EXILES AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

by

Caroline McCulloch

2021

To: Dean John Stack
Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs

This dissertation, written by Caroline McCulloch, and entitled Cuban Exiles and U.S. Foreign Policy, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION
CUBAN EXILES AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

by

Caroline McCulloch

Florida International University, 2021

Miami, Florida

Professor Ronald Cox, Major Professor

This dissertation examines the influence of Cuban-American exiles in shaping U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba from the 1980s to the present. The role of Cuban-American interest groups is analyzed within a larger context of U.S. national security objectives, national politics and Cuban politics. Instead of privileging domestic politics or national security politics in explaining Cuban-American influence, as other International Relations theories do, this study argues that Cuban exile politics can best be understood as an expression of subnational interest group power that affects, and is affected by, the shifting dynamics of local, national and global politics. Also, ideological divisions and demographic shifts in the Cuban-American community have impacted both Cuban-American public opinion and interest group strategy, thereby affecting U.S. foreign policy over time. The conclusion posits that hardline Cuban Americans' political power is waning in relation to newer generations of Cuban-Americans who are less conservative, more in favor of engagement, less politically active, and decreasing in proportional size relative to the South Florida electorate.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

17D	Obama's Cuban thaw announcement on December 17, 2014
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
ACT	America Como Tu
AG	Attorney General
AIPAC	American Israel Public Affairs Committee
ALF-CIO	American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
CABA	Cuban American Bar Association
CACR	Cuban Assets Control Regulations
CAMACOL	Latin Chamber of Commerce of the USA
CANC	Cuban American National Council
CANF	Cuban American National Foundation
CCD	Cuban Committee for Democracy
CCDHRN	Comision Cubana de Derechos Humanos y Reconciliacion Nacional
CDA	Cuba Democracy Act of 1992
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CLC	Cuban Liberty Council
CODEHU	Coordinadora de Organizaciones de los Derechos Humanos en Cuba
CSG	Cuba Study Group
DACA	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
DCCC	Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee

DHS	Department of Homeland Security
EU	European Union
FAA	Foreign Assistance Act
FACE	Facts About Cuban Exiles
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCSC	Foreign Claims Settlement Commission
FEC	Federal Election Commission
FIAC	Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center
FIU	Florida International University
GAESA	Grupo de Administracion Empresarial S.A.
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GOP	“Grand Old Party”
IG	Inspector General
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
LBA	Latin Builders Association
Libertad	Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996
MiG	Russian Aircraft Corporation MiG (formerly Mikoyan)
MINREX	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Cuba
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Non-government Organization

NSA	National Security Advisor
NSC	National Security Council
OAS	Organization of American States
OFAC	Office of Foreign Assets Control
PAC	Political Action Committee
POTUS	President of the United States of America
PUND	Partido Union Nacional Democratica
SALAD	Spanish American League Against Discrimination
SCOTUS	Supreme Court of the United States of America
TPS	Temporary Protected Status
TSRA	Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000
TWEA	Trading with the Enemy Act
UNCHR	United Nations Commission on Human Rights
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNPACU	Union Patriotica de Cuba
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USCIS	United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
USIA	United States Information Agency
USC	United States Code
VOA	Voice of America
WTO	World Trade Organization

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The stalemate in U.S.-Cuban relations has lasted for six decades. It has endured a six-decade-long U.S. embargo on Cuba, eleven U.S. presidential administrations, Cuban political repression, détente with Communist China, the end of an era of military dictatorships in Latin America, the fall of the Soviet Union, the subsequent Special Period of economic crisis in Cuba, the United States' reestablishment of relations with several Communist countries, the end of Fidel Castro's rule, and Cuba slowly opening more to the world market. The past ten years have been particularly eventful with President Barack Obama's U.S.-Cuba thaw and President Donald Trump's reversals, Fidel Castro's death, the first Cuban president outside the Castro family since 1959 (Miguel Diaz-Canel), Venezuela's economic collapse, Cuba's consequent major economic recession, and major demographic and political changes on both sides of the Florida Straits, especially among the Cuban-American community. Much like the situation after the fall of the Soviet Union, this era has the potential to be a pivotal moment in U.S.-Cuban relations, depending on the policies each government adopts.

My research relates to fundamental questions about subnational interest group influence on U.S. foreign policy and determining the explanatory factors for why dominant International Relations theories do not adequately explain the relationships between states. Structural theories like Neo-Realism and Neo-Liberalism treat nation-states as black boxes, preferring to concentrate on the relationships between states within the context of the international system. Classical Realism and Neo-Marxist theories similarly emphasize power differentials between states and their resulting actions.

Contrary to these theories, the most commonly accepted explanation for why the United States has mostly maintained the same policy towards Cuba for six decades is due to domestic politics rather than international systemic considerations.

Six pieces of legislation govern the U.S. embargo against Cuba: the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917, the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, the Cuban Assets Control Regulations of 1963, the Cuba Democracy Act of 1992, the Libertad Act of 1996, and the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000. The Libertad Act, also known as the Helms-Burton Act, is the single most consequential piece of legislation that consolidated and codified the embargo. It ensures that only an act of Congress could reverse the embargo if Cuba were to democratize. Specifically, Cuba would have to legalize all political activity, release political prisoners and allow international human rights investigations, dissolve the Department of State Security, and commit to free and fair elections for the embargo to be lifted.¹ If the embargo's primary purpose is to achieve these ends, then it has not been successful. Yet, the Libertad Act ensures that it is much easier to maintain the status quo than change course dramatically.

The United States has mostly normalized relations with other communist countries, like China and Vietnam, and it maintains strong alliances with other countries well-known for human rights abuses, such as Saudi Arabia. The embargo itself has not had the intended effect on Cuba despite being in place for more than half a century. A large majority of Americans support ending the embargo. Cuban-American public opinion surveys show a long-term trend of increasing opposition to the embargo as well.

¹ 22 U.S.C. §6065(a).

Even though the Congressional support for the embargo is bipartisan, so is the opposition. Furthermore, powerful agricultural and pharmaceutical lobbies, among other business interests, have been advocating for lifting the embargo for years. Nearly every country has condemned the United States embargo against Cuba, and it strains U.S. relations with Latin America, Europe, and elsewhere. Maintaining a hostile policy toward a country only 90 miles from Florida and in a strategic location in the Caribbean also presents a potential geo-security risk, as the Cuban Missile Crisis demonstrated.

Assuming that it is in the United States' national interest to end the embargo with Cuba, why does the United States maintain the embargo? This research will explore the merits of the common hypothesis that Cuban-American influence is the primary reason why the United States maintains the embargo. This chapter first explains the U.S. national security policymaking apparatus. Second, it introduces the analysis framework before summarizing the history of U.S.-Cuban relations and Cuban exiles prior to Ronald Reagan. Third, it reviews the scholarly explanations for U.S.-Cuba policy. Finally, it outlines the investigative methods for research and the chapters of this study.

The U.S. Foreign Policy Apparatus

The U.S. Constitution delegates the primary authority to conduct foreign policy to the President. According to Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress has the power to regulate commerce, declare war, apportion the budget, and ratify treaties. Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution tasks the President with the bulk of foreign policy, stating:

The President shall be Commander in Chief [of the armed forces]....

He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors....

The 1936 U.S. Supreme Court decision for *United States v. Curtiss-Wright Export Corporation* regarding the sale of arms to countries engaged in the South American Chaco War further clarified the executive branch's jurisdiction over foreign policy. It determined, "In international relations the President is the sole organ of the Federal Government."² Furthermore, it states:

In view of the delicacy of foreign relations and of the power peculiar to the President in this regard, Congressional legislation which is to be made effective in the international field must often accord to him a degree of discretion and freedom which would not be admissible were domestic affairs alone involved.³

Thus, it summarily established the legal precedent that the President is the ultimate authority on U.S. foreign policy. Hence, the factors that determine the President's election and the President's policies merit investigation for anyone interested in or concerned with such policies. Presumably, if Presidential leadership were the main factor in determining foreign policy, policies could differ significantly from one administration to the next, but this has not been the case with Cuba.

The White House National Security Council (N.S.C.) serves an advisory role to coordinate the various agencies that formulate and regulate foreign policy. The U.S. Department of State oversees diplomacy, the Department of Defense (the Pentagon) directs the military, and the Treasury and Commerce Departments regulate foreign trade.

² *US v Curtiss-Wright*, 299 U.S. 304, 305 (1936).

³ *Ibid.*

The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), which falls under the Treasury's purview, is one of the offices that enforces sanctions. The Department of Homeland Security, which includes the Coast Guard, manages customs and immigration.

When it comes to Cuba policy, the President sets the agenda within the legal limits. The State Department meets with foreign and domestic actors to create a range of foreign policy recommendations for the President and the Secretary of State. They ultimately make the decisions on which proposals to accept. The State Department coordinates with other government departments and agencies to create specific procedures and guidelines. These may take the form of executive action, memoranda, directives, etc. Congress passes legislation for sanctions, but the executive branch sets the foreign policy agenda, interprets the legislation, develops guidelines according to the laws, and enforces the rules and regulations. The State Department has both regional and functional bureaus working on policies. In Washington, D.C., the Office of the Coordinator for Cuban Affairs works within the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs to coordinate between the various governmental actors to craft policy. The U.S. Embassy in Havana carries out the diplomatic and consular fieldwork. The Departments of the Treasury and Commerce regulate licenses and enforcement procedures for trade, travel, remittances, telecommunications, information exchange, banking, and financial services. The Department of Homeland Security enforces immigration and customs laws, including border security, interdictions, visas, asylum claims, and deportations. The N.S.C., D.H.S., Defense, State, the Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.), and the Office of the Director of National Security (ODNI) all contribute to the national security apparatus that monitors, determines, and responds to Cuban security threats.

Congress passes national laws for the President to ratify and provide oversight of the executive branch. Article I, Sections 7 and 8 Constitution of the United States endows Congress with the power of the purse. All money bills must originate in the House of Representatives, according to Section 7.

Congress also regulates foreign trade. Article I, Section 8 denotes, “The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States.” The Appropriations and Budget Committees in each chamber can support or deny the success of programs and policies depending on the amount of money they allocate in the federal budget. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee prepare legislation and overview for foreign policy. Section 10 gives Congress the power to ratify treaties that the President signs.

Lobbies, political action committees (PACs), consultants, political parties, think tanks, contractors, nongovernmental organizations, dark money organizations, activists, and policy analysts meet with and provide information to policymakers. Some also donate to politicians. These groups advocate for various causes on behalf of citizens, but the way they exercise power and the disproportionate influence some have are controversial subjects. Weak campaign finance laws allow donors to skirt individual contribution limits and give wealthy donors an outsized impact.

Foreign Policy Analysis Models

Graham Allison’s seminal works entitled “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis” and *The Essence of Decision-Making* provide a roadmap for investigating

the foreign policy formation through levels of analysis. The first model he examines, the Rational Choice Model, presumes that a unified national government acts rationally to achieve its strategic objectives.⁴ Such an approach treats the state as a black box rather than recognizing how subnational group competition determines national policy.⁵ The alternatives he presents, the Organizational Process Model and the Bureaucratic Politics Model, help fill this gap.

The Organization Process Model posits that government behavior results from “*outputs* of large organizations functioning according to standard patterns of behavior.”⁶ This model focuses on decentralizing assignments and expertise, “action channels,” coordination, and the resulting quasi-resolutions.⁷ However, the third model, Bureaucratic Politics, provides the most useful framework for explaining how Cuban-Americans influence U.S. foreign policy. Like the Organizational Process Model, the Bureaucratic Politics model also recognizes the decentralized nature of policy-creation, but the third model focuses on the “outcomes of bargaining games” “along regularized channels among players positioned hierarchically within the government.”⁸ Thus, rather than being merely part of the machine apparatus, individual agents can play a significant role in the bargaining process.

⁴ Allison, Graham. “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis.” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (Sep., 1969), p. 690.

⁵ Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” 690-693.

⁶ Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” 698.

⁷ Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” 699-703.

⁸ Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” 707.

Alternatively, Robert Pastor uses what he calls an *interactive lens*. He argues that other lenses attribute the relationship between the United States and Latin America primarily to U.S. actions.⁹ Instead, the interactive lens “presumes that the region is composed of actors...that try to influence the United States even as they are influenced by it.”¹⁰ Their interactions result in the relationships formed. Therefore, all actors need to be more cognizant of the other actors’ motivations and intentions to increase collaboration and create more effective policies.¹¹

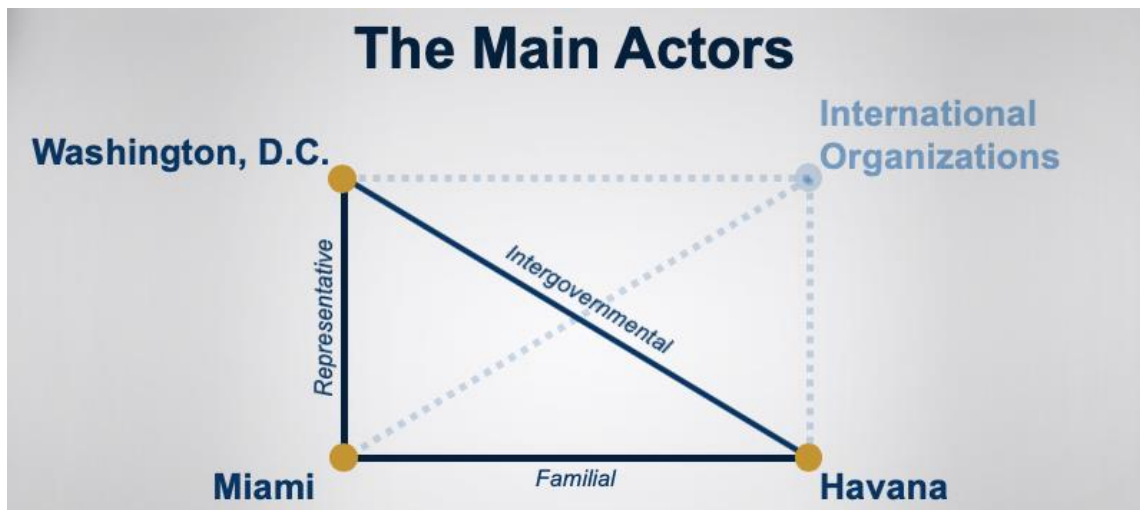


Figure 1.1: Foreign Policy Analysis Model

Scholars identify the main independent variables affecting U.S. policy towards Cuba to be the structure of the international system, national security and business interests, imperial ideologies, and the Cuban-American community. One way to

⁹ Pastor, Robert A. *Whirlpool: U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Latin America and the Caribbean* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 33.

¹⁰ Pastor, *Whirlpool: U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Latin America and the Caribbean*, 33.

¹¹ Pastor, *Whirlpool: U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Latin America and the Caribbean*, 36-37.

conceptualize these competing factors and the actors involved is to recognize four poles of influence: the political institutions and organizations in Washington, D.C., the seat of Cuban government power in Havana, the Cuban-American community primarily located in South Florida, and third countries or international organizations. Officials in the U.S. Government and the Cuban government represent their respective countries' official policies, but the relationship is far from bilateral due to the other actors involved. Miami sends lobbyists representatives to Washington, D.C., to promote the interests of the community. Meanwhile, exiles maintain their relationships with family, friends, and activist networks in Cuba. The Cuban regime and the exile community are both inextricably tied and constantly at odds with each other over incommensurable visions of the island's future. Lastly, policymakers and activists all maintain relations with third countries who in turn exert pressure on Havana and Washington, D.C., to institute policies that benefit their national interests and those of the international system. The many papers and books that have explained the relationship between the United States and Cuba recognize Miami's importance in the framework of U.S.-Cuba policy but address their influence superficially. They tend to describe the Cuban-American community as an unchanging monolith in domestic politics and the embargo as a fairly stable entity when in actuality, the community has evolved over time, as has the embargo's implementation. It remains to be determined the extent to which the community changes have resulted in parallel changes to U.S. policy.

Brief History

When trying to explain why U.S. policy towards Cuba has remained stagnant for six decades, the most common explanation is that domestic political factors determine how the U.S. engages with Cuba. The Cuban community in South Florida has had an outsized influence over electoral politics compared to their percentage of the population. Thus, politicians defer to them to score political points. However, their power in Washington and Miami goes beyond just electoral votes for president. Cuban-Americans have organized one of the most successful ethnic interest groups, behind only the Israel lobby. Few would argue that Cuban-Americans were the main factor in creating the embargo, but perhaps its longevity can be attributed to factors other than the international system, the nature of the U.S.-Cuba relationship, domestic politics generally, or just the ease of maintaining the status quo. While most political scientists have failed to thoroughly understand Cuban-American political influence and organization apart from the monolith, other social scientists have problematized the subject more in-depth.

The United States and Cuba have a long, integrated political history. Cuban-Americans have inhabited a unique cultural and political space among elite circles in the U.S. due to Washington's relationship with Havana. The U.S. has been involved with the small island nation since both were colonies due to proximity, strategic partnerships, and economic trade. The U.S. has consistently sought to exert greater power over Cuba. Following the Missouri Compromise, Southern U.S. legislators explored annexing Cuba as a slave state, as the Ostend Manifesto demonstrated. Elite business interests became interconnected. U.S. companies invested more in Cuba, Americans vacationed there, and Cuban elites contracted with U.S. companies to enrich themselves and extricate

themselves from Spanish rule. After Americans became involved in the Civil War, Cubans began their fight for independence from Spain in 1868. Cuba remained a Spanish colony at the war's end in 1878 after a decade of fighting, but the separatists persevered. Cuban exiles created communities in Key West, Tampa, and New York City.

Jose Marti and other Cuban exiles brought attention to Cubans' plight as they again fought for independence from Spain in the 1890s. Cuban patriots appealed to U.S. newspapers to publish news of human rights atrocities in Cuba at the hand of Spanish soldiers. In 1898, the U.S. waged war on Spain after the U.S.S. Maine exploded in Havana harbor, allegedly due to a Spanish attack (though this is unlikely). The United States gained Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines as protectorates in the war's aftermath.

The United States used the Monroe Doctrine to impose itself on the island through the Roosevelt Corollary and the Platt Amendment. Although Cuba was officially a republic, its northern neighbor reserved the right to intervene in Cuban politics. Through the eras of "Big Stick" policy, "gunboat diplomacy," and "dollar diplomacy," the United States became heavily involved in the politics and business interests of Cuba, thereby increasing its own wealth and power. While the Great Powers of Europe entered into continental war, the U.S. pursued its own imperial ambitions in the Caribbean with the help of its international corporations and military installations. Thus, the Cuban elites during the Republican Era tended to be very friendly to the U.S., causing resentment among the Cuban lower classes. When leaders were inimical to U.S. interests, the U.S. government supported opponents and coups that were friendlier to the "yanquis." The resentment to U.S. meddling reached its zenith with U.S. support of Fulgencio Batista.

On July 26, 1953, at the age of 26, Fidel Castro attacked Santiago de Cuba's Moncada barracks with a small group of rebels. At his sentencing, he made the famous declaration, "History will absolve me," ("*La historia me absolvera.*"). The revolutionary guerrillas thereon became known as July 26 Movement (MR-26-7). Batista released Fidel and his associates from imprisonment in 1955 in a move designed to promote better public relations for the increasingly unpopular *caudillo*. Fidel and his brother Raul soon fled to Mexico City and began drawing up new plans to renew the revolutionary struggle against the Batista regime. With his group of Cuban dissidents and other like-minded Latin American political exiles, Fidel trained his army and acquired a decrepit yacht known as the *Granma* in preparation for their subsequent invasion. Eighty-one rebels set sail from Mexico on November 25, 1956, and arrived in Cuba on November 30, 1959, beginning the 3-year-long guerrilla war that resulted in the victory of the Castro-led *Revolucion*. The nationalist revolution had broad support across a Cuban population, longing to be free of U.S.-backed dictator General Fulgencio Batista.

January 1, 1959, forever changed the destiny of Cuba. In the early morning hours, the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista fled the Caribbean island nation. Three days earlier, Che Guevara led his brigade of Fidel Castro's rebel army in a decisive victory in the city of Santa Clara on his way to the capital city of Havana. Castro victoriously rolled into Havana in the ensuing days, taking back Cuba for the Cuban people from the corrupt Batista government and its entrenchment with foreign governments, transnational corporations, the U.S. mafia, and the Cuban aristocracy. The guerrilla war ended, and the Revolutionary Period in Cuba began.

A tense and polarizing political situation soon developed on the island due to violent suppression measures, nationalization of private property, and other government policies that made people fear for their lives and livelihoods. Although Fidel Castro and his revolutionary compatriots initially had widespread support throughout Cuba for ousting Batista and foreign influence, his punitive “trials”, expropriation of property, and adoption of communism initiated decades of mass migration from the small island of Cuba to the United States of America. Most viewed their move to the United States as temporary until the revolutionary fever subsided in Cuba. Many retained their Cuban citizenship for years.

Table 1.1: Main Postrevolution Periods of Cuban Migration to the United States

Phase	Dates	Landmark Events	Number of Emigrants
Historical exile	January 1959- October 1962	The success of the revolution onward through the missile crisis	248,100
Freedom flights	December 1965- April 1973	The closing of the port of Camarioca to the end of the airbridge flights	260,600
Mariel exodus	April-September 1980	The opening of the Mariel harbor and closing several months later	124,800
<i>Balsero</i> crisis	August- September 1994	The lifting of Cuban restrictions on migration and eventual U.S.- Cuban migration agreements	30,900
Post-Soviet migration	May 1995-January 2017	Establishment of the “wet-foot, dry-foot” policy, and its rewriting by the Obama administration	649,700 (up to 2015)

Source: Jorge Duany, “Cuban Communities in the United States: Migration Waves, Settlement Patterns and Socioeconomic Diversity,” *Pouvoirs dans la Caraïbe 11* (1999): 69–103, available online; María Cristina García, *Havana USA: Cuban Exiles and Cuban Americans in South Florida, 1959–1994* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996); D.H.S., *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* (Washington, DC: D.H.S. Office of Immigration Statistics, 2015), available online. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/cuban-migration-postrevolution-exodus-ebbs-and-flows>

Many of the first to leave were Batista supporters, American citizens and companies doing business in Cuba, large landholders, elites, and religious leaders. Not all early exiles were white and wealthy, but the majority had fairer complexions and were at least middle class, because these were the people in Cuba more likely to have ties to the predominantly-white elite society from which the revolution sought to take power and the financial means to fund the exodus. Those that owned large companies in Cuba or worked with large American companies re-established their businesses in the United States, especially in South Florida. Some parents sent their children to live in the U.S. until the revolution ended or until they could raise the money to join their children. The Catholic Church facilitated the migration of approximately 14,000 Cuban children to the U.S. through Operation Peter Pan.

At first, Cuban-American political influence was minimal and primarily effective within the context of providing U.S. politicians with examples of the failures of communism during the Cold War. The regime's alliance with the Soviet Union and its effect on U.S. security, national interests, and business interests prompted President John F. Kennedy to institute multiple sanctions against the regime, including a nearly complete trade embargo. Kennedy ratified the wide-ranging Foreign Assistance Act (F.A.A.) of 1961. Section 620 of the F.A.A. (22 U.S.C. 237) states:

No assistance shall be furnished under this Act to the present government of Cuba. As an additional means of implementing and carrying into effect the policy of the preceding sentence, the President is authorized to establish and maintain a total embargo upon all trade between the United States and Cuba.

These, in addition to the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917, formed the foundation of the embargo. The Cuban Assets Control Regulations (CACR) of 1963 specifically enumerated the rules prohibiting financial transactions with Cuba.¹²

Meanwhile, over a thousand adult Cuban exiles organized a counter-revolutionary force to invade Cuba with C.I.A. support. The Soviet Union setting up a nuclear weapons base in Cuba brought the United States and the Soviet Union to the brink of direct warfare between the superpowers, more than practically any other event in the Cold War. The April 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion and the October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis further compounded Cuba's significance in the Cold War situation. Hundreds of thousands of Cubans came to the United States on their own accord and through Operation Peter Pan, the Camarioca boatlift, and the Freedom Flights. Cuban immigration continued largely-unabated throughout the 1960s before beginning to decline. Although the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966 did make it easier for Cubans to gain citizenship, they did not have the numbers, finances, mass organization, opportunity, and leadership to become an effective domestic political bloc. Although Cubans had deep roots in New York, Key West, Tampa, and other locations in the United States, much of their organization during the 1960s and 1970s still focused on Cuban politics rather than U.S. politics.¹³ Fortunately for the Cubans that had fled their native land, the prevalence of the anti-communist domino theory narrative often aligned with their political preferences.

¹² Congressional Research Service. "Cuba Sanctions 2018."

¹³ Duany, Jorge. *Blurred Borders: Transnational Migration between the Hispanic Caribbean and the United States*. (The University of North Carolina Press. 2011. Kindle Edition.)

U.S.-Cuba relations was likely more of a convenient proxy war in the overall Cold War than motivated by Cuban-American political influence.¹⁴ Ultimately, though, the dynamics of the Soviet Union and its patronage of communist Cuba in opposing the U.S. were more influential to how the United States determined policy towards Cuba during the height of the Cold War. Indeed, many Cubans formed groups still aimed at influencing politics on the island in hopes of returning from exile. National security dominated exile politics in the early days of the revolution during the Cold War.¹⁵

Two political camps took shape in the 1970s: the exile-oriented and the immigrant-oriented.¹⁶ Famously or infamously, Cuban-Americans became more prominent in the 1970s. Bebe Rebozo, a well-known Cuban-American, was a highly influential friend of Richard Nixon, and it was the Cuban-American “plumbers” who were among those to take the fall for Nixon in the Watergate scandal. The 1970s were a divisive time for the Cuban community as exiles disagreed over the best political approach toward Cuba, with the dominant group aggressively pursuing a single narrative and blacklisting others. Activists become more radicalized and increasingly engaged in violence. Cuban-Americans that dissented occasionally found themselves victims of intra-community violence. In 1976, Orlando Bosch and Luis Posada Carriles bombed a

¹⁴ Westad, Odd Arne. *The Global Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.)

¹⁵ De Los Angeles Torres, Maria. *In the Land of Mirrors: Cuban Exile Politics in the United States* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2001), 60-61.

¹⁶ De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 84.

Cubana Airlines passenger flight. President Carter's attempted "dialogue" and incremental normalization in the late 1970s more acutely divided the community.¹⁷

As Cuban-Americans became more established in the United States, they became essential leaders in business and politics, especially in South Florida. That influence resulted from significant, concerted effort and determination among a close-knit and involved community over several decades. The "Anglo" power structures in Miami excluded them, so they built parallel power structures and economic spheres. They also benefited from preferential immigration policies and civil rights legislation. Cuban-American interests began to find their political voice in the early 1980s with the founding of the Cuban-American National Foundation and Ronald Reagan's presidential campaign. The 1980s saw Cuban-American politics enter mainstream U.S. politics. That is the point at which this study begins.

The Cuban-American Community

Sociologists like Jorge Duany, Maria de los Angeles Torres, and Maxine Molyneux have helped develop a deeper understanding of the Cuban American community and its relationship to both countries, informing its role in U.S.-Cuban relations.

Jorge Duany, building on Steven Vertovec's writings on transnationalism, argues that "the form, frequency, and intensity of transnationalism largely hinges on the nature

¹⁷ De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 94-100.

of the relationship between sending and receiving countries.”¹⁸ Thus, the US-Cuba relationship affects how migrants interact with the Cuban government their families back home. Jorge Duany groups the post-revolution exodus into five waves: the Historical Exiles, the Freedom Flights, the Mariel Exodus, the Balsero Crisis, and Post-Soviet migration (See Table 1.1).¹⁹ For the purposes of this study, I suggest two more potential waves: 2014-2017 (thaw emigres) and 2017+ (post-wet foot, dry foot emigres).

Maria de los Angeles Torres directly analyzes one direction in the two-way relationship between foreign policy and the Cuban exile community during the Cold War. She focuses on “how the foreign and domestic policies of host and home countries have influenced the politics of émigré groups, particularly Cuban exiles,” rather than vice versa.²⁰ National security interests are an essential consideration for both states and, therefore, in accordance with state structures and ideologies, partially define the role of community.²¹ Meanwhile, the Cuban government’s strategy was to divide and conquer the exile community.²² She concludes, “For [decades] children and families have been manipulated politically to feed power structures on both sides of the Florida Straits that functioned as mirror images of each other, even though they evolved in radically distinct

¹⁸ Duany, Jorge. *Blurred Borders: Transnational Migration between the Hispanic Caribbean and the United States* (The University of North Carolina Press. Kindle Edition.), 7.

¹⁹ Jorge Duany, interview by the author, March 12, 2018.

²⁰ De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 31.

²¹ De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 30-31.

²² De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 180.

political spaces.”²³ The Cuban Revolution had as great an effect on the Cuban population as the Civil War did in the United States of America.

Molyneux concludes that Cuban-Americans have definitely affected U.S. policy but that one cannot solely ascribe that policy to the exile community.²⁴ Distinctive characteristics of the Cuban-American community that enabled its effective political organization include its spatial concentration, assimilation, economic success, “long distance citizenship” or Cubanidad, and preferential U.S. government policies.²⁵ Class, generation, and race divide opinions within the community.²⁶ Overall public opinion has also changed with the end of the Cold War, changes in Washington politics, and “the evolution of the community itself.”²⁷ Consequently, the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), the leading Cuban American political organization, had to adjust its strategies, and other exile organizations, with differing *modi operandi*, have emerged. She concludes, “What the exile lobby has been able to do is to ensure that this broader support for the embargo and related issues is maintained and that, in the absence of any remotely comparable lobby on the other side, their interests have prevailed.”²⁸ Thus, the relationship between the diaspora and U.S.-Cuba policy is interactive.

²³ De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 199.

²⁴ Molyneux, Maxine. “The Politics of the Cuban Diaspora in the United States.” In *The United States and Latin America: The New Agenda* (edited by Victor Bulmer-Thomas and James Dunkerley, 287–310. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 305.

²⁵ Molyneux, “The Politics of the Cuban Diaspora in the United States,” 291-293.

²⁶ Molyneux, “The Politics of the Cuban Diaspora in the United States,” 296-298.

²⁷ Molyneux, “The Politics of the Cuban Diaspora in the United States,” 298.

²⁸ Molyneux, “The Politics of the Cuban Diaspora in the United States,” 305.

Robert Suro describes the development of the ethnic-enclave economy among Cuban-Americans in Miami.²⁹ When “Anglos” dominated the political and economic spheres in Miami, a parallel Cuban-American economic structure arose and supplanted “Anglo” dominance.³⁰ Location and timing contributed to their endeavor's success, as they benefited from the human capital of the first waves, Cold War politics, civil rights legislation, and opportunities for growth in South Florida.³¹ The community networks that they built helped to ensure their success as they ventured into U.S. national politics.

Factors Influencing U.S. Cuba Policy

The continued adherence to the embargo contradicts many theoretical assumptions about how foreign policy works. Powerful countries like the United States tend to dominate less powerful nations like Cuba, but realist theory posits that stronger countries will behave rationally in pursuing their national interest. In the edited volume *Cuba, the United States, and the Post-Cold War World*, co-editors Morris Morley and Chris McGillion argue that the U.S.'s Cuba policy is distinctly “unrealist” due to its lack of internal coherency with other U.S. foreign policy.³² The three main contradictions include domestic factors usurping national interest, the embargo's inconsistency with the promotion of free trade ideology, and its professed commitment to an international

²⁹ Suro, Roberto. *Strangers Among Us*. New York: Vintage Books, 1999., p. 163.

³⁰ Suro, *Strangers Among Us*, 159-178.

³¹ Suro, *Strangers Among Us*, 160-166, 171.

³² Morley, Morris, and Chris McGillion. *Cuba, the United States, and the Post-Cold War World*. Edited by Morris Morley and Chris McGillion (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 10.

community that condemns these policies.³³ Many business sectors in the United States have been lobbying to allow investment for decades, and the majority of the American public has opposed the embargo. The inimical relationship between the governments of the United States and Cuba has resulted in Cuba drawing close to countries that are hostile to the United States, causing a greater security threat. Former chief of the U.S. Interests Section Vicki Huddleston points out that the United States implemented a stricter policy toward Cuba than most of the other countries it considers enemies. “Cuba is the only country against which we maintain a comprehensive unilateral economic embargo and the only country in which we occupy part of its territory against its wishes.”³⁴ She believes the United States undermines its own national interests and drives Cuba closer to China and Russia.³⁵ Moreover, the embargo has not forced any major changes on the island.

The International System and Relative Power

The dominant theories that describe the relationship between the United States and Cuba emphasize the power differential. Realist scholars highlight how the international system’s structure and relative power relationships allow the United States to impose its will on Cuba. Lars Schoultz, the author of *Beneath the United States* and *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, grounds his work firmly in realist theory and

³³ Morris & McGillion, *Cuba, the United States, and the Post-Cold War World*, 8-9.

³⁴ Huddleston, Vicki. *Our Woman in Havana* (New York, NY: The Overlook Press, 2018), 12-13.

³⁵ Huddleston, *Our Woman in Havana*, 13, 284.

Thucydides' observation that the strong do what they can while the weak do what they must.³⁶ In other words, the United States treats Latin America, including Cuba, however it pleases because of the power disparities and usually according to the dictates of U.S. self-interest.³⁷ For Latin American nations, the United States is a problem in that it inserts itself as a domineering presence in regional affairs and a solution in its aid and available trade.³⁸ Regarding U.S.-Latin American relations more broadly, Victor Bulmer-Thomas and James Dunkerley also highlight "the profound asymmetry of power and resource between the United States of American and the rest of the continent" and the "thoroughly inequitable relationship."³⁹

Although they may recognize other factors that contribute to U.S. foreign policy, scholars ultimately tend to situate these factors within the context of the structure of the international system. According to David Baldwin's calculations in *Economic Statecraft*, the central U.S. policy toward Cuba since the inception of the revolution was based almost entirely on strategic concerns in relation to the international system. Cole Blasier's *The Hovering Giant* investigated the roles of U.S. private interests and perceived extra-hemispheric threats. Perceptions of strategic concerns had a greater influence on U.S. intervention in Latin America, but economic considerations were

³⁶ Lars Schoultz. *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America* (Kindle Edition), Locations 35-37.; Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 3-4, 555.; Thucydides, Melian Dialogue, Peloponnesian War.

³⁷ Lars Schoultz. *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America* (Kindle Edition), Location 52.

³⁸ Pastor, *Whirlpool*, 23.

³⁹ Bulmer-Thomas, Victor, and James Dunkerley. *The United States and Latin America: The New Agenda* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 311.

generally compatible with these policies.⁴⁰ Ultimately, he concludes national interest, primarily in the form of Great Power rivalry, was the foremost concern then protecting U.S. private interests.⁴¹

In *Talons of the Eagle*, Peter H. Smith primarily takes a structural look at the relationship between the U.S. and Latin America divided into three time periods: the 1790s to the 1930s, the 1940s to the 1980s, and the contemporary era.⁴² These periods have corresponded to balance-of-power regime concerns and multilateral rivalries (The Imperial Era), the bilateral rivalry between the U.S. and the Soviet Union during the Cold War (The Cold War), and an “absence of clear-cut rules of the game” and uncertainty in the aftermath of the Cold War (The Age of Uncertainty).⁴³ Important factors determining the rules or systemic constraints of each period include “the number of major powers, the nature of power resources, and the goals of international policy.”⁴⁴ Notably, the four closely-related variables that he identifies as determining U.S. foreign policy reactions cover all levels of analysis: “(1) the relative importance of Latin America vis-a-vis other world regions, (2) perceptions of extra-hemispheric rivalry, (3) definitions of U.S. national interest, and (4) the relationship between state actors and social groups in policy

⁴⁰ Blasier, Cole. *The Hovering Giant* (Revised. University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985), 236.

⁴¹ Blasier, *The Hovering Giant*, 221-22.

⁴² Peter H. Smith. *Talons of the Eagle: Dynamics of U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Kindle Edition), 5-6.

⁴³ Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, 5-8, 353-354.

⁴⁴ Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, 356-357.

formation.”⁴⁵ Thus, these variables are ultimately consequential within the context of the structure of the international system.

The role of Cuba in international affairs was particularly poignant during the Cold War. The United States and the Soviet Union were unquestionably the two great powers for nearly half a century after World War II. Although the U.S. relationship with Cuba was firmly based on the Cold War’s geopolitical structure, that mindset has lingered beyond the end of the Cold War.

Neo-imperialism

Neo-Marxist scholars similarly suggest an imperial relationship that maintains the power differential and primarily serves the stronger nation’s national interests. In the tradition of neo-Marxist theorists, Jane Franklin’s *Cuba and the U.S. Empire: A Chronological History*, in providing a detailed timeline of international events related to US-Cuban relations, concludes:

Many people have called U.S. policy toward Cuba a relic of the Cold War. This is a misconception. The history chronicled here in *Cuba and the U.S. Empire* demonstrates that U.S. policy toward Cuba since the revolution has been basically a continuation of the imperial policy enunciated by Thomas Jefferson.⁴⁶

Her views align with a neo-Marxist political thought tradition in Latin America that gained popularity after the Second World War. Argentine economist Raul Prebisch, the former executive director of the Economic Commission for Latin America, provided a

⁴⁵ Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, 357.

⁴⁶ Franklin, Jane. *Cuba and the U.S. Empire: A Chronological History* (Monthly Review Press. Kindle Edition, 2016.)

foundation for dependency theory. Dependency theory and its sister, Immanuel Wallenstein's world systems theory, describe how industrialized "core" nations exploit a structural advantage over poorer "periphery" nations in international trade relations and politics.

The Cuban regime's official statements present itself in a neo-Marxist framework. Cuba's foreign policy in relation to the United States has been largely consistent since the inception of the revolution. Cuba's niche on the world stage has largely been as a symbol of a small country shirking the oppressive mantle of a greedy, capitalist empire in favor of a more egalitarian system of redistribution of wealth and economic power. Cuba's official government statements and state-owned media have continued to espouse this anti-hegemonic, Neo-Marxist narrative over the decades. Cuban government rhetoric portrays the small island country as a victim of U.S. imperial aggression and themselves as a sort of David character victorious against this Goliath. Neo-Marxist social science scholars have likewise focused on the economic and structural inequities of the U.S.-Cuba relationship with varying levels of attribution of agency to the Cuban government and the results of its actions. The relationship with Cuba continues to affect U.S. domestic policy and U.S. foreign policy, largely with a lingering anti-communist impetus.⁴⁷ The U.S. relationship with Latin America, including Cuba, extends beyond the interpretation of "neo-imperialist arrogance and passive victimhood" to an "inter-American structure of power."⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Bulmer-Thomas and Dunkerley, *The United States and Latin America: The New Agenda*, 312.

⁴⁸ Bulmer-Thomas and Dunkerley, *The United States and Latin America: The New Agenda*, 315.

The Power of Ideas

Prevailing ideologies and the lenses through which actors understood international relations governed how they analyzed and responded to issues in the international arena. Although the United States and the Soviet Union never went to war directly against one another during the Cold War period, they both engaged in a series of proxy wars to promote their ideologies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. As historian Odd Arne Westad argues, in these battlefields, the Cold War was actually quite hot. Furthermore, Cuba became a symbolic victory for Latin Americans and other peoples of the “Third World” striving to break free of their exploitative, dependent relationships with the United States and Europe.

In *The Global Cold War*, Westad argues that at the center of the United States and the Soviet Union’s rivalry were competing ideological visions of modernity that governed their international interactions.⁴⁹ Although these visions of how the “Third World” could progress had anti-colonial origins, they evolved to exhibit a neocolonial approach toward less developed nations, which became the battlefield for their competing projects.⁵⁰ Furthermore, he claims that the U.S. ideology of promoting freedom and security through intervention has governed U.S. foreign policy even after the Cold War despite the dismantling of its rival.⁵¹ Cuba put the two great rivals at direct odds with the

⁴⁹ Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 39.

⁵⁰ Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 397.

⁵¹ Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 405.

Cuban Missile Crisis and brought them closer to nuclear warfare than at any other moment during the Cold War. However, Cuba's symbolic appeal as liberation from U.S. dominance and its military and supporting aid to strategic Third World allies were among its greatest contributions – and its greatest challenges to the United States – during the Cold War.⁵² Westad focuses on how superpower ideological rivalry manifested itself throughout the Third World to explain U.S. Cuba policy.

Furthermore, how the United States views its own role in the international system, especially in relation to Cuba and other Latin American nations, determines how the United States interacts with Cuba. Lars Schoultz identifies two currents that have coexisted independently of political party throughout the history of U.S. relations with Latin America: (1) foreign policy activism and interventionism, and paradoxically, (2) isolationism.⁵³ Schoultz emphasizes, “A belief in Latin American inferiority is the essential core of United States policy toward Latin America because it determines the precise steps the United States takes to protect its interests in the region.”⁵⁴ U.S. policy towards Cuba has portrayed itself as a “civilizing mission,” often obscured in the rhetoric of human rights concerns.⁵⁵

In *Economic Statecraft*, David A. Baldwin's assessment of the Cuban embargo primarily highlights the Cold War ideologically battle and related national security

⁵² Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 179-80.

⁵³ Bulmer-Thomas and Dunkerley, *The United States and Latin America: The New Agenda*, 316-17.

⁵⁴ Schoultz, *Beneath the United States*, Kindle Locations 81-82.

⁵⁵ Schoultz, Lars. *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic: The United States and the Cuban Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 7, 556.

interests. Baldwin argues that there were four main goals behind the U.S. embargo against Cuba:

1. To reduce Castro's will and ability to export subversion and violence to the other American states;
2. To make plain to the people of Cuba that Castro's regime cannot serve their interests;
3. To demonstrate to the peoples of the American Republics that communism has no future in the Western Hemisphere; and
4. To increase the cost of the Soviet Union of maintaining a Communist outpost in the Western Hemisphere.⁵⁶

Indeed, as many scholars note, leadership viewed winning the ideological battle as essential to securing U.S. national interests.

National Interests and Security

How the United States defines and prioritizes its national interests—including national security, promotion of ideas, and economic interests—at any given time factor greatly into the formation and justification of policies. Robert Pastor explains that Latin America's proximity, vulnerability, and instability “make the region of special concern to the United States.”⁵⁷ According to Peter Smith, U.S. self-interests primarily cater to national security, domestic politics, economic development, and a belief in ethnic superiority, but the make-up of these variables evolves over time.⁵⁸ Schoultz emphasizes

⁵⁶ Baldwin, David A. *Economic Statecraft*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985. 176.

⁵⁷ Pastor, *Whirlpool*, 23.

⁵⁸ Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, Kindle Locations 72-76, 5050-5054.

that Realist self-interest explains the U.S.'s Cuba policy.⁵⁹ Schoultz frames his analysis of U.S.-Cuban relations as U.S. protection of interests:

Specifically, Washington's policy has reflected first the economic concerns of U.S. investors, then—and much more important—the security concerns of U.S. defense managers, and finally the electoral concerns of U.S. politicians, who have eagerly sought the support of Cuban Americans, some of whom are wealthy campaign contributors and several hundred thousand of whom vote in the crucial state of Florida.⁶⁰

U.S. interests tend to prioritize national security, but commercial interests have often been an intrinsic part of pursuing U.S. interests.

Bridging various theoretical perspectives is the recognition that U.S. commercial interests impacted bilateral relations. Pursuing U.S. commercial interests built and maintained U.S. economic primacy, promoted U.S. goals and values abroad, protected U.S. nationals, and ensured U.S. security. To reiterate, various neo-Marxist theorists, Cuban leadership, Smith, and Schoultz all specifically identify U.S. commercial interests as historically prominent in U.S.-Cuba relations. Cole Blasier's *The Hovering Giant* investigated the roles of U.S. private interests and perceived extra-hemispheric threats. Perceptions of strategic concerns had a greater influence on U.S. intervention, but economic considerations were generally compatible with these policies.⁶¹ Ultimately, though, he concludes that national interest primarily in the form of Great Power rivalry was the foremost concern followed by protecting U.S. private interests.⁶²

⁵⁹ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, p. 561-563.

⁶⁰ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 3.

⁶¹ Blasier, *The Hovering Giant*, 236.

⁶² Blasier, *The Hovering Giant*, 221-22.

Domestic Influences: All Politics Is Local

Several Latin Americanists have cautioned against over-emphasizing the role of Cuban-Americans. Regarding the United States' special interest in Cuba, Bulmer-Thomas and Dunkerley conclude:

It is tempting to assume that this strange state of affairs is due to the overwhelming influence of the Cuban-American lobby in the United States and, in particular, the role played by the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF)... Yet U.S. concerns with Castro's Cuba predate the formation of CANF, and U.S. policy has not always reflected CANF interests.... Thus, the influence of CANF should not be exaggerated.⁶³

Furthermore, "Cuba may no longer be a threat to U.S. interests, but the costs to the USA of maintaining the *status quo* remain remarkably slight."⁶⁴ As noted in previous sections, Peter Smith recognizes the financial influence that Cuban-Americans have had. However, he views the international system and national security as more significant variables for policy formation than social groups.⁶⁵ According to Blasier, the most important actors in policy-formation were, in order of influence: (1) the president and cabinet officers, (2) corporate leaders working with the White House and Capitol Hill, and (3) "middle-level diplomats and civil servants."⁶⁶ Thus, Cuban-Americans who advocate for the embargo may not so much as determine the embargo's fate as advocate a position that aligns with policymakers' preferences.

⁶³ Bulmer-Thomas and Dunkerley, *The United States and Latin America: The New Agenda*, 323.

⁶⁴ Bulmer-Thomas and Dunkerley, *The United States and Latin America: The New Agenda*, 323.

⁶⁵ Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, 357.

⁶⁶ Blasier, *The Hovering Giant*, 237.

Nevertheless, policymakers, analysts, and scholars often argue that the Cuban-American community has been the most important factor in determining U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba and maintaining the embargo over the past several decades. Vicki Huddleston, the former U.S. Department of State Coordinator for Cuban Affairs and Chief of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, repeatedly emphasizes the influence of the Cuban-American community, stating, “[O]ur Cuba policy is actually domestic policy, not foreign policy.”⁶⁷ Political analyst and former Senior Advisor for Western Hemisphere Affairs at the State Department, Daniel P. Erikson’s main takeaway is that the South Florida Cuban American community has largely determined U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba, because policymakers largely view Cuba as unimportant to overall U.S. foreign policy.⁶⁸ In his book *Cuba Wars*, Erikson describes their political influence in the following manner:

This considerable influence emerged from a potent cocktail of factors that have shaped the Cuban exile experience: the relative affluence and superb human capital of the first wave of emigres in the 1960s; the fast track to legal residency afforded to subsequent Cuban immigrants under the provisions of the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act; their successful efforts at political organization beginning in the 1980s; and, of course, the fact that the hatred the founding generations had for Castro dovetailed with the top U.S. foreign policy goal of containing communism during the cold war. But perhaps none of this would have mattered so much, or proved so enduring, if the majority of the exiles had settled anywhere in the country besides Florida.

Popular understanding ascribes the embargo’s resilience to Cuban-Americans, particularly in the news media, especially during election season.

⁶⁷ Huddleston, Vicki. *Our Woman in Havana*. New York, NY: The Overlook Press, 2018. p.12.

⁶⁸ Erikson, Daniel P. *The Cuba Wars: Fidel Castro, the United States, and the Next Revolution* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2008), x-xi.

Every presidential election cycle, all eyes focus on Florida as a notorious swing state with twenty-nine of the 538 delegates in the electoral college. Tied with New York, it has the third-largest delegation of any state. California has the largest delegation with fifty-five electors and, like New York, tends to vote reliably Democratic. California's electoral vote has not gone to the Republican candidate since 1988, and New York has not gone Republican since 1984. Texas, the second-largest delegation, has voted for the Republican candidate since 1980. Florida, too, voted Republican from 1980 to 1992, a point that is important to note given the time period on which this study focuses. However, Florida is notoriously fickle. Between 1996 and 2016, Florida's electoral college votes have gone to the Democratic candidate three times and to the Republican candidate three times, but it voted for the eventual winner all six times. Any community of voters that can give candidates an extra edge in the presidential election automatically becomes a campaign focus. With a population of nearly 1.3 million in a state of 21.3 million inhabitants and narrow statewide election margins, Cuban-Americans constitute one of these communities.

Clearly, it is more than just electoral politics that shapes Cuban American political power. If it were so, their influence would only bear fruit every four years during presidential campaigns. Presidential campaign years result in more pandering to Cubans but attributing their success to their location in Florida undermines their tremendous successes in Washington's foreign policy apparatus. This study will examine how and to what extent the Cuban-American population has influenced U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba and Latin America and how that influence has changed over time.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

My research questions include the following: How has the Cuban-American community influenced specific policies, such as the decades-long Cuban embargo or the Cuban-American Adjustment Act? Does Cuban-American influence have more explanatory value than other factors that influence U.S.-Cuba relations? Unlike other studies that privilege either domestic interest group explanations of U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba or national security considerations, I will use process tracing to analyze the intersection between Cuban exile influence and national security policy. This means an interrogation of the shifting dynamics of Cuban exile influence within changes in local Cuban politics, national political considerations, and changes in the dynamics of international policy.

In order to establish Cuban-American influence on U.S. policy toward Cuba, process tracing will be used to trace a relationship between Cuban-American political preferences, Cuban-American interest groups that lobby for those preferences, the ability of those interest groups to have access to the highest levels of U.S. foreign policymaking, and evidence of a discernable impact of these lobbying efforts on the shaping and direction of U.S. policy. Understanding the extent to which Cuban-American exiles have been effective in shaping U.S. foreign policy requires establishing the policy preferences of Cuban-Americans over a wide historical timeframe, where the shifting dynamics of Cuban-American influence can be effectively analyzed as global, national, and local circumstances change. In this context, I also look at an ancillary research question: How have ideological divisions and demographic shifts in the Cuban-American community impacted both Cuban-American public opinion and strategy, thereby affecting policy?

I hypothesize that the original hardline Cuban interest group organizational structures have had a decreasingly significant impact over time in framing U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba and Latin America. Instead, the strategic focus now relies more on federal government representation and campaign finance. Furthermore, I hypothesize that hardline Cuban Americans' political power is waning in relation to newer generations and newer arrivals of Cuban-Americans are less conservative, more in favor of engagement, less politically active, and decreasing its proportional size in the South Florida electorate.

Definitions

It is important to define major terms to set boundaries for the study. Two of the most essential definitions to clarify for this study are "Cuban-American" and "Exile." In this study, I define Cuban-Americans as those of Cuban birth or descent living in the United States. As such, they may be first- or second-generation or later. They also do not have to be exclusively of Cuban descent. Cuban-American includes anyone from Cuba or of Cuban descent living in the United States (hyphenated because of "life on the hyphen"). Unless otherwise specified, "Cuban-Americans" generally refers to the South Florida Cuban-American community. This is not to discount the influence and sometimes differing opinions of Cuban-Americans who are dispersed throughout the country but to reflect the primary locus of Cuban-American power in the United States. The research demonstrates that Cuban-Americans are in no way a monolithic community, but at times I will use it as a blanket term to describe the average opinion of the South Florida Cuban-American community or to describe a subset of the community whose common

characteristic is ethnic origin (ex. Cuban-Americans who called into a radio program).

Likewise, at times I use Cuban to refer to anyone on the island or within the diaspora but add context to specify to whom I am referring. U.S. Code Title 8, Section 1101, Article 42 defines “refugee” as:

The term “refugee” means (A) any person who is outside any country of such person’s nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, or...any person who is within the country of such person’s nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, within the country in which such person is habitually residing, and who is persecuted or who has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.⁶⁹

A person applying for asylum must “meet the definition of refugee, [already be] in the United States, [and seek] admission at a legal point of entry.”⁷⁰

Mario Sznajder and Luis Roniger define exile as “the removal of opponents in a state framework as a result of confrontational politics.”⁷¹ Thus, an exile would be someone who a ruling regime has forced to leave due to that person’s political opposition to the regime. This definition centers the underlying political motives for migration in a manner that does not necessarily apply to refugees, immigrants, and diaspora. However,

⁶⁹ 8 U.S. Code § 1101. “[USC02] 8 USC 1101: Definitions.” Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid%3AUSC-prelim-title8-section1101&num=0&edition=prelim>.

⁷⁰ “Refugees and Asylum | USCIS.” Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum>.; 8 U.S. Code § 1158. “[USC02] 8 USC 1158: Asylum.” Accessed February 16, 2021. [https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=\(title:8 section:1158 edition:prelim\) OR \(granuleid:USC-prelim-title8-section1158\)&f=treesort&edition=prelim&num=0&jumpTo=true](https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:8 section:1158 edition:prelim) OR (granuleid:USC-prelim-title8-section1158)&f=treesort&edition=prelim&num=0&jumpTo=true).

⁷¹ Sznajder, M., and L. Roniger. “Political Exile in Latin America.” *Latin American Perspectives* 34, no. 4 (2007): 7–30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582X07302891>.

for the purposes of this study, I use the term “exile” loosely to include any Cubans that migrated to the United States in 1959 or later. I recognize the implicit bias and limits of using the word “exiles” to describe Cuban-Americans, but I choose to use it for contextual purposes. Sociologist Steven Vertovec defines diaspora as “an imagined connection between a post-migration (including refugee) population and a place of origin and with people of similar origins now living elsewhere in the world.”⁷²

Hardline approaches refer to policies that favor isolation of the Cuban regime through a wide-ranging embargo and opposing official diplomatic ties, cultural engagement, and travel to the island. Moderate and liberal policies, in terms of Cuba policy, refer to the extent to which policies diverge from the status quo, hardline approach. Generally, moderates advocate specific, limited openings for travel, diplomatic engagement, and exceptions to the embargo. Liberals in regards to Cuban policy refers to those who promote engagement with the island and the regime. The use of conservative, moderate, and liberals in relations to Cuba policy does not necessarily correlate to party affiliation, because there is bipartisan support for both isolation and engagement. However, Cuban-American Republicans and their allies are more likely to favor isolation, and Democrats are more likely to favor engagement.

The Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 defines lobbyist as:

any individual who is employed or retained by a client for financial or other compensation for services that include more than one lobbying contact, other than an individual whose lobbying activities constitute less than 20 percent of the time

⁷² Vertovec, Steven. *Transnationalism* (Taylor and Francis, Kindle Edition), Kindle Locations 2839-2840.

engaged in the services provided by such individual to that client over a six month period.⁷³

I use the word “lobby” more expansively to include interest groups, activists, and concerned citizens engaged in political activities like fundraising and donations for candidates, endorsements, public support, meetings with policymakers, and so forth. By influence, I mean any of the aforementioned activities that impact how policymakers decide on policy or the resulting policy itself.

The embargo refers to the series of U.S. laws and regulations that limit trade and travel between the United States and Cuba. The most important of these are the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917, the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, the Cuban Assets Control Regulations of 1963, the Cuba Democracy Act of 1992, the Libertad Act of 1996, and the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000. According to the Council on Foreign Relations,

Economic sanctions are defined as the withdrawal of customary trade and financial relations for foreign- and security-policy purposes. Sanctions may be comprehensive, prohibiting commercial activity with regard to an entire country, like the long-standing U.S. embargo of Cuba, or they may be targeted, blocking transactions by and with particular businesses, groups, or individuals.... Sanctions take a variety of forms, including travel bans, asset freezes, arms embargoes, capital restraints, foreign aid reductions, and trade restrictions.⁷⁴

⁷³ “The Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995.” Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://lobbyingdisclosure.house.gov/lda.html>.

⁷⁴ “What Are Economic Sanctions? | Council on Foreign Relations.” Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.cfr.org/background/what-are-economic-sanctions>.

Methods

I used an exploratory, inductive approach that prioritizes empirical qualitative methods to allow additional explanatory variables to emerge. My approach combines historical document analysis and ethnographic research. Ethnographic research methods include interviews, focus groups, and immersive participation in an internship at the Office of the Coordinator for Cuban Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.

I interviewed dozens of leaders in the Cuban-American community and scholars of Cuban studies. I studied public policy survey results and a private survey provided on the topic of Cuban-American influence. Additionally, I researched and analyzed public records of campaign contributions to prominent Cuban-American politicians and from prominent Cuban-American donors. Lastly, I employed the process-tracing method to analyze the historical context of Cuban-Americans in policy decision-making from the Reagan administration to today.

I analyze the history of Cuban-American political influence as a point of reference to help identify trends in Cuban-American political strategy overall, changes in strategy, and their impact. Analysis of primary documents includes media coverage, congressional hearings, campaign finance data, and public government documents.

I conducted a series of interviews with elites in the South Florida exile communities of Cubans and with experts and policymakers who specialize in U.S. foreign policy toward the aforementioned nation-state over the period of February 2018 to August 2019. These in-depth interviews concentrated on key informants such as community activists, political leaders with links to the community, academics with expertise in either community, journalists, business people, etc. I chose the elite

interviewees based on names that frequently come up in the readings on the Cuban-American community as leaders in business, education, politics, and media. These were people who have the power to shape opinion, fund projects, and create or advise policy. I similarly sought the input of both Cuban-American and non-Cuban-American policymakers who have been directly involved in Cuba policy. These policymakers will have greater insight into the decision-making process and the role of Cuban-Americans. Lastly, I interviewed policy analysts and scholars who specialize in Cuba or are Cuban-American themselves regarding their research and experiences related to the topic. In these interviews, I used the “snowball” method, whereby earlier interviewees’ recommendations led to later interviewees.⁷⁵ Sampling did not attempt to achieve a representative population of the Cuban-American community but to represent and unearth the change-makers’ values and their impressions on those who work with them or study their work. Standardizing the questions improved the empirical falsifiability, replicability, and validity of the controlled comparison of the research and responses.⁷⁶

The interviews were designed to answer the main research topic, Cuban-American influence on U.S. foreign policy, by breaking it down into several questions. The interview questions were designed to answer four main themes: (1) What do Cuban-Americans, especially elites, want politically? (2) What effect have Cuban-Americans had on U.S. foreign policy? (3) Who has had the greatest effect? (4) How have they effected change? As described above, the overall independent variable is Cuban-

⁷⁵ Rudestam, 91.

⁷⁶ George and Bennett, 81, 86.

American political influence, and the dependent variable is U.S. foreign policy. The interview questions primarily consist of questions about exile communities' role in foreign policy decision-making, starting with an opening ice-breaker question, leading into content questions, and finishing with closing instructions.⁷⁷

1. What is your personal relationship with the Cuban exile community and its homeland?
2. When did you arrive in the U.S.?
3. Are you a member of an exile organization? If yes, which?
4. Are you a member of a political party? If so, which?
5. Why did you choose that party?
6. What is your opinion of Obama's policies towards Cuba and Latin America and the Caribbean?
7. What is your opinion of Trump's policies towards Cuba and Latin America and the Caribbean?
8. Has your opinion of how the U.S. should engage with Cuba changed over time? How so?
9. Have you engaged in direct lobbying through your party or organization?
10. What kinds of lobbying activities?
11. How has your activity influenced policy toward Cuba?
12. Has the exile community changed the direction of what U.S. foreign policy would otherwise be? If so, how and to what extent?
13. Which organizations have been most effective at influencing policy? How so?
14. Do you have any recommendations for other people I should interview and/or other sources of information?

The questions were open-ended to allow the interviewees freedom to emphasize the factors they consider most important in U.S.-Cuban relations and the Cuban-American community. All interviews were recorded, and transcripts were made of these recordings, identified only by an assigned number. The transcripts and recordings are in the possession of the researcher.

⁷⁷ Creswell, John W., and J. David Creswell. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (5th Ed. Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2018) 191.

Further qualitative research into the Cuban-American community included focus groups, which were held in South Florida at the FIU campus and other public spaces in 2018 and 2019. Unlike the interviews, the focus groups aimed at capturing the zeitgeist of the Cuban-American community at large. Focus groups were limited exclusively to adults 18 years old and over who were born in Cuba or are of Cuban-American descent. Each focus group brought together community members with commonalities to make the discussion flow easier and more openly, but the series of focus groups aimed at representing key demographics from the community to explore how important international issues affect the broader community. Unlike the elite interviews, the focus groups attempted to uncover what average Cuban-Americans in the community think and to understand the reasoning behind their opinions. I recruited participants online using social media, fliers, and face-to-face at public locations in South Florida. Like in the elite interviews, open-ended questions allowed participants to identify the values and variables they deem most important. The focus groups did not have a perfectly representative population of Cuban-Americans, but various groups were represented through the series of sessions, and all members felt comfortable expressing their opinions in the settings.

The main themes on which the focus groups centered were similar to those of the elite interviews. (1) What do average Cuban-Americans want politically? (2) How do opinions differ depending on demographics and experiences? (3) What effect have Cuban-Americans had on U.S. foreign policy? (4) Who has had the greatest effect? (5) How have they effected change? Likewise, the central research question, independent variables, and dependent variables will remain more-or-less the same as the interview

questions with slight modifications to accommodate for the setting and a broader segment of the population.

The focus group questions began with a broad, overall engagement question to allow the participants to discuss their opinions regarding the issues most important to them. We then proceeded to narrower, more focused exploration questions to find out more specifics on their opinions, being careful to allow for free expression of ideas instead of debate. The final exit question allowed them to express any last words or unexpressed ideas on the subject matter.

Engagement question:

1. What is your opinion of U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba and Latin America?

Exploration questions:

2. What is your opinion of President Trump's policies towards Cuba and Latin America?
3. What is your opinion of President Obama's policies towards Cuba and Latin America?
4. What should U.S. policy towards Cuba be?
5. How has the Cuban-American community influenced U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba and Latin America?
6. When has the Cuban-American community had the most influence on U.S. foreign policy?
7. What are the most effective methods that the Cuban-American community has used to influence U.S. foreign policy?
8. How well do the elected Cuban-American members of Congress represent the Cuban-American community's foreign policy interests?
9. How well do Cuban-American special interest organizations represent the Cuban-American community's foreign policy interests?
10. How well do major US political parties represent the Cuban-American community's foreign policy interests?

Exit question:

11. Is there anything else you would like to say about the role of the Cuban-American community on U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba and Latin America?

I interned at the Office of the Coordinator for Cuban Affairs at the U.S.

Department of State from February to May 2019. I primarily assisted the economic

foreign service officers in writing memos and reports, researching compliance with U.S. laws, and preparing for and attending meetings. Security concerns limit my ability to comment on the experience, but it provided insight for understanding the policymaking process at the federal level, which informs my descriptions of the process.

I also gathered public opinion data on the broader Cuban-American community, such as that from the FIU Cuba Poll, Cuba Data, Gallup, Pew, Bendixen & Amandi, and the University of Chicago NORC.

Contribution

Why does this study matter? My analysis departs from a narrowly statist or domestic politics conception of foreign policy by advancing an understanding of foreign policy formation as a two-way process in which powerful domestic interest groups can shape definitions of “national security” and also use definitions of “national security” to promote the objectives of well-positioned interest groups. Although international and national structures still matter, U.S. interests are mediated through interest groups.

Chapter Outline

Chapters Two through Nine trace the growth and development of Cuban-American influence on U.S. foreign policy during each U.S. presidential administration from Ronald Reagan to Donald Trump. Chapter Two discusses the formation and growth of CANF during the Reagan administration. Chapter Three describes the evolving role of CANF during the transition of the international system at the end of the Cold War during George H. W. Bush’s presidency. Chapters Four and Five demonstrate how influential

Cuban-Americans were during Bill Clinton's Democratic administration and the beginning of the unraveling of CANF after it reached its zenith. Under George W. Bush, Cuban-American public opinion began to change more significantly, and pluralism expanded within the community, as Chapters Six and Seven outline. Chapter Eight covers the historic changes in U.S.-Cuban relations during the Barack Obama administration, which instituted the broadest normalization efforts since the embargo began. Chapter Nine discusses Donald Trump's return to hardline policies. Chapter Ten summarizes and discusses the conclusions.

CHAPTER 2: RONALD REAGAN

Introduction

The role of Cuban-Americans in U.S. foreign policy after the Cuban Revolution shifted according to demographic changes in the community and changes in the international system. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the greater context of the Cold War superpower rivalry subsumed the role of Cuban-Americans, pitting U.S. liberal capitalist ideology against Soviet communism. Cuban-Americans validated the U.S. Government's stance on communism. The CIA helped train Cuban-Americans to initiate a coup in the Bay of Pigs invasion and used Cubans to fight communism in CIA missions throughout the Americas. This early wave of post-revolution Cuban American immigrants resented Democratic President John F. Kennedy for not providing U.S. military support at the Bay of Pigs. President Lyndon Johnson signed the Cuban Adjustment Act in 1966, but many Cubans viewed themselves as exiles, prepared to return to their homeland once Castro was gone. They focused on effecting change in the Cuban political system rather than laying down roots in the United States.

Nevertheless, they gradually created a Cuban economic and political structure of their own as each year of Castro's reign made the prospect of returning to Cuba less likely. Much of the community resented President Jimmy Carter's attempts to normalize relations with Castro because they viewed it as legitimizing the regime. Yet, it was not the early waves of Cuban-Americans' socioeconomic status and political ideologies, Kennedy's Bay of Pigs disaster, or Carter's dialogue with Cuba that ultimately drove Cuban-Americans to the Republican Party. Eventually, the Cuban American National

Foundation and President Ronald Reagan consolidated most Cuban-Americans' allegiance to the GOP. And it started with the Mariel boatlift.

The Mariel Effect

The Mariel boatlift of 1980 marked a turning point in Cuban-American life and politics.⁷⁸ After hundreds of Cubans rushed the Peruvian embassy in Havana to seek asylum, Castro opened the port of Mariel to allow the “traitors” to leave, as well as members of other segments of the population Castro deemed undesirable. Furthermore, Castro had released some prisoners into the Mariel boatlift crowds to rid himself of them and tarnish the reputation of the migrants.

The Mariel boatlift had a watershed impact on the Cuban-American community. First, it fundamentally altered U.S. and Cuban perceptions of Cuban immigration to the United States. This new wave of exiles to the United States represented a broader swath of the island's population than previous migrations. While the earlier exiles tended to be whiter and middle class or wealthier, the Cuban emigres from Mariel onward include more non-white, poorer, less educated, and more economically-motivated than politically-motivated Cubans.⁷⁹ The new arrivals exacerbated ethnic tensions in South Florida.⁸⁰ The earlier waves of exiles viewed them with skepticism and worried that living under communism had compromised them. Despite tensions with anti-immigrant

⁷⁸ Andres Viglucci And Oscar Corral. "Mariel: From Turmoil To Triumph." *The Miami Herald*, April 3, 2005: A1.

⁷⁹ Maria de Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors: Cuban Exile Politics in the United States*; Duany, *Blurred Borders*.

⁸⁰ Viglucci And Corral. "Mariel: From Turmoil To Triumph."

Americans and established Cuban-Americans, the U.S. Government and the Cuban community provided services to the newcomers. The mass exodus demonstrated the Cuban government's inability to care for its people or control its borders, reinvigorating the Cuban-American community's efforts to pressure Castro.⁸¹ Although exiles still focused on Cuba, Mariel helped change the Cuban-American community's political orientation from Havana to Washington.⁸²

Carter ran for reelection in 1980 against the staunchly anti-communist, charismatic Ronald Reagan. Cuban-Americans and the American public at large viewed President Jimmy Carter as weak on communism, and he found disfavor in the Cuban-American community for his attempts at softening the relationship between the U.S. and Cuba. As far as Cuban-Americans were concerned, Carter conceded too much to Fidel Castro in the diplomatic dialogues—more access to American money, a diplomatic presence in Washington for the first time in nearly two decades, and greater legitimacy—with little in return. Ongoing crises with the Iran hostage crisis and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan provided further proof of Carter's flawed approach to foreign policy in American voters' minds. However, the weak economy became the most significant issue on the presidential campaign trail.

Ronald Reagan's 1980 presidential campaign may have been the first national campaign to recognize the Cuban-American community's potential political power.⁸³

⁸¹ De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 113-114.

⁸² Duany, *Blurred Borders: Transnational Migration between the Hispanic Caribbean and the United States*, 176.; Suro, *Strangers Among Us*, 167.; Jorge Duany, interview by the author, March 12, 2018.

⁸³ Pedro Roig, interview by the author, July 23, 2018.

Miami-Dade had been a Democratic stronghold until Reagan.⁸⁴ Reagan sought to form a New Right conservative coalition, a realignment that began under Nixon with his Southern Strategy. Among other demographics, he specifically courted Cuban-Americans, a large and growing segment of the South Florida population housed within a state that carried a large electoral college delegation. By then, exiles had resigned themselves to the notion that their hopes of returning to Cuba after Fidel Castro lost power was not on the horizon. Cubans had become citizens, established homes and businesses, helped build Miami, and entered into elite circles.⁸⁵ Some naturalized or registered to vote after many years specifically to vote for “The Great Communicator.”⁸⁶ Reagan’s charismatic conservatism attracted voters that sought a vehement anti-Communist who valued free enterprise and property rights. Property rights were most important to the Cuban-Americans who had lost their property in Cuba. Reagan won the Electoral College vote 489-49, and 86 percent of the Cuban-American vote.

Reagan takes office

From the start of his presidency, Ronald Reagan enlisted like-minded anti-communists’ help to create and implement his neoconservative foreign policy. Dr. Jeanne Kirkpatrick, his Ambassador to the United Nations, drafted the administration’s overall approach to Latin America. The strategy of Kirkpatrick and others in the administration

⁸⁴ Santiago, Fabiola. "For Many In Miami, A Voice For Freedom." *The Miami Herald*, June 6, 2004: A1.

⁸⁵ Anonymous interview with the author, June 2018.; Molyneux, 294

⁸⁶ Anonymous interview with the author, June 2018.

often hinged on supporting anti-communist dictators and uprisings because an authoritarian conservative government would be better than what they perceived to be the only other option: communist totalitarianism.⁸⁷ Seeing Cuba as a case of communist totalitarianism and a proxy for Soviet influence in the hemisphere, they deftly used the Cuban-American community's experience and support to reinforce this point and rewarded the community in return. During her tenure, she developed a close relationship with the Cuban community.⁸⁸ Likewise, Reagan's first Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, so adamantly believed Cuba to be a danger to the hemisphere that he once offered to the President, "You just give me the words, and I'll turn that f---- island into a parking lot."⁸⁹

The Reagan administration's Latin America approach centered on the Caribbean Basin. They saw the civil wars in El Salvador and Nicaragua as predominantly ideological battles and proxy wars for the Soviet Union to exert more influence in the hemisphere with Cuba's aid. Thus, containing Cuba would be essential to conquering the "Soviet-Cuban axis" in the Americas.

Founding the Cuban American National Foundation

Different sources tell different origin stories for the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), but most agree that the idea emerged from conversations between

⁸⁷ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 366.

⁸⁸ Bardach, *Cuba Confidential*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), 141.

⁸⁹ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 369.; Nancy Reagan with William Novak, *My Turn: The Memoirs of Nancy Reagan* (New York: Random House, 1989), 242.

Reagan's National Security Advisor Richard Allen and Jorge Mas Canosa.⁹⁰ Frank Calzon wrote a proposal for a "Cuban American Foundation" in May 1981 after years of promoting the Cuban cause in Washington, D.C.⁹¹ The ambitious Mas Canosa created CANF with other elite, politically-minded, Cuban associates in summer 1981 to promote the community's interests in the federal government. Mas Canosa, Raul Masvidal, Carlos Salman, and eleven other Miami businessmen became founding members, and they named Frank Calzon the first executive director.⁹² They modeled this new organization after phenomenally successful Jewish special interest groups. Barney Barnett, a founder of the prominent American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), and AIPAC executive director Tom Dine consulted with them in this endeavor.⁹³ They created three organizational arms to advance their interests: a nonprofit organization, a political action committee (PAC), and a lobby. The two offshoots of the nonprofit Cuban American National Foundation resulted in the National Coalition for a Free Cuba PAC and the Cuban-American Public Affairs Council, a lobby.⁹⁴ Frank Hernandez led the National Coalition for a Free Cuba, later shortened to the Free Cuba PAC.⁹⁵ It became their

⁹⁰ Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire.*; Dan Erikson, *The Cuba Wars*, 112; Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 270.; Bardach, *Cuba Confidential*, 139.

⁹¹ R.A. Zaldivar. "Miami Cubans Build Powerful Lobby Group." *The Miami Herald*, August 11, 1986: A1.

⁹² Frank Calzon, interview with the author, May 11, 2018.

⁹³ R.A. Zaldivar. "Miami Cubans Build Powerful Lobby Group.";

Moreira, Domingo. "Jorge Mas Canosa: Memories Of A Patriot." *The Miami Herald*, November 23, 2007: A27.

⁹⁴ De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 116.

⁹⁵ De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 116.; Bardach, *Cuba Confidential*, 139.

financial arm, donating to like-minded politicians on both sides of the aisle.⁹⁶ Dr. Francisco “Pepe” Hernandez, who would later become CANF’s executive director, explained, “When we went to Washington, we realized that we had to seek the support of both sides of the political system.... This is something that our Jewish friends helped us understand at the time.... If you don’t work both sides of the aisle, you really don’t go anywhere.”⁹⁷ Although they tended to favor Republicans, working in a bipartisan fashion enabled them to effect change regardless of the party in power. Furthermore, they cultivated relationships in the legislative and executive branches, which allowed them to recommend policies to the White House directly and advocate for Reagan’s anti-communist policies with Congress members.⁹⁸

Reagan’s Foreign Policy

Reagan quickly increased the pressure on Cuba. From November 1980 through March 1981, the United States banned French steel for containing Cuban nickel.⁹⁹ The United States confined Cuban U.N. diplomats to only a 25-mile radius for travel, accused them of spying and buying prohibited goods, and limited their housing, employment, and travel.¹⁰⁰ In May, the Treasury began seizing Cuban publications mailed to unlicensed U.S. addresses until the *Nation v. Haig* Supreme Court decision reversed the policy in

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Erikson, *The Cuba Wars*, 112.

⁹⁸ Santiago, Fabiola. "For Many In Miami, A Voice For Freedom."

⁹⁹ Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire.*; Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 374.

¹⁰⁰ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 374.

early 1982.¹⁰¹ The State Department denied travel visas to Cuban authorities on official business.¹⁰² In September 1981, Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Enders and National Security Advisor Richard Allen announced plans to create Radio Marti, a propaganda radio station targeted at Cuba, based on Radio Free Europe.¹⁰³ This project would take several years to implement but became a dominant focus of Cuban-American lobbying efforts.

The Reagan team grew more aggressive. The administration began a series of military maneuvers in the Caribbean in October 1981 that continued over several years, as an effort both to train the U.S. military and to intimidate rivals in the region.¹⁰⁴ Reagan officially authorized the CIA to aid the Contras in Nicaragua to fight the Cubans and Nicaraguan revolutionaries present via documents released and signed in December 1981 and January 1982.¹⁰⁵ Those documents outlined the beginning of covert U.S. aid, military and otherwise, to the region that would come under heavy scrutiny in the Iran-Contra affair. Cuban-Americans provided political, financial, and tactical support for Reagan's agenda in Latin America.

¹⁰¹ Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire*.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 377.

¹⁰⁵ "Finding Pursuant to Section 662 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, As Amended, Concerning Operations Undertaken by the Central Intelligence Agency in Foreign Countries, Other Than Those Intended Solely for the Purpose of Intelligence Collection."; Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire*.; National Security Directive 17

In his June 8, 1982, Westminster address, Reagan introduced the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the “Reagan Doctrine.”¹⁰⁶ Its purpose was “to foster the infrastructure of democracy, the system of a free press, unions, political parties, [and] universities.”¹⁰⁷ The NED regularly provided grants to CANF once it became operational.¹⁰⁸

Radio Marti and Midterm Elections

Cuban-American politics in Washington began to emerge from the shadows. Radio Marti underwent a review in Reagan’s Commission on Broadcasting to Cuba.¹⁰⁹ It then passed the House of Representatives in 1982.¹¹⁰ Progressive, pro-engagement Cuban-Americans in the Cuban-American Committee lobbied against the bill.¹¹¹ So did broadcasters and farmers, who feared that Cuba would retaliate by blocking their signals, but CANF and dedicated legislators continued to fight for it after it died in the Senate.¹¹² Chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee and South

¹⁰⁶ “Address to Members of the British Parliament | Ronald Reagan.” Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/address-members-british-parliament>.

¹⁰⁷ [Ibid.](#)

¹⁰⁸ [Ibid.](#)

¹⁰⁹ Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire.*; LeoGrande, William M., and Peter Kornbluh. *Back Channel to Cuba*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015. 227.

¹¹⁰ [Ibid.](#)

¹¹¹ De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 118.; Alfonso Chardy. "Opposition To Radio Marti Binds A Motley Coalition." *The Miami Herald*, July 8, 1982: A6.

¹¹² [Ibid.](#)

Florida Democrat, Representative Dante Fascell led the House fight.¹¹³ Republican Florida Senator Paula Hawkins, a member of the CANF advisory council, battled for Radio Marti in the U.S. Senate.¹¹⁴ Additionally, CANF gathered forty-four Senators' signatures for a letter supporting the initiative.¹¹⁵

Candidates concentrated on midterm elections in the fall of 1982. The GOP specifically recruited Hispanic voters, staff, and candidates in South Florida under the leadership of Jeb Bush, the Vice President's son, and Roberto Casas, a Cuban-American who became a Florida State Representative that year.¹¹⁶ They recognized that Hispanic voters had the potential to be an important voting bloc, listened to them, and helped develop their capabilities. Three Cuban-Americans—Ricardo Nunez, Manuel Iglesias, and Evelio Estrella—ran for the Republican nomination to unseat Democratic Representative Claude Pepper, who had represented Florida in the U.S. Congress off-and-on since 1936.¹¹⁷ Estrella took pride in being the first Cuban to run for Congress and the fact that there were "18 Hispanics aspiring for public office" that year.¹¹⁸ Even though Pepper maintained his seat, it demonstrated how active Cuban-Americans were becoming in U.S. civic life. Key players in the Republican Party supported them. Wealthy Cuban-

¹¹³ Guillermo Martinez. "Cuban Exiles Pour Money into Congressional Races." *The Miami Herald*, September 27, 1982: A1.; John Spicer Nichols. *The Nation*. 247.11 (Oct. 24, 1988): p389+.

¹¹⁴ Martinez. "Cuban Exiles Pour Money into Congressional Races."

¹¹⁵ Fabiola Santiago. "Radio Marti Legislation Set For Senate Agenda Monday." *The Miami Herald*, December 5, 1982: A12.

¹¹⁶ Helga Silva. "A Bush By Any Name Is Just Good." *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 1982: C4.

¹¹⁷ Helga Silva. "3 Cuban-Americans After Claude Pepper's Seat." *The Miami Herald*, August 26, 1982: D2.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

Americans poured thousands of dollars into Floridian and nationwide congressional races. *Miami Herald* staff writer Guillermo Martinez described the atmosphere in an editorial entitled “Cubans Come of Age in America”:

[A]fter more than two decades in this country Cubans are finally appreciating, understanding, and participating fully in the American democratic process. For years, it has been said that Cubans, who had been a tremendous economic success in the United States, had been a miserable political failure. They were criticized because they were too busy making money to get involved in the local and national political process.
No more.¹¹⁹

The article emphasized that Cuban-Americans ran for office and created groups like Facts About Cuba Exiles (FACE) and CANF to advocate for the community nationally.

The President and GOP leadership made frequent visits to South Florida in 1983 to rally support. At a March CANF luncheon, Florida Senator Paula Hawkins assured the audience, “I’m on urgent orders from the President to get Radio Marti passed.”¹²⁰ She and Representative Dante Fascell re-introduced Radio Marti bills that spring to the new session of Congress.¹²¹ Barbara Burris, an aide to Representative Fascell, called CANF “the most effective and most active” Cuban-American group and noted, “They were the primary force behind Radio Marti.”¹²² Jorge Mas Canosa acknowledged, “People consult us. People listen to us. Our credibility has increased considerably.”¹²³ This influence

¹¹⁹ Guillermo Martinez. “Cubans Come Of Age In America.” *The Miami Herald*, September 30, 1982: A31.

¹²⁰ Jay Ducassi. “Hawkins: New Radio Marti Bill Should Meet Little Opposition.” *The Miami Herald*, March 8, 1983: A6.

¹²¹ Fabiola Santiago. “\$1 Million Is Goal For Anti-Castro Lobby.” *The Miami Herald*, March 27, 1983: A21.

¹²² Stuart Taylor Jr. “Rising Voice Of Cuban-Americans.” *The New York Times*, March 7, 1984: B8.

¹²³ Santiago. “\$1 Million Is Goal For Anti-Castro Lobby.”

became more apparent as their coffers increased, and high-profile politicians visited Miami regularly.

The Hispanic Campaign Trail

President Reagan became the first president to visit the Cuban-American community of South Florida since John F. Kennedy twenty years earlier.¹²⁴ Reagan spoke at a CANF-sponsored commemoration of Cuba's Independence Day on May 20.¹²⁵ Before the visit, Reagan pardoned Cuban-American Watergate burglar Eugenio Martinez.¹²⁶ Miami's Cuban-American community buzzed excitedly over Reagan's visit. President Reagan, administration officials, and Congress members recognized various Cuban-Americans in his commemoration speech and announced that Cuban-American Jose Sorzano would become the new Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations under Jeane Kirkpatrick.¹²⁷ He contended that the Cuban government participated in drug trafficking, and he further promoted Radio Marti in his fight against communism in the hemisphere.¹²⁸ He challenged them to fight for God and freedom against the "Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan axis":

¹²⁴ Guillermo Martinez. "Reagan Visit Honors Cubans' Strength." *The Miami Herald*, May 19, 1983: A1.

¹²⁵ Martinez. "Reagan Visit Honors Cubans' Strength."; Fabiola. "For Many In Miami, A Voice For Freedom."

¹²⁶ "2 Denied Pardons In Watergate Hunt, Magruder Had Wider Roles." *The Miami Herald*, May 15, 1983: A1.

¹²⁷ "U.S. Aide: Diplomacy Succeeding In Nicaragua." *The Miami Herald*, August 27, 1983: PB2.; Woods, Casey. "CANF Celebrates 25th Year." *The Miami Herald*, July 22, 2006: B3.

¹²⁸ "Remarks at a Cuban Independence Day Celebration in Miami, Florida | Ronald Reagan." Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/remarks-cuban-independence-day-celebration-miami-florida>.

Perhaps the best gift that you can give to your fellow citizens -- and you've already contributed so much to our well-being -- is a better understanding of that which they cannot see -- the human freedom that surrounds them. Perhaps you can help them understand something that you know instinctively -- the awesome responsibility that we have as Americans. For if we fail, there will be no place for free men to seek refuge. I'm counting on you to help me explain the threats in Central America, the threats you recognize so clearly.¹²⁹

Reagan's presence and remarks recognized Cuban-American support and achievements.

It was meaningful for Cuban-Americans because, as one explained, "He is the only president since John F. Kennedy who has paid any attention to us."¹³⁰

Reagan's visit to Miami epitomized his Hispanic strategy during the 1984 campaign, even though his reputation among minorities slipped nationally.¹³¹ The day before Reagan visited Miami, former President Richard Nixon, noted the potential impact of Latinos on the election as the fastest-growing, second-largest minority, and young minority in the United States.¹³² "The swing votes are out there. The majority of the undecided ones are in the Latin community," Nixon remarked.¹³³ A Reagan spokesman confirmed that his visit was "to show that he is grateful for the Cuban electoral support in 1980 and hopeful that it will be contagious for other Hispanics nationwide. He knows no one more fervently supports his anti-Communist Central American policy."¹³⁴ Cubans'

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Helga Silva. "Guess Who's Coming To Dinner? President Will Try Cuban Specialties At Miami Restaurant." *The Miami Herald*, May 18, 1983: A1.

¹³¹ Roberto Fabricio. "Reagan Visit Was More Than Mere Politics." *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 1983: B1.

¹³² John-Thor Dahlburg. "Republicans, Democrats Both Court Growing Latin Vote." The Associated Press. May 21, 1983.; Haynes Johnson and Thomas B. Edsall. "Hispanics' Political Star Ascending." *The Washington Post*, March 25, 1984: A1.

¹³³ Dahlburg. "Republicans, Democrats Both Court Growing Latin Vote."

¹³⁴ Martinez. "Reagan Visit Honors Cubans' Strength."

predominant issue was “La Causa” (the cause), overshadowing all other concerns: restoring democracy in Cuba and fighting communism.¹³⁵ Two Cuban-Americans quoted in the *Washington Post* said, “We don’t care if we are unemployed as long as we are fighting communism,” and “When it comes to communism, every Cuban is going to leave everything behind and go fight against it.”¹³⁶

Statistics showed that Hispanic voter participation rose as both major parties addressed them in the 1983-1984 election season, but Reagan dominated among Cuban-Americans. In 1980, 25 percent of Latinos nationwide voted Republican, but only 2.2 million of 6.6 million voting-age Hispanics cast ballots nationwide.¹³⁷ In 1983, there were 200,000 registered Hispanic voters in Florida and an estimated 100,000 more eligible.¹³⁸ By June 1, 1983, about 20% of Dade County registered voters were Hispanic.¹³⁹ Cuban-Americans made up about 80 percent of Miami Latinos at the time, even though only 6.3 percent of Latinos nationwide were Cuban.¹⁴⁰ Florida’s swing-state status indicated that Hispanic voters could help determine the election.

¹³⁵ Thomas B. Edsall, “The Cuban Bloc Florida Anti-Communists Rally to GOP.” *The Washington Post*, March 25, 1984: A6.; Guy Gugliotta and Helga Silva. “La Causa’ Binds Exile Community.” *The Miami Herald*, December 11, 1983: M14.

¹³⁶ Edsall, “The Cuban Bloc Florida Anti-Communists Rally to GOP.”

¹³⁷ Edsall, “The Cuban Bloc Florida Anti-Communists Rally to GOP.”; Johnson and Edsall. “Hispanics’ Political Star Ascending.”

¹³⁸ Lou Cannon. “President Courts Hispanics in Florida.” *The Washington Post*, August 13, 1983: A1.

¹³⁹ Anne S. Crowley. “As Cubans Come of Age Politically, Impact is ‘Tremendous.’” *The Associated Press*. July 3, 1983.

¹⁴⁰ Edward Cody. “In Miami, It’s ‘Reagan, Si’; Cuban Americans Like White House Foreign Policy.” *The Washington Post*. May 21, 1983: A2.; Dahlburg. “Republicans, Democrats Both Court Growing Latin Vote.”

The Republican strategy of courting Cuban-Americans worked as both major parties continued their Hispanic campaigns. The Florida Republican Party set aside \$30,000 to register 30,000 new Cuban voters, and the Republican National Hispanic Assembly's Viva '84 campaign in Florida aimed for \$1 million as the national Viva '84 campaign spent \$2.5 million nationally to mobilize Hispanic Republican voter registration.¹⁴¹ Newly-registered Hispanic Republicans helped shrink the Democrats' 3.7-to-1 advantage among registered Miami voters in March 1980 to 2.7-to-1 by February 1984.¹⁴² The number of Hispanic Republicans increased by 66 percent in four years.¹⁴³ Civic organizations registered tens of thousands of Hispanic voters with both major political parties' help.¹⁴⁴ Hispanic-American Voter Education Inc. aimed to register 10,000 new Hispanic voters in Dade county before the 1984 election and help 90,000 Marielitos attain American citizenship by 1986.¹⁴⁵

Reagan rewarded Cuban-Americans for supporting the GOP. Reagan appointed many Cuban-Americans to high-level positions in the administration and backed Radio Marti, CANF's pet project.¹⁴⁶ By the end of summer 1984, Reagan's administration had

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Edsall, "The Cuban Bloc Florida Anti-Communists Rally to GOP."

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Helga Silva. "Hispanics Team Up To Register 10,000." *The Miami Herald*, March 9, 1984: 7C.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 122.

appointed about 20 Cuban-Americans into prominent government positions.¹⁴⁷ They included:

- Jose Sorzano, principal Deputy to the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations;
- Otto Juan Reich, head of the State Department's Office of Public Diplomacy;
- Juan Manuel Casanova, Executive Director, Inter-American Development Bank;
- Adis Vila, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs;
- Rita Rodriguez, member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Export-Import Bank;
- Humberto Medrano, deputy director of Radio Marti;
- Ernesto Betancourt, research director for Radio Marti;
- Victor Blanco, chairman of the Inter-American Foundation board of directors;
- Carlos Diaz-Alejandro, National Bipartisan Commission on Central America;
- Alberto Martinez Piedra, U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala;
- Jorge Mas Canosa, Chairman of Radio Marti's Advisory Board;
- Carlos Salman, member of the Board of Directors of the Overseas Private Investment Corp.;
- Carlos Benitez, member of the national advisory board on International Education Programs
- Juan Del Real, General Counsel at the Department of Health and Human Services;
- Manuel Justiz, Director at the National Institute of Education;
- Mario Aguero, Commissioner at Copyright Royalty Tribunal;
- Roberto Cambo, Commissioner at the National Commission for Labor Policy; and
- Alberto Cardenas, Chairman of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Small and Minority Business Ownership.¹⁴⁸

Mas Canosa regularly met with administration officials, attending briefings, talking to foreign leaders, and more while promoting his business. CANF continued to strengthen its relationship with these leaders. The GOP promoted more Cuban candidates for elected offices than the Democrats, who struggled to balance ethnic tensions and supported

¹⁴⁷ Alfonso Chardy. "Reagan Aides Include Many Who Fled Fidel Castro." *The Miami Herald*, August 5, 1984: A12.

¹⁴⁸ "Miamian Gets Seat On International Board." *The Miami Herald*, December 22, 1983: 11C.; Chardy. "Reagan Aides Include Many Who Fled Fidel Castro."; "Reagan's Cuban-American Appointees." *The Miami Herald*, August 5, 1984: A12.

conservative domestic agendas that included English-only proposals.¹⁴⁹ So, Cuban-Americans increasingly ran for local, state, and national offices on the GOP ticket. Moreover, the wealthy Cuban-American elite in Miami greatly benefited from Reagan's economic policies.¹⁵⁰

In return, the Cuban-Americans provided Reagan's GOP more than just votes. They donated generously. CANF's National Coalition for a Free Cuba PAC's supporters pledged over \$200,000 for presidential and congressional campaigns.¹⁵¹ Additionally, Republicans suffered from an image problem among minorities resulting from their economic and other domestic policies that disproportionately hurt minority communities. Winning over the African-American community was unlikely, so Republicans focused on the Hispanic voters to court key swing voters and make the party appear less homogenous.¹⁵² Support from victims of a communist state legitimated the administration's efforts to fight communism in Latin America.

Reagan's record with Cuban-Americans was not perfect. His administration was the first to deport a Cuban since the Revolution.¹⁵³ It cut the assistance for Marielitos and denied adjustment of legal status for them.¹⁵⁴ Under Reagan, the U.S. Government did

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Helga Silva. "Cubans Raise Funds For Reagan But Miff GOP." *The Miami Herald*, January 31, 1984: B1.; "Radio Marathon Raises \$201,400 For Reagan Campaign And Others." *The Miami Herald*, February 1, 1984: D3.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Guillermo Martinez. "Reagan's Mixed Record On Cuban Americans." *The Miami Herald*, September 6, 1983: A21.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

not provide the promised visas for Cuban political prisoners, detained Cuban refugees for lengthy periods, and more.¹⁵⁵ The minority of Cuban-Americans that lived outside of Florida tended to be less conservative and often created alliances with other Latinos and minorities due to their small numbers.¹⁵⁶ While their impact was still notable, especially in Union City, New Jersey, the Cuban-American community's political strength predominated in Miami. Thus, Cuban-Americans' Washington presence often reflected Miami politics as a result, and the majority continued to support Reagan.

Domestic Victories and Foreign Disappointment

After two years, the Senate passed the Radio Marti bill on September 13, and the House passed it on September 29, 1983.¹⁵⁷ The President officially signed it into law in October. Most prominent Cuban-Americans viewed it as a victory, even though the compromise bill removed independence and placed Radio Marti under the direction of Voice of America (VOA), the United States' international broadcasting service.¹⁵⁸

Meanwhile, Representative Dante Fascell promoted the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Fascell's bill proposed allotting \$31.3 million a year to the NED.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 124.

¹⁵⁷ Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire*.

¹⁵⁸ Jay Ducassi. "Miamians Celebrate Radio Marti Cuban-Americans Hail Senate OK." *The Miami Herald*, September 15, 1983: A18.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

Fascell became the first director of the NED.¹⁶⁰ CANF received one of the first grants and would receive nearly \$400,000 for its Cuba programs by 1988.¹⁶¹ However, unrest in the Caribbean and resulting fallout eclipsed the legislative celebrations.

Just two days after Robert McFarlane became the U.S. President's new National Security Advisor, Grenadine coup leaders assassinated Prime Minister Maurice Bishop on October 19, 1983. A considerable Cuban presence on the island and the new Grenadine leadership's Cuban sympathies concerned the U.S. government, and they decided to justify the invasion as necessary in order to rescue American medical students studying there.¹⁶² The U.S. military invaded Grenada on October 25, 1983, and took control of the island within days.¹⁶³ The 784 Cubans, who mostly worked airport construction, defended themselves against eight thousand U.S. troops.¹⁶⁴ Twenty-four Cubans died, and 57 were wounded, but the U.S. Interests Section in Havana managed to negotiate for the dead and wounded's return.¹⁶⁵

The invasion was not popular, but many Cuban-American conservatives lauded it via Spanish radio, letters, telegrams, and public statements. Constantine Menges, the senior director for Latin American affairs at the National Security Council, referred to it

¹⁶⁰ Nichols, John Spicer. "Cuba: the Congress; the power of the anti-Fidel lobby." *The Nation*, 24 Oct. 1988, p. 389+.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 390-391, 393.

¹⁶³ Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire.*; Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 393.; Kornbluh and LeoGrande, *Back Channel to Cuba*, 237-38.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 393.; Kornbluh and LeoGrande, *Back Channel to Cuba*, 237-38.

as a substantial foreign policy success at a CANF breakfast the following month because it put the Cuban government on notice.¹⁶⁶ He then outlined a four-point plan to deal with Cuba, including a public information campaign, isolating Cuba from the West, containing Cuba's activities abroad, and supporting Cuban democracy activists.¹⁶⁷ Cuban-American Otto Reich, the State Department's public diplomacy director, spoke on prerequisites Cuba must meet before normalizing relations.¹⁶⁸ They included democracy, improved human rights, payment for confiscated properties, the return of the Mariel excludables, and a response to drug trafficking charges.¹⁶⁹

1984

As the battle for the Hispanic vote intensified, the Reagan administration rewarded more South Florida Republicans. Jeb Bush, the son of Vice President George H.W. Bush, became the chairman of the Dade County Republican Party.¹⁷⁰ Cuban-American Tirso del Junco replaced Mexican-American Fernando C. de Baca as president of the Republican National Hispanic Assembly in 1983.¹⁷¹ Tirso del Junco chaired the

¹⁶⁶ Alfonso Chardy. "U.S. Official Outlines Plan To Isolate Havana Regime." *The Miami Herald*, November 29, 1983: A14.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Chardy. "U.S. Official Outlines Plan To Isolate Havana Regime."

¹⁷⁰ Bardach, *Cuba Confidential*, 315.; Norman D. Sandler. "Reagan warns of Soviet, Cuban 'power play'," United Press International, Washington News. March 19, 1984.

¹⁷¹ Bardach, *Cuba Confidential*, 315.; Sandler. "Reagan warns of Soviet, Cuban 'power play.'"; De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 121.; Edsall, "The Cuban Bloc Florida Anti-Communists Rally to GOP."

national for Viva '84 campaign and guided Cuban-American voter recruitment.¹⁷² The Republican Finance Committee invited CANF's Carlos Benitez to become one of its ten members.¹⁷³ Former CANF board member Carlos Perez headed Florida's Viva '84 campaign, a branch of the national GOP's Hispanic fundraising division.¹⁷⁴ The U.S. Government valued Cuban-Americans' contributions and wished to maintain this mutually beneficial relationship.

Administration officials and Voice of America leadership began hiring for the executive posts for Radio Marti in Washington and Miami, interviewing applicants at the CANF office and with Mas Canosa present at Miami interviews.¹⁷⁵ They tapped veteran newsman Emilio Milian to be the director with Humberto Medrano as vice director and Washington consultant Ernesto Betancourt as research director.¹⁷⁶ President Reagan nominated Jorge Mas Canosa to be the chairman of the bipartisan board of advisors for Radio Marti.¹⁷⁷ He also added Cuban-American and California Republican Tirso de Junco to the project.¹⁷⁸ Cuban exiles would dominate the decision-making of what information to transmit to Cuba.

¹⁷² De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 121.; Edsall, "The Cuban Bloc Florida Anti-Communists Rally to GOP."

¹⁷³ De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 121.

¹⁷⁴ Jay Ducassi. "Irate Cuban Exiles Question Fund-Raising Radio Marathon." *The Miami Herald*, March 8, 1984: C10.

¹⁷⁵ Jay Ducassi. "Radio Marti Moving Ahead On Hiring And Site." *The Miami Herald*, March 5, 1984: B1.

¹⁷⁶ Jay Ducassi. "Milian May Be Named Marti Head." *The Miami Herald*, February 21, 1984: B1.; Ducassi. "Radio Marti Moving Ahead On Hiring And Site."; Alfonso Chardy and Jay Ducassi. "Miamian To Head Radio Panel." *The Miami Herald*, June 1, 1984: A4.

¹⁷⁷ Chardy and Ducassi. "Miamian To Head Radio Panel."

¹⁷⁸ De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 118.

Walter Mondale became the Democratic candidate for President at the 1984 Democratic convention in San Francisco. However, he could not match Reagan's popularity. "The Great Communicator" beat Mondale in a landslide, winning 525 electoral votes to Mondale's thirteen. Reagan won 30 percent of the national Hispanic vote but 80 percent of the Cuban-American vote.¹⁷⁹ Cuban-Americans did not decide the overwhelming victory, but the 1984 election witnessed Cuban-Americans becoming a firm Republican voting bloc, especially in South Florida.¹⁸⁰

Migration Negotiations

The migration negotiations of 1984 resisted input from Cuban-American lobbying efforts.¹⁸¹ Officials from Cuba and the United States finally settled the most pronounced migration issues that plagued each country concerning the Mariel crisis. The United States wanted greater control over whom it allowed into the country, to ensure that it could deport whomever it chose and prevent another Mariel.¹⁸² Cuba wanted the United States to resume immigrant processing at the U.S. Interests Section, which the United States had scaled back since 1980.¹⁸³ Both wanted an end to the airplane hijackings.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹ De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 122-23.; Cody. "In Miami, It's 'Reagan, Si'; Cuban Americans Like White House Foreign Policy."

¹⁸⁰ R.A. Zaldivar. "Cuban Voters' Growing Clout Poses Political Problems For Pepper." *The Miami Herald*, February 12, 1985: B1.

¹⁸¹ De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 117.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 117.; Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 398.

¹⁸⁴ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 397.

Initially, the United States requested Cuba to take back 789' excludables,' and a 1983 CANF-sponsored poll of Cuban-Americans showed that the majority felt that the 'excludables' should return to Cuba.¹⁸⁵ CANF opposed the deportations but could not convince the administration to grant 1500 Cuba political prisoners visas until Cuba agreed to take the Mariel' excludables.'¹⁸⁶ The final terms of the agreement stated that Cuba would accept 2,746' excludables,' while the United States would grant visas to up to 3,000 former political prisoners with their families and resume processing up to 20,000 visas per year in Havana.¹⁸⁷

Radio Marti On Air

Radio Marti finally hit the air on Cuban Independence Day, May 20, 1985.¹⁸⁸ Several government officials participated in CANF's celebration.¹⁸⁹ Ambassador Kirkpatrick spoke while others recorded messages for the event, including President Reagan, Senator Paula Hawkins, Senator Lawton Chiles, Representative Claude Pepper, and Representative Dante Fascell.¹⁹⁰ In response, Castro suspended the migration

¹⁸⁵ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 396-397.; Fabiola Santiago. "Cubans: Don't Release Jailed Mariel Refugees." *The Miami Herald*, November 13, 1983: D3.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.; De Los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 118.

¹⁸⁷ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 399.; Kornbluh and LeoGrande, *Back Channel to Cuba*, 242.; Nery Ynclan and Barbara Gutierrez. "Immigration Pact With Cuba Stirs Fears, Hopes." *The Miami Herald*, December 14, 1984: A28.

¹⁸⁸ Kornbluh and LeoGrande, *Back Channel to Cuba*, 245.

¹⁸⁹ R.A. Zaldivar. "Radio Marti Will Start Beaming To Cuba Monday, Senators Say." *The Miami Herald*, May 19, 1985: A1.

¹⁹⁰ Zaldivar. "Radio Marti Will Start Beaming To Cuba Monday, Senators Say."; Marc Fisher. "Kirkpatrick Criticizes Congress For Voting Against Aid To Contras." *The Miami Herald*, May 19, 1985: 6A.

agreement and the accords of the 1978 Dialogue, disallowing Cuban-American visits to Cuba.¹⁹¹

The tit-for-tat escalated. In June, the United States announced that it would no longer accept legal Cuban migrants, including ones already granted visas.¹⁹² Cubans escaped to third countries (e.g., Panama, Costa Rica, Venezuela) while waiting for the United States to start granting visas again. Because most only had third-country travel visas, they could not work in these countries but could not risk returning to Cuba. Many waited for years in a state of limbo. Cuban exiles urged the United States to expedite visas for Cuban exiles waiting in third countries. CANF collected \$202,000 from 9,000 donors in their first annual radio campaign for third-country Cubans.¹⁹³

That summer, CANF circulated to Washington lawmakers an options paper of suggested policies for hardening U.S. policy toward Cuba, such as suspending most Cuban-American travel to Cuba, closing the U.S. Interests Section, ending cultural exchanges, and creating TV Marti.¹⁹⁴ In October, Reagan issued Proclamation 5377,

¹⁹¹ Kornbluh and LeoGrande, *Back Channel to Cuba*, 246.

¹⁹² Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire.*; Sandra Dibble and Jose De Cordoba. "U.S. May Cut Off Visas To Immigrating Cubans." *The Miami Herald*, June 12, 1985: 1A.

¹⁹³ Lourdes Meluza. "Exiles Lobby For Entry Of New Refugees." *The Miami Herald*, November 26, 1985: 3B.; Sandra Dibble. "Latin Listeners Open Hearts To Airwave Appeals." *The Miami Herald*, December 15, 1985: AA1.; Tina Montalvo. "Radio Fund-Raiser To Help Cubans In Third Countries." *The Miami Herald*, December 10, 1987: C6.; Carlos Harrison And Beatriz Parga. "Broadcasters Rally For Cubans In Third Countries." *The Miami Herald*, December 15, 1987: 1C.; Mirta Ojito. "Cuban Exiles Get Gifts From Miami." *The Miami Herald*, December 18, 1987: C4.; Sandra Dibble. "Exiles Dig Deep To Aid Comrades." *The Miami Herald*, October 4, 1988: B1.; Mirta Ojito. "Pledges For 3rd-Nation Cubans Could Raise Quota." *The Miami Herald*, October 5, 1988: D3.

¹⁹⁴ R.A. Zaldivar. "Curb Travel To Cuba, Group Asks Congress." *The Miami Herald*, August 28, 1985: A8.

banning all Cuban government officials from entering the United States.¹⁹⁵ Eighteen members of the Florida congressional delegation urged Reagan to adopt recommendations like CANF's in a December letter.¹⁹⁶

1986 Midterm Elections

Vice President George H.W. Bush spoke at CANF's 1986 Cuban Independence Day celebration and the first anniversary of Radio Marti. He cited cases of human rights abuses in Cuba, promoted aid for the contras, and lauded the "Cuban miracle" of exile success.¹⁹⁷ That day, Florida Senator Lawton Chiles requested that the United States Information Agency (USIA) explore broadcasting television signals to Cuba on a trial basis.¹⁹⁸ The State Department also released a human rights report on Cuba.¹⁹⁹

Cuba released twenty-seven political prisoners that summer.²⁰⁰ The Reagan administration announced that it would not grant political asylum to the released prisoners unless Cuba agreed to reinstate the migration agreement.²⁰¹ CANF and other

¹⁹⁵ Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire.*; R.A. Zaldivar. "U.S. Sharply Cuts Visits By Cubans." *The Miami Herald*, October 9, 1985: A6.

¹⁹⁶ R.A. Zaldivar. "18 Florida Lawmakers Urge Reagan: Slap Castro Harder." *The Miami Herald*, December 6, 1985: A14.

¹⁹⁷ Tom Fiedler. "Bush Rips Castro's Repression Says He Destroys Economy, Culture." *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 1986: A1.

¹⁹⁸ "Chiles: Beam TV To Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, May 29, 1986: A9.

¹⁹⁹ Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire.*

²⁰⁰ Jose De Cordoba. "Reports Identify 19 Freed Cubans U.S. Urged To Take Castro Foes." *The Miami Herald*, June 7, 1986: A8.

²⁰¹ Lourdes Meluza. "Hispanics Denounce Asylum Stand." *The Miami Herald*, June 11, 1986: B1.

Cuban groups pressured the administration to change the “immoral” policy.²⁰² Reagan publicly expressed measured disagreement with the asylum decisions before traveling to Miami for Senator Paula Hawkins’ campaign.²⁰³ The State Department soon reversed the policy.²⁰⁴ The new policy would admit the prisoners for whom marine biologist Jacques Cousteau had secured the release and seventy-five others for whom Cuba’s Catholic bishops advocated.²⁰⁵ Representative Claude Pepper and Senator Lawton Chiles attained the visas.²⁰⁶ Initially, Washington planned to trade the Mariel excludables for Cuban political prisoners; now that Washington agreed to accept the prisoners regardless, they had to find another way to leverage Castro to accept concessions.²⁰⁷

Negotiators from the United States and Cuba met in Mexico in July to no avail.²⁰⁸ The U.S. delegates believed that the only way to extract concessions from Castro was to block immigration from Cuba, which had historically provided a safety valve for Castro.²⁰⁹ On August 22, 1986, President Reagan announced Proclamation 5517.²¹⁰ The

²⁰² Lourdes Meluza. "Exile Leaders Plan Asylum Policy Protest." *The Miami Herald*, June 12, 1986: C10.

²⁰³ Franklin *Cuba and the U.S. Empire.*; R.A. Zaldivar. "U.S. Agency Urges Visas For Cubans Reverses Stand On Castro Foes." *The Miami Herald*, June 25, 1986: A1.

²⁰⁴ Zaldivar. "U.S. Agency Urges Visas For Cubans Reverses Stand On Castro Foes."

²⁰⁵ Zaldivar. "U.S. Agency Urges Visas For Cubans Reverses Stand On Castro Foes."; R.A. Zaldivar. "U.S. Speeds Cuba Prisoner Admission." *The Miami Herald*, July 26, 1986: A1.

²⁰⁶ Zaldivar. "U.S. Agency Urges Visas For Cubans Reverses Stand On Castro Foes."

²⁰⁷ Fabiola Santiago and Lourdes Meluza. "Crusade For Cuban Prisoners Pays Off Politics Wins Over Policy In Dispute." *The Miami Herald*, August 24, 1986: A1.

²⁰⁸ Kornbluh and LeoGrande, *Back Channel to Cuba*, 247.

²⁰⁹ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 412.

²¹⁰ "Proclamation 5517 -- Suspension of Cuban Immigration | Ronald Reagan." Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/proclamation-5517-suspension-cuban-immigration>.

compromise stipulated that the United States would accept all Cuban political prisoners that spent at least ten years in Cuban jails and stop issuing U.S. visas to Cubans in third countries until Cuba agreed to accept the excludables.²¹¹ Former Cuban prisoners began arriving in Miami less than a month later.²¹²

A South Florida coalition headed to Washington in mid-September to champion improving the U.S. immigration policy for Cubans.²¹³ They requested meetings with Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) Commissioner Alan Nelson, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs Elliot Abrams, and Florida's congressional delegation to advocate admitting stateless Cuban migrants in third countries like Panama and political prisoners that served less than ten years.²¹⁴ CANF sponsored former political prisoner Armando Valladares's memoir promotion tour around the country and Washington to testify about the situation prisoners faced.²¹⁵ By the beginning of October, the State Department resumed issuing visas to third-country Cubans who could prove they left Cuba before August 22, 1986.²¹⁶ Additionally, the U.S. mission to the United

²¹¹ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 412-13.; Lourdes Meluza. "U.S. To Take Cubans Held For 10 Years." *The Miami Herald*, August 23, 1986: A1.

²¹² Richard Wallace and Lourdes Meluza. "Joy, Tears Greet 111 Cubans Prisoners, Relatives Welcomed." *The Miami Herald*, September 16, 1986: A1.

²¹³ Guillermo Martinez. "Fair Immigration Policy Is A Common Cause." *The Miami Herald*, September 18, 1986: A31.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Lourdes Meluza. "Book Gives Cuban Author Celebrity Status." *The Miami Herald*, September 20, 1986: A13.

²¹⁶ "Visas And Morality." *The Miami Herald*, October 5, 1986: C2.

Nations began its yearly campaign to convince the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in Geneva to condemn Cuba for its abuses, including its prisoners' treatment.²¹⁷

Cuban-American voters helped decide the 1986 midterm elections. The *Miami Herald* surmised, "In South Florida today, Cuban Americans are the Republican Party."²¹⁸ Republican Bob Martinez, a non-Cuban who grew up among Tampa's Cubans, became governor of Florida. Paula Hawkins lost her U.S. Senate seat to Bob Graham. Floridians reelected Representatives Dante Fascell and Claude Pepper. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and her husband, Dexter Lehtinen, became Florida State Senators.²¹⁹ Florida Governor Bob Martinez promoted Jeb Bush from Dade Republican Chairman to Secretary of Commerce; former CANF founding member and director Carlos Salman replaced Bush as chairman.²²⁰

The Iran-Contra Affair

The Reagan Doctrine emphasized the need to counter Soviet influence around the world.²²¹ He appealed to Congress to support his Central American initiatives to combat

²¹⁷ Kornbluh and LeoGrande, *Back Channel to Cuba*, 247.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Guillermo Martinez. "Locally, Cuban Americans Are The GOP." *The Miami Herald*, November 20, 1986: A29.

²²⁰ Bardach, *Cuba Confidential*, 317; Luis Feldstein Soto. "Salman Likely To Be Elected GOP Chairman." *The Miami Herald*, December 11, 1986: 2C.

²²¹ NSDD 71; NSDD 75; "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union - February 1985 | Ronald Reagan." Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/address-joint-session-congress-state-union-february-1985>.

the “Cuban-Soviet bloc” aiding Nicaragua.²²² The Cuban-American director of the State Department’s Office of Public Diplomacy from 1983 until 1985, Otto Reich, oversaw promoting the administration’s goals for Central America.²²³ Privately, Mas Canosa and CANF allegedly aided illegal, clandestine Contra operations.²²⁴ One culprit, Luis Posada Carriles, had been serving time in Venezuela for his alleged part in bombing a 1976 Cuban airline flight.²²⁵ Jeb Bush, Jorge Mas Canosa, and influential Miami Cubans purportedly helped Posada escape jail in 1985; they then recruited him and Felix Ismael Rodriguez.²²⁶ Oliver North directed Mas Canosa, Posada, and Rodriguez, who had all worked with the CIA to varying degrees since the Bay of Pigs invasion.²²⁷ Contras, the CIA, and Cuban exiles secretly trained, strategized, and coordinated covert aid in Miami.²²⁸ When the White House could not garner sufficient Congressional support to send aid to the Contras in Nicaragua, administration officials used them to funnel money and arms surreptitiously through Iran.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Bardach, *Cuba Confidential*, 200.

²²⁴ Bardach, *Cuba Confidential*, 142.

²²⁵ Gugliotta and Dillon. "How Jail Escapee Joined Rebels' Supply Network."

²²⁶ Dibble. "Miamian Tied To Anti-Sandinistas Bay Of Pigs Veteran Once Helped Track Down Che Guevara."; Gugliotta and Dillon. "How Jail Escapee Joined Rebels' Supply Network."

²²⁷ Dibble. "Miamian Tied To Anti-Sandinistas Bay Of Pigs Veteran Once Helped Track Down Che Guevara."; Guy Gugliotta and Sam Dillon. "How Jail Escapee Joined Rebels' Supply Network." *The Miami Herald*, November 2, 1986: A1.

²²⁸ Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire*.

Otto Reich had already been serving as U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela for three months when the Iran-Contra Affair became public in October 1986.²²⁹ Sandinistas captured U.S. citizen Eugene Hasenfus, who revealed that Rodriguez and Posada managed arms shipments to the Contras.²³⁰ As investigations unfolded, officials left the National Security Council (NSC).²³¹ Jose Sorzano, the president of CANF since 1985, resigned after the 1986 midterms to serve as NSC Director for Inter-American Affairs.²³² All of the Cubans involved escaped indictment.

Meanwhile, government officials pursued efforts to condemn Cuba's human rights record via international organizations. CANF created the International Coalition for Human Rights in Cuba with NED funding.²³³ The United States introduced a U.N. General Assembly resolution condemning Cuba in 1986 and credited CANF for helping.²³⁴ CANF helped fund Armando Valladares and other former Cuban prisoners' March 1987 trip to attend the U.N. Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) with the

²²⁹ Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire*.; R.A. Zaldivar. "Miami Cubans Build Powerful Lobby Group." *The Miami Herald*, August 11, 1986: A1.; R.A. Zaldivar. "Latin Chief Sees NSC Job As Challenge." *The Miami Herald*, December 19, 1986: A13.

²³⁰ Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire*.

²³¹ Aaron Epstein and Owen Ullmann. "President Is Seeking Immunity For Two." *The Miami Herald*, December 17, 1986: A4.; R.A. Zaldivar. "Latin Chief Sees NSC Job As Challenge." *The Miami Herald*, December 19, 1986: A13.; Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 412.

²³² R.A. Zaldivar. "Miami Cubans Build Powerful Lobby Group." *The Miami Herald*, August 11, 1986: A1.; R.A. Zaldivar. "Latin Chief Sees NSC Job As Challenge." *The Miami Herald*, December 19, 1986: A13.

²³³ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 415.

²³⁴ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 415.

U.S. delegation.²³⁵ The commission rejected a U.S. resolution to condemn Cuba in 1987.²³⁶

Ambassador Reich purportedly secured Orlando Bosch's acquittal and prison release in August 1987.²³⁷ Reich sought a U.S. travel visa for Bosch, but Bosch flew to Miami on December 7, 1987, before INS denied the visa.²³⁸ INS detained him, and the Cuban exile community defended him. Mas Canosa, state Senator Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, and Jeb Bush called him a "freedom fighter," not a "terrorist." The Deputy U.S. Attorney General and the Attorney General rejected Bosch's request for political asylum.²³⁹ President George H. W. Bush overruled them, expedited Bosch's release in 1990, and granted him citizenship in 1992.²⁴⁰

Cubans in Limbo

In autumn 1987, supporters of CANF's Cuban Exodus Relief Fund traveled to Washington to lobby for Cubans waiting for U.S. visas in third countries.²⁴¹ On October

²³⁵ Lourdes Meluza and Luis Feldstein Soto. "Victims Of Castro's Jails To Lobby U.N. In Geneva." *The Miami Herald*, February 26, 1987: A1.; John Arnold. "Geneva Trip Gave Former Prisoners A Forum At Last." *The Miami Herald*, April 27, 1987: C3.

²³⁶ Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire.*; Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 416.

²³⁷ Bardach, *Cuba Confidential*, 201.; Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire*.

²³⁸ Bardach, *Cuba Confidential*, 201-202.; Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire*.

²³⁹ Bardach, *Cuba Confidential*, 202-203.

²⁴⁰ Bardach, *Cuba Confidential*, 203.

²⁴¹ "Exiles To Lobby For Third-Country Immigration." *The Miami Herald*, September 25, 1987: C1.

8, the Senate passed an amendment to facilitate their immigration.²⁴² At the time, the State Department had 5,491 pending Cuban visas, and CANF estimated that there were 10,000-12,000 more Cubans who did not meet U.S. immigration requirements.²⁴³ The Cuban Exodus Relief Fund arranged caravans for supporters to protest and meet with officials in Washington.²⁴⁴ Senators Lawton Chiles, Senator Bob Graham, Representatives Larry Smith, and Representative Dante Fascell spoke at the demonstration.²⁴⁵

At a U.S.-Cuba meeting in November 1987, Cuba agreed to reinstate the migration agreement and accept Mariel excludables if the United States compromised on Radio Marti and resumed visa processing.²⁴⁶ Cuba and the United States revived the immigration pact on November 20, 1987.²⁴⁷ The United States had detained and denied due process to many Mariel inmates since 1980. The news that the U.S. government would deport 2,545 Mariel detainees upset many Cuban-Americans.²⁴⁸ People opposed

²⁴² Tina Montalvo. "Senate Votes To Ease Cuban Immigration Change Would Aid Third-Country Exiles." *The Miami Herald*, October 8, 1987: A1.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ "Exiles To Lobby For Third-Country Immigration."; Montalvo. "Senate Votes To Ease Cuban Immigration Change Would Aid Third-Country Exiles."; Tina Montalvo. "Cuban Exiles Rallying In D.C." *The Miami Herald*, October 14, 1987: B2.; Tina Montalvo. "Exiles Hope D.C. Bus Trip Is Ticket To Family Reunions." *The Miami Herald*, October 15, 1987: B1.; Tina Montalvo. "Meeting, Speeches Give Hope Of Family Reunions Someday." *The Miami Herald*, October 16, 1987: C1.

²⁴⁵ Montalvo. "Meeting, Speeches Give Hope Of Family Reunions Someday."

²⁴⁶ Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire.*; Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 413-414.; Kornbluh and LeoGrande, *Back Channel to Cuba*, 247-48.

²⁴⁷ Andres Viglucci And Christopher Marquis. "Some Cuban Exiles Decry Plan To Deport Detainees Key Group Applauds New Accord." *The Miami Herald*, November 21, 1987: A1.; "Reaction To The Agreement." *The Miami Herald*, November 21, 1987: A1.

²⁴⁸ Rodrigo Lazo And Tina Montalvo. "Exiles Headed For Washington To Protest Inmates' Deportation." *The Miami Herald*, November 23, 1987: A1.

making any deals with Cuba.²⁴⁹ The inmates' relatives and Catholic clergy rejected resigning them to an uncertain fate in communist Cuba.²⁵⁰ "We're refugees from a Communist country," stated one detainee. "The U.S. should save people from communism, not send them back."²⁵¹ The detainees' supporters protested in Washington, D.C.²⁵² Within days, CANF went from framing the renewal of the immigration pact as a "tremendous concession" to refusing to support the Mariel inmates' deportation after realizing the full scope of consequences.²⁵³ Foundation executive director Jose Antonio Font said, "They cannot simply be tools of our foreign policy."²⁵⁴ CANF suggested restricting the list of deportees and helped arrange meetings between relatives and Congress.²⁵⁵

Mariel prisoners rioted in Oakdale, Louisiana, and Atlanta, Georgia, when they heard the news.²⁵⁶ Starting on November 21, they took 122 hostages between the two

²⁴⁹ Viglucci and Marquis. "Some Cuban Exiles Decry Plan To Deport Detainees Key Group Applauds New Accord."

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ojito and Gillis. "Tensions Easing In Atlanta 4 Hostages Released."

²⁵² Lazo and Montalvo. "Exiles Headed For Washington To Protest Inmates' Deportation."

²⁵³ Viglucci and Marquis. "Some Cuban Exiles Decry Plan To Deport Detainees Key Group Applauds New Accord."; "Reaction To The Agreement."; Lazo and Montalvo. "Exiles Headed For Washington To Protest Inmates' Deportation."; Feldstein Soto, Luis. "Restrict Deportation List, Foundation Says." *The Miami Herald*, November 24, 1987: A9.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Feldstein Soto. "Restrict Deportation List, Foundation Says."; Lazo and Montalvo. "Exiles Headed For Washington To Protest Inmates' Deportation."

²⁵⁶ Feldstein Soto. "Restrict Deportation List, Foundation Says."

prisons.²⁵⁷ Atlanta alone had 94 hostages and 1,119 Mariel inmates.²⁵⁸ Other Cuban-Americans reevaluated their attitudes toward the Mariel detainees.²⁵⁹ A 1983 CANF poll showed that most exiles favored returning the excludables to Cuba, but now the prisoners were martyrs, risking everything to stay.²⁶⁰ Many exiles feared the consequences for Cuban immigrants; some feared the standoff would harm Cuban-Americans' image.²⁶¹

Esteemed Cuban-Americans soon descended on the prisons to negotiate the hostages' release. Auxiliary Bishop Agustin Roman mediated between prisoners and authorities in the Oakdale prison first.²⁶² The detainees in Oakdale reached a tentative agreement and began to release hostages.²⁶³ Bishop Roman continued his mediations with other representatives and officials in Washington, D.C.²⁶⁴ Carlos Arboleya and Ralph Penalver accompanied Bishop Roman in Washington.²⁶⁵ Jorge Mas Canosa and former

²⁵⁷ Zaldivar, R.A. "Progress Reported." *The Miami Herald*, November 27, 1987: A1.

²⁵⁸ Justin Gillis And Rodrigo Lazo. "Miamians Rebuffed In Atlanta Suarez Leads Delegation To Prison." *The Miami Herald*, November 28, 1987: B1.; Mirta Ojito And Justin Gillis. "Tensions Easing In Atlanta 4 Hostages Released." *The Miami Herald*, November 30, 1987: A15.

²⁵⁹ Feldstein Soto, Luis. "Exiles Decide To Embrace Mariel Inmates Prisoners Go From Outcasts To Martyrs." *The Miami Herald*, December 1, 1987: D1.; R.A. Zaldivar. "Scenes Shifting In Detainee Drama." *The Miami Herald*, December 5, 1987: A1.

²⁶⁰ Santiago. "Cubans: Don't Release Jailed Mariel Refugees."; Feldstein Soto. "Exiles Decide To Embrace Mariel Inmates Prisoners Go From Outcasts To Martyrs."

²⁶¹ Tina Montalvo and Luis Feldstein Soto. "'I'm Going To Atlanta,' Bishop Says." *The Miami Herald*, November 26, 1987: D1.

²⁶² Montalvo and Feldstein Soto. "'I'm Going To Atlanta,' Bishop Says."; Martin Merzer. "Uprisings Forced Cuban Dilemma Into The Spotlight." *The Miami Herald*, December 6, 1987: A1.

²⁶³ Zaldivar. "Progress Reported."; Gladys Nieves And Robert L. Steinback. "Leaders Offer Aid." *The Miami Herald*, November 27, 1987: A1.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Nieves And Steinback. "Leaders Offer Aid."; David Satterfield. "Banker Doesn't Balk At Controversy." *The Miami Herald*, December 7, 1987: BM9.

Cuban political prisoners Roberto Martin Perez and Armando Valladares arrived in Atlanta to meet with three inmate representatives.²⁶⁶

Fifteen more leaders of the Cuban-American community arrived in Atlanta separately. This delegation included: State Sen. Ileana Rosa-Lehtinen; State Rep. Roberto Casas; State Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart; Sweetwater Mayor Isidoro Cuevas; West Miami Mayor Pedro Reboledo; Reps. Javier Souto, Luis Morse, and Roberto Casas; Metro Commission Jorge Valdes; ex-political prisoners Huber Matos and Alberto Muller; Antonio de Varona, president of the Cuban Patriotic Board; and former Cuban diplomat and political prisoner Dr. Andres Vargas Gomez.²⁶⁷ This group was not allowed to enter the prison.²⁶⁸ Radio news direction Tomas Garcia Fuste traveled back and forth between Atlanta and Miami.²⁶⁹

Mas, Martin Perez, and Valladares stayed to negotiate as the standoff continued. The prisoners finally released the hostages on December 4, but the inmates' fates remained uncertain.²⁷⁰ By then, there were thirty injuries and one death.²⁷¹ Cuban exile leaders pledged to continue working in their interests in Washington in conjunction with

²⁶⁶ Zaldivar. "Progress Reported."; Nieves And Steinback. "Leaders Offer Aid."

²⁶⁷ Nieves And Steinback. "Leaders Offer Aid."; Richard Wallace And Celia Dugger. "Many Eager For Chance To Be Crisis Negotiators." *The Miami Herald*, November 28, 1987: 1A.; Justin Gillis And Rodrigo Lazo. "Miamians Rebuffed In Atlanta Suarez Leads Delegation To Prison." *The Miami Herald*, November 28, 1987: B1.

²⁶⁸ Wallace And Dugger. "Many Eager For Chance To Be Crisis Negotiators."; Gillis And Lazo. "Miamians Rebuffed In Atlanta Suarez Leads Delegation To Prison."

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ R.A. Zaldivar. "Scenes Shifting In Detainee Drama." *The Miami Herald*, December 5, 1987: A1.; Gillis, Justin. "Inmate Minority Blocks Deal." *The Miami Herald*, December 1, 1987: A1.

²⁷¹ Gillis. "Inmate Minority Blocks Deal."

groups like the American Civil Liberties Union, and they would all receive a review of their cases.²⁷² The Justice Department appointed Tomas Garcia Fuste, Mas Canosa, Valladares, and Auxiliary Bishop Roman to the six-person panel overseeing the settlement's implementation.²⁷³ In December 1988, Miami Cubans had mixed reactions as INS deported five Mariel inmates for the first time since May 1985.²⁷⁴

Meanwhile, prominent Cuban-Americans participated in policy talks in Washington regarding third-country Cubans.²⁷⁵ The Cuban American National Foundation negotiated an agreement with the State Department in which the Foundation would absorb all refugee resettlement expenses for two years if the government provided visas.²⁷⁶ When they resumed the paused discussions after the prison hostage situation, the State Department offered to admit 1,500 former political prisoners, but CANF wanted them to accept third-country Cubans too.²⁷⁷ CANF estimated that 7,000 Cubans were waiting to migrate to the United States from other countries.²⁷⁸ They finalized the

²⁷² Zaldivar. "Scenes Shifting In Detainee Drama."

²⁷³ Grimm, Fred. "U.S. Takes Control Of Prison Inmates Searched, Bused Out." *The Miami Herald*, December 5, 1987: A1.; R.A. Zaldivar. "Roman Joins Talks About Case Reviews." *The Miami Herald*, December 8, 1987: B1.; David Hancock. "U.S. May Deport 15 Mariel Cubans Inmate Advocates In Miami, Atlanta To Ask Judge To Halt Move." *The Miami Herald*, November 17, 1988: A1.

²⁷⁴ Hancock. "U.S. May Deport 15 Mariel Cubans Inmate Advocates In Miami, Atlanta To Ask Judge To Halt Move."; Jacquelyn Swearingen And David Hancock. "Deportees Get 72-Hour Notice 15 Cubans Ordered Returned Lawyers Granted 3 Days To Appeal." *The Miami Herald*, November 18, 1988: A1.; Lourdes Fernandez. "Cuba Under Castro: 30 Stormy Years." *The Miami Herald*, December 25, 1988: A22.

²⁷⁵ "Local." *The Miami Herald*, December 2, 1987: B2.; "Talks To Help Cubans Abroad Bog Down." *The Miami Herald*, December 3, 1987: C5.

²⁷⁶ Christopher Marquis. "Cuban Refugees In 3rd Nations May Join Influx." *The Miami Herald*, November 22, 1987: A15.

²⁷⁷ "Talks To Help Cubans Abroad Bog Down."

²⁷⁸ Mirta Ojito. "U.S. May Let In Cubans Living In 3rd Countries." *The Miami Herald*, May 20, 1988: A1.

unprecedented agreement in June 1988.²⁷⁹ The Foundation resettled the migrants, but the U.S. Government determined who could migrate and when.²⁸⁰ The nonprofit Cuban Exodus Relief Fund began Operation Exodus in September 1988.²⁸¹ They rescued 671 Cubans in the first wave and funded their transportation and cost of living expenses via donations.²⁸² Operation Exodus aimed to sponsor 1500 by the end of the year.²⁸³

TV Marti

Government agencies, elected representatives, and the Cuban-American community argued over Radio Marti's personnel issues, the degree of control Betancourt and Mas Canosa exerted, and the station's role.²⁸⁴ Critics accused Radio Marti of being

²⁷⁹ "Out Of Limbo." *The Miami Herald*, June 21, 1988: A10.; David Hancock. "Private Aid Brings 700 Cubans To Miami." *The Miami Herald*, September 4, 1988: A1.

²⁸⁰ Mirta Ojito. "Refugee Selection Questioned Some In Costa Rica Left Off Interview List." *The Miami Herald*, August 7, 1988: A20.; Mirta Ojito. "Cubans In Costa Rica Get OK For U.S. Entry." *The Miami Herald*, August 20, 1988: A9.; "Miami Ailing Cuban First To Come Under Pact." *The Miami Herald*, August 31, 1988: B3.

²⁸¹ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 414.; Santiago, Ana. "Immigration Starts For Cubans In 3rd Nations." *The Miami Herald*, July 24, 1988: B1.; Mirta Ojito. "Cubans In Costa Rica 'Nervous, Happy' Years In Limbo May Come To End." *The Miami Herald*, August 4, 1988: A20.; Polk Laffoon. "Dialogue Is Deepening For Cubans, Americans." *The Miami Herald*, September 4, 1988: G2.; Chardy, Alfonso. "Cuban Exiles Exodo: Festival Will Commemorate Anniversary Of Cuban American National Foundation's Exodo." *The Miami Herald*, September 21, 2008: B1.

²⁸² Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 414.; Tina Montalvo. "Radio Fund-Raiser To Help Cubans In Third Countries." *The Miami Herald*, December 10, 1987: C6.; "Dade County NAACP, 7-Eleven Head Vote Drive." *The Miami Herald*, August 30, 1988: B2.; Rodrigo Lazo. "First 3rd-Nation Cubans Arrive But Illness Tempers Joy Of Family's Airport Reunion." *The Miami Herald*, September 4, 1988: B1.; David Hancock. "Stranded Cubans' Wait Nearly Over." *The Miami Herald*, September 10, 1988: D1.; Lourdes Fernandez. "3rd-Country Cuban Dies 6 Days After U.S. Arrival." *The Miami Herald*, September 10, 1988: D1.; "A Win-Win Situation." *The Miami Herald*, September 11, 1988: C2.

²⁸³ Sandra Dibble. "100 More Stranded Cubans Expected." *The Miami Herald*, September 13, 1988: B1.; "Nursing Chief Pleads Not Guilty To Trying To Kill Ailing Baby." *The Miami Herald*, September 28, 1988: B2.; David Hancock. "Private Resettlement Called A Success." *The Miami Herald*, October 11, 1988: B1.

²⁸⁴ R.A. Zaldivar. "Radio Marti: Internal Static." *The Miami Herald*, January 4, 1988: A1.

too expensive and gathering intelligence on the Cuban government.²⁸⁵ Different Radio Marti studies produced conflicting results, but a Hill and Knowlton survey determined that many Cuban islanders listened to the station and considered it credible.²⁸⁶ Frank Calzon and Mas Canosa built momentum in Washington for a corresponding TV Marti.²⁸⁷ Florida Representatives introduced a bill in August 1987 for TV Marti, but it died in committee.²⁸⁸ Yet, Florida Senator Lawton Chiles managed to add funding for a TV Marti feasibility study to a massive appropriations bill.²⁸⁹ Mas Canosa chaired the Advisory Board for Radio Broadcasting to Cuba's 1988 feasibility study.²⁹⁰ Congress ultimately passed a massive appropriations bill that granted TV Marti a \$7.5 million start-up budget one month before the 1988 general election.²⁹¹

UNCHR

Valladares returned to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights meeting in Geneva in the spring of 1988. Demonstrators raised money, focused attention, and enlisted other

²⁸⁵ Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire.*; Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic.*

²⁸⁶ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic.*; R.A. Zaldivar. "Radio Marti: Internal Static." *The Miami Herald*, January 4, 1988: A1.

²⁸⁷ Franklin, *Cuba and the U.S. Empire.*; Volsky, George. "Ex-Reporter Says Radio Marti Spies," September 17, 1987. <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/09/17/world/ex-reporter-says-radio-marti-spies.html>.

²⁸⁸ Mica, Daniel Andrew. "Cosponsors - H.Con.Res.180 - 100th Congress (1987-1988): A Concurrent Resolution Entitled: 'TV Marti, An Open Window of Liberty' .," 1987. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/100th-congress/house-concurrent-resolution/180/cosponsors>.

²⁸⁹ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 439.; PL 100-102, 101 Stat. 1337, 22 December 1987.

²⁹⁰ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 439.

²⁹¹ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 439-40.; Title V of PL 100-459, 102 Stat. 2186, 1 October 1988; Jacquelyn Swearingen And David Hancock. "Congress: OK To Try TV Marti." *The Miami Herald*, September 29, 1988: A1.

countries to vote to condemn Cuba's human rights violations.²⁹² The resolution failed, but the commission agreed to investigate.²⁹³ However, Cuba gained a seat on the UNCHR in May.²⁹⁴ The Cuban government jailed twenty people whom the United Nations investigative contingent had questioned.²⁹⁵ Cuban dissident Ricardo Bofill provided their names to Valladares.²⁹⁶ Bofill defected in December that year.²⁹⁷

Disillusionment

After the Iran-Contra Affair, Reagan moderated his approach toward Latin America and the Caribbean. Cuban-Americans expressed disappointment that Reagan had softened his stance on Cuba over the years. Fifteen prominent Cuban exiles expressed their disappointment in the administration in a letter to U.N. Ambassador

²⁹² Carlos Harrison. "Rallies To Urge U.N. Action On Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, February 11, 1988: C2.; Luciano Garcia. "Protesters Seek U.N. Condemnation Of Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, February 19, 1988: D2.; "Miami International Airport 4 Charged With Smuggling Cocaine By Swallowing It." *The Miami Herald*, February 23, 1988: B2.; Dugger, Celia W. "Lepers Came To Florida On Boatlift." *The Miami Herald*, March 3, 1988: A13.

²⁹³ "Reaction To Compromise." *The Miami Herald*, March 11, 1988: A6.; Nieves, Gladys. "Cuban Americans Split On Compromise." *The Miami Herald*, March 11, 1988: A6.; "Miami Man Shot By Officer Dies 6 Years Later." *The Miami Herald*, September 1, 1988: B3.; Peter Slevin. "U.N. Human Rights Team Begins To Craft Report On Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, November 3, 1988: A16.; Liz Balmaseda. "The Ironic Diplomacy Of Armando Valladares Human Rights Ambassador Has Turned Against Some Who Share His Hatred For Castro." *The Miami Herald*, October 7, 1990: H5.

²⁹⁴ Mary Voboril. "Cuba, Panama Win Seats On Human Rights Panel." *The Miami Herald*, May 27, 1988: A1.

²⁹⁵ R.A. Zaldivar. "Dissident: Cuba Jailed 28 Queried By Rights Panel." *The Miami Herald*, November 29, 1988: A8.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Christopher Marquis. "Hero's Welcome Eludes Cuban Rights Leader." *The Miami Herald*, December 6, 1988: A1.

Vernon Walters dated February 29, 1987.²⁹⁸ By 1988, CANF and its associated PAC and lobby had an annual budget of \$1.7 million and had successfully lobbied on behalf of Angolan rebel support, Radio Marti, political appointees, Cuban political prisoners, and more.²⁹⁹ Still, Raul Masvidal felt that the administration distanced itself from CANF after establishing Radio Marti.³⁰⁰ The administration catered to CANF publicly but held secret, back-channel communications with the Cuban government.³⁰¹ Several months later, the community opposed the Reagan administration renewing the migration pact in secret and reducing its worldwide anti-communism efforts.³⁰² Members of the Cuban-American community rejected the November 1987 migration pact renewal because they said it legitimized the Castro government, undermined U.S. credibility, and altered Cuban emigres' status from political refugees to immigrants.³⁰³ Four Florida state legislators published an open letter to the president in *The Washington Times* on February 4, 1988, expressing concern about the administration's lack of progress on the Cuban cause.³⁰⁴ A CANF memo noted that the Reagan administration had recently opposed four

²⁹⁸ Alfonso Chardy. "Reagan 'Talked Tough But Acted Softly'." *The Miami Herald*, May 1, 1988: A22.

²⁹⁹ Dugger. "Cuban Lobby Scales To Top Of Capitol Hill."

³⁰⁰ Dugger, Celia W. "Cuban Lobby Scales To Top Of Capitol Hill." *The Miami Herald*, April 11, 1988: A1.; Chardy. "Disillusionment Is Growing Among Exiles Moves To Improve Relations Cause Trust In Reagan To Drop."

³⁰¹ Kornbluh and LeoGrande, *Back Channel to Cuba.*; Chardy. "Reagan 'Talked Tough But Acted Softly'."

³⁰² Feldstein Soto, Luis. "Exiles Decide To Embrace Mariel Inmates Prisoners Go From Outcasts To Martyrs.;" Alfonso Chardy. "Disillusionment Is Growing Among Exiles Moves To Improve Relations Cause Trust In Reagan To Drop." *The Miami Herald*, May 2, 1988: A1.

³⁰³ Chardy. "Disillusionment Is Growing Among Exiles Moves To Improve Relations Cause Trust In Reagan To Drop."

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

Congressional initiatives that would tighten the embargo.³⁰⁵ Mas Canosa claimed that it was the Treasury and State Departments hampering the president's initiatives.³⁰⁶ One Cuban diplomat noted that the administration "talked tough but acted softly."³⁰⁷ Former U.S. diplomat Wayne Smith described Reagan's Cuba policies as "smoke and mirrors."³⁰⁸

A divide emerged in the Cuban-American community between those who still supported the administration's efforts on Cuba, such as CANF, and those who felt Reagan was not doing enough, such as the people and organizations aligned with the Task Force of Cuban Civic Organizations.³⁰⁹ The task force submitted a letter of disapproval on April 6.³¹⁰ CANF released a set of policy proposals entitled *Towards a New U.S.-Cuba Policy*.³¹¹ It recommended abolishing the Kennedy-Khrushchev understanding that the United States would not attack Cuba so long as the Soviet Union agreed not to install nuclear missiles to Cuba, supporting anti-communist forces more, setting consequences for third countries dealing with Cuba, encouraging defections, and

³⁰⁵ Chardy. "Reagan 'Talked Tough But Acted Softly'."

³⁰⁶ Chardy. "Disillusionment Is Growing Among Exiles Moves To Improve Relations Cause Trust In Reagan To Drop."

³⁰⁷ Chardy. "Reagan 'Talked Tough But Acted Softly'."

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Chardy. "Disillusionment Is Growing Among Exiles Moves To Improve Relations Cause Trust In Reagan To Drop."

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Chardy. "Disillusionment Is Growing Among Exiles Moves To Improve Relations Cause Trust In Reagan To Drop."

tightening the embargo.³¹² In May, Jose Sorzano quit the National Security Council over the White House's decreasing support for the Contras and disagreements with other personnel.³¹³ By the end of May, even Mas Canosa expressed disappointment in Reagan.³¹⁴

The remainder of the Cuban-American community either (1) advocated more cooperation with Cuba or (2) were predominantly young, middle-class Cuban-Americans less interested in foreign policy.³¹⁵ The former felt that CANF did not represent them and disagreed with the "millionaire boys' club" policies.³¹⁶ They criticized CANF directors' self-serving politics locally, nationally, and internationally.³¹⁷ The Policy Alternatives for the Caribbean and Central America created a booklet of liberal policy proposals entitled *An Alternative U.S. Policy Toward Cuba*, encouraging greater engagement.³¹⁸ Miami psychologist Carmen Diaz founded the Cuban American Committee for Family Rights to advocate for family reunification.³¹⁹ Monsignor Bryan Walsh, the Catholic priest who ran

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Alfonso Chardy. "Cuban American Quits Reagan Post." *The Miami Herald*, May 17, 1988: A1.

³¹⁴ Christopher Marquis. "Mas Canosa: Deal Would Prolong Castro Stay." *The Miami Herald*, May 29, 1988: B1.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Dugger. "Cuban Lobby Scales To Top Of Capitol Hill."

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Chardy. "Disillusionment Is Growing Among Exiles Moves To Improve Relations Cause Trust In Reagan To Drop."

³¹⁹ Christopher Marquis. "Miami Group Rekindles Talk Of Closer Cuban Ties." *The Miami Herald*, October 10, 1988: A1.

Operation Peter Pan, supported family reunification efforts, as did at least 2000 others who attended a breakfast for the cause.³²⁰

Protests and violence increased with the frustration over Cuba policy. In May, conservative members of the Miami Cuban community called on the Cuban Museum of Arts and Culture board to resign for holding an auction with Cuban art, for which the museum was attacked with a pipe bomb.³²¹ Another pipe bomb hit the home of the organizer of a conference about improving relations with Cuba.³²² Hundreds demonstrated in Little Havana in June.³²³ They marched to free Orlando Bosch and protest thawing U.S.-Cuban relations.³²⁴ High profile politicians attended CANF's Congress to discuss the next step.³²⁵ In August, Reagan eased restrictions on informational and cultural materials from Cuba.³²⁶ Raul Masvidal and Carlos Salman tried to incorporate "The Republic of Cuba Inc." to preempt future investment in Cuba.³²⁷ Still, most Cuban-Americans preferred Republicans to Democrats.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Celia W. Dugger And Mirta Ojito. "Exile Groups Call For Rest Of Museum Board To Quit." *The Miami Herald*, May 12, 1988: D1.; Craig Gemoules And Celia W. Dugger. "Politicians Call For Museum Probe." *The Miami Herald*, May 13, 1988: C1.

³²² Alfonso Chardy. "Cuban American Group Told New Contra Vote Not Likely." *The Miami Herald*, June 13, 1988: A12.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ R.A. Zaldivar. "U.S. Eases Cuba Trade Restrictions New Law OKs Imports Of Recordings, Movies." *The Miami Herald*, August 25, 1988: A1.

³²⁷ Fred Tasker. "Free At Last? Banker Scores Bloodless Coup." *The Miami Herald*, September 5, 1988: C1.

By the end of Reagan's second term, 800,000 Cubans exiles immigrated to the United States since the Revolution.³²⁸ About a third of Miami-Dade residents, or approximately 560,000 people, were of Cuban descent.³²⁹ About one in five Miami Cubans arrived during or after Mariel.³³⁰ Cubans had become leaders in the Miami community, but only 6% of Miami Cubans owned their own companies.³³¹ Ironically, those in the community who favored more engagement with Cuba, even just with their families abroad, often felt the anti-communist hardliners silenced their dissent.³³² Younger generations born in the United States did not feel the same about Cuba as their predecessors.³³³ The Miami Cuban community was large and diverse, but non-Cubans still expected them to speak with one voice.

The 1988 Presidential Election

Paying respect to CANF became a requisite part of politicking in South Florida. Unofficial presidential candidate Sen. Bob Dole spoke at CANF's Cuban Independence Day celebration in May 1987.³³⁴ He advocated more economic pressure on Cuba and

³²⁸ Dugger, Celia W. "Exile Ties Deepen In New Miami." *The Miami Herald*, December 25, 1988: A1.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Herbert Buchsbaum. "Cubans Plan To Celebrate Freedom." *The Miami Herald*, May 20, 1987: B1.

introduced a bill to sanction those who trade with Cuba.³³⁵ Republican presidential candidate Jack Kemp stopped in Miami in late July 1987, and, with Jorge Mas Canosa and Armando Valladares by his side, he spoke at a University of Miami-sponsored event about the need to defeat communism and Castro.³³⁶

Prominent members of the Cuban-American community split their loyalties between George Herbert Walker Bush and Bob Dole.³³⁷ CANF risked losing influence in Washington if a Democrat won the presidential election that year, despite their many contributions to candidates in both major parties.³³⁸ Despite their frustration with Reagan, Cuban-Americans hoped for the best with Bush. After all, he was the Vice President, former CIA Director, and the father of South Florida-based Republican operative Jeb Bush. Eighty-six percent of Cuban-Americans voted for George H.W. Bush in the Florida primary.³³⁹ Bush defeated Democratic challenger Michael Dukakis in the November 1988 presidential election.

Cuban-Americans mourned the death of Ronald Reagan in 2004 and sought to memorialize him.³⁴⁰ *The Miami Herald* explained, "He alone seemed to share their anti-

³³⁵ Buchsbaum. "Cubans Plan To Celebrate Freedom."; Lee, Felicia R. "Dole: Put More Pressure On Castro." *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 1987: B1.

³³⁶ Reinaldo Ramos. "Kemp: Castro Must Be Defeated." *The Miami Herald*, July 29, 1987: A3.

³³⁷ "Who Prominent Floridians Are Backing For President." *The Miami Herald*, January 24, 1988: 20A.

³³⁸ Dugger. "Cuban Lobby Scales To Top Of Capitol Hill."

³³⁹ Chardy. "Disillusionment Is Growing Among Exiles Moves To Improve Relations Cause Trust In Reagan To Drop."

³⁴⁰ Santiago, Fabiola. "For Many in Miami, A Voice for Freedom." *The Miami Herald*, June 6, 2004: A1.; Kevin Deutsch and Fabiola Santiago. "In Broward, Reagan Inspired Leadership." *The Miami Herald*, June 6, 2004: A1.; Abrams, Jim. "Reagan Admirers Want His Picture on Currency." *The Miami Herald*, June 9, 2004: A5.; Daniel De Vise and Tere Figueras. "He Felt the Cuban Cause . . . In His Own Blood." *The*

Communist urgency and their domino-theory nightmares. Where other presidents saw zealotry and extremism, Reagan saw eye to eye.”³⁴¹ “We were the most militant anti-communists of any refugees from anywhere in the world. And Reagan in his heart knew that we were right, that you don’t fight communism with letters and diplomacy only,” said Lombardo Perez.³⁴² Although he commanded strong, majority support in the community, those who diverged from the hard-line felt differently. Referring to an environment inhospitable to pluralism that he and hardliners created, one Cuban-American, Manuel Dominguez, explained, “Reagan will be remembered with mixed feelings by a lot of Cuban Americans who still dare not speak.”³⁴³

Conclusion

The Cuban American National Foundation brought Cuban-American politics to the national stage. Within years of its 1981 founding, it dominated U.S. policies toward Cuba and laid the foundation for Cuban-American politicians’ rise. The ambitious Jorge Mas Canosa led the way. CANF helped inspire more Cuban-Americans to engage in domestic politics and foreign policy formation actively. They voted, donated, demonstrated, organized, lobbied, and ran for office.

Miami Herald, June 10, 2004: A16.; "Recalling Ronald Reagan's Attributes, Faults." *The Miami Herald*, June 11, 2004: A22.; "Quotes in The News." *The Miami Herald*, June 13, 2004: L1.

³⁴¹ De Vise and Figueras. "He Felt the Cuban Cause . . . In His Own Blood'."

³⁴² De Vise and Figueras. "He Felt the Cuban Cause . . . In His Own Blood'."

³⁴³ "Recalling Ronald Reagan's Attributes, Faults."

As Cuban-Americans asserted their agency in domestic U.S. politics and foreign policy, President Ronald Reagan fundamentally shaped the Republican Party's relationship with the Cuban-American community for decades to come. He recognized their potential as essential allies: ideological affiliation, economic power, growing numbers, increasing civic participation, and strategic location. He recognized Cuban-Americans' uniqueness, beyond the stereotypes of the title of "Hispanic" or "Latino," rather than succumbing to politicians' baser instincts of pander to a monolithic image of minority communities. He listened and addressed this tenacious community's specific concerns, and they rewarded his administration with support, votes, and donations. Republicans have reaped the benefits of this relationship ever since, especially in presidential campaigns seeking Florida electoral college votes.

CANF grew successfully due to Reagan's support, AIPAC guidance, the Cold War context, bipartisan lobbying, tenacious leadership, the Miami Cuban-American network, and the U.S. electoral system. CANF obtained national influence as local Miami Cuban politicians won more local offices, primarily with the GOP. Instead of trying to effect change in Cuba directly, they now used the power of the U.S. government to aid their mission to democratize Cuba. CANF's biggest achievements during the Reagan era were promoting Cuban-American politicians, Radio Marti, the Exodus program, mediating with Mariel inmates, and obtaining large National Endowment for Democracy grants. Cuban-Americans provided indispensable support to the Reagan administration during elections and regarding Reagan's Latin America policies, but their influence in the Reagan administration waned in the last couple of years. As with Reagan's successors, he

prioritized Cuban-American special interests less after he had finished all of his election campaigning.

Unfortunately, now that visits to the Cuban-American community have become standard during the campaign season, both Democrats and Republicans tend to base their approach to the community on a conservative exile stereotype. The community has never been a monolith, but demographic changes have loosened Republicans' grip on this traditional voting bloc. Democrats have always tended to take minority community votes for granted to the detriment of the party and voter participation. Republicans could face the same problems with Cuban-Americans if they continue to treat them as a given voting bloc. Both major parties would do well to take a page out of Reagan's playbook.

CHAPTER 3: GEORGE H. W. BUSH

Introduction

George Herbert Walker Bush ascended from Vice President to President of the United States on January 21, 1989. This gave Cuban-Americans several inroads to the White House. Jorge Mas Canosa had already developed contacts in Washington with the Cuban-American National Foundation. In addition, the president's son, Jeb Bush, was a South Florida Republican Party political fixture, whose business partner, Armando Codina, was a part of the Cuban-American business community.³⁴⁴

Although George H.W. Bush only served one term as President, it was a period full of major transitions in attitudes toward Cuba, in part brought on by the collapse of the Soviet Union. Five trends in Cuban-American foreign policy dominated this period: (1) the creation of more diverse organizations to represent the Cuban American community, (2) the rise of Cuban-American legislators at the national level, (3) the continued Mariel refugee resettlement and new refugees escaping a battered Cuban economy, (4) Congressional legislation supporting CANF priorities and (5) preparations for a potential transition in Cuba during the collapse of communism around the world. At the time, countries worldwide were transitioning to democracy after military juntas and communist dictatorships. The Cuban American National Foundation and its isolationist policies toward the Cuban regime overshadowed other organizations that formed to challenge CANF's authority over U.S. Cuba policy at this inflection point for Cuba. Bush's deep network with Cuban-Americans, the growing success of Cuban-

³⁴⁴ Alfonso Chardy and Tom Fiedler. "'Out' Bush Pals Soon to Be Back-Benchers." *The Miami Herald*, November 8, 1992: A27.

American elected officials, and other bipartisan CANF allies in Congress ensured support for CANF's agenda. These connections enabled CANF and its allies to advocate successfully for Cuban refugees when crises emerged. The end of the Cold War also meant that Cuba diminished as a security threat to the United States, so CANF could capitalize on lower-level decision-making.³⁴⁵

House Vacancy

Cuban-American politicians had increasing success throughout the eighties but had never won a national-level race. That changed in Bush's first year. Cuban-Americans had their first chance of gaining a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, which would allow them to be part of the policymaking process, not just influencers.

South Florida Representative Claude Pepper, who many in the Miami Cuban community considered a strong ally, died in office on May 30, 1989.³⁴⁶ The scramble to fill his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives began immediately, and friction between ethnicities soon followed.³⁴⁷ State Senator Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and businessman Carlos Perez entered the race on the Republican side.³⁴⁸ The Cuban American National Foundation soon endorsed Senator Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, but some individual members of

³⁴⁵ Schoutlz. *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic.*; Anonymous, interview by the author, March 27, 2018.

³⁴⁶ Ivan Roman and Richard Wallace. "Pepper's Diverse Constituency Grieves for a 'Wonderful Friend'." *The Miami Herald*, June 4, 1989: B1.

³⁴⁷ Ronnie Ramos. "Race Is on For Pepper's Seat." *The Miami Herald*, June 6, 1989: B1.; Luis Feldstein Soto and Tom Fiedler. "Irate Gordon Won't Seek Pepper Seat Cites Likelihood of Ethnic Friction." *The Miami Herald*, June 16, 1989: A1.; "Storm Warnings." *The Miami Herald*, June 17, 1989: A26.

³⁴⁸ Ramos. "Race Is on For Pepper's Seat." *The Miami Herald.*; Ronnie Ramos. "GOP's Front-Runner Confident, Conservative." *The Miami Herald*, July 26, 1989: B1.; Arzua, Lila. "Carlos Salman, 69, Active in Republican Politics." *The Miami Herald*, November 12, 2001: B4.

CANF supported former CANF director Carlos Perez.³⁴⁹ It was not the first time a Cuban-American had campaigned for a seat in U.S. Congress, but they wanted their first win.

Carlos Perez described the race as a referendum on CANF's political clout after Mas Canosa threw his weight behind Perez's opponent.³⁵⁰ People assumed that CANF essentially controlled exile politics, and Perez wanted to prove them wrong.³⁵¹ Ros-Lehtinen rebutted that her popularity exceeded CANF's endorsement.³⁵²

On August 29, 1989, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen won the election to become the first Cuban-American in the U.S. Congress.³⁵³ She won the primary in a landslide with 83% of the vote.³⁵⁴ She credited Spanish-language media for helping her win her election.³⁵⁵ She continued to keep them in the loop from her position in Washington.³⁵⁶ Having a Cuban-American be a part of the highest legislative body in the United States gave Ileana Ros-Lehtinen a direct voice in crafting policy and influencing colleagues.

³⁴⁹ "Local." *The Miami Herald*, June 13, 1989: B2.

³⁵⁰ Tom Fiedler. "Perez Calls Vote a Test of Mas Clout." *The Miami Herald*, June 26, 1989: B1.; Ramos. "Reaganite Perez Running as The People's Candidate."

³⁵¹ Fiedler. "Perez Calls Vote a Test of Mas Clout."; Ramos. "Reaganite Perez Running as The People's Candidate."

³⁵² Fiedler. "Perez Calls Vote a Test of Mas Clout."

³⁵³ "Local." *The Miami Herald*, August 31, 1989: B2.; Ronnie Ramos. "Contrasting Demands Await Ros-Lehtinen In Congress." *The Miami Herald*, September 3, 1989: A1.

³⁵⁴ Ronnie Ramos. "Quayle, GOP Give Boost to Ros-Lehtinen." *The Miami Herald*, August 3, 1989: B1.

³⁵⁵ Luis Feldstein Soto and Ronnie Ramos. "Ros-Lehtinen Seeks Post-Campaign Unity." *The Miami Herald*, August 31, 1989: B1.

³⁵⁶ Liz Balmaseda. "Living Today." *The Miami Herald*, November 19, 1989: G1.

Refugees and Aid

Bush picked up where Reagan left off with Cuban migration. The U.S. Government had not yet resolved what to do about the Mariel inmates and Cuban migrants waiting in third countries. CANF and other exile influencers were less involved in nationwide immigration policy, but they actively advocated for Cuban refugees when they deemed it expedient. Operation Exodus continued to run successfully, but it took an acute political crisis before Cuban exile leadership weighed in on the Mariel refugees who had been imprisoned for years without due process. Cuban-Americans leveraged their influence so that their favored organizations became regular recipients of government funding. As Cuba's economic situation worsened with the end of the Cold War, more Cuban islanders left for the United States, and Cuban-Americans sought ways to provide aid to their family and friends on the island. Cubans were caught between trying to care for their loved ones financially but not wanting to buoy the regime economically.

Various corrupt actors took advantage of Cuban emigres. The backlogged U.S. Government approved only 3,136 of the 20,000 visas allotted for Cubans in 1988.³⁵⁷ Obtaining a visa was difficult, so Cuban government officials, private human traffickers, and officials in third-country governments often illegally demanded money to facilitate migration.³⁵⁸ With remittances from their families, some Cubans were paying up to

³⁵⁷ Sandra Dibble. "Many Cubans Try Illegal Path to U.S." *The Miami Herald*, July 23, 1989: B1.

³⁵⁸ "For Sale: Human Beings." *The Miami Herald*, July 10, 1989: A14.

\$10,000 to migrate.³⁵⁹ Mas Canosa testified about the phenomenon before Congress in fall 1988.³⁶⁰ Authorities detained at the Krome Avenue facility a record number of Cubans illegally entering the United States.³⁶¹ Miami airport officials stopped over 600 Cuban migrants without proper paperwork in two months, and there were 170 detained at the Krome Avenue detention center in July 1989.³⁶² U.S. agencies increasingly treated Cubans more as standard immigrants rather than exiles, complete with threatening deportation.³⁶³

By the end of September 1989, the Exodus project had resettled 2,236 refugees.³⁶⁴ Congress permitted 4,000 per year, of which the Exodus project received 1,500.³⁶⁵ Congress's 1990 refugee plan set aside 3,500 refugee visas for Latin America, of which they earmarked 3,000 for Cubans.³⁶⁶ By September 1990, the program had aided over 4,800 refugees.³⁶⁷

³⁵⁹ Dibble. "Many Cubans Try Illegal Path to U.S."

³⁶⁰ "For Sale: Human Beings."

³⁶¹ Dibble. "Many Cubans Try Illegal Path to U.S."

³⁶² Dibble. "Many Cubans Try Illegal Path to U.S."

³⁶³ Dibble. "Many Cubans Try Illegal Path to U.S."

³⁶⁴ Mirta Ojito. "Year-Old Exodus Helping Cubans Rebuild Lives." *The Miami Herald*, September 11, 1989: B3.; Aminda Marques Gonzalez and David Hancock. "Cuban Acrobat Leaped." *The Miami Herald*, September 30, 1989: B1.

³⁶⁵ Ojito. "Year-Old Exodus Helping Cubans Rebuild Lives."

³⁶⁶ R.A. Zaldivar. "U.S. Envoy: Soviets Can Go Home Says Reforms Help Jewish Refugees." *The Miami Herald*, September 14, 1989: A13.

³⁶⁷ "Miami Man, 75, Dies in Car Wreck After Running A Red Light." *The Miami Herald*, September 11, 1990: B2.

The number of rafters fleeing Cuba for Florida's shores increased dramatically in 1991. By the end of July, over 1,400 had arrived.³⁶⁸ Over 65% were 18-29 years old, and 87% were men.³⁶⁹ The Coast Guard intercepted most of them, but others washed up on shore, cruise ships rescued a few, and even the Queen of England's yacht picked one up.³⁷⁰ South Florida's Krome Detention Center experienced overcrowding in 1991 due to a sudden influx of refugees.³⁷¹ The camp, which had a limit of 450, now held 600 detainees, including about 250 Haitians and 140 Cubans.³⁷² Miami INS director Richard Smith worked with CANF to liberalize the parole policy to ease the overcrowding.³⁷³

Shipping money and humanitarian goods to Cuba became a burgeoning business in South Florida in the early nineties as Cuba's Special Period began.³⁷⁴ Remittances were limited to exiles \$500 every three months to the same household, but Cuban-Americans found ways around it by having several family members send money to the same household.³⁷⁵ Under U.S. law, they could also send a maximum of \$200 a month of goods to Cuba, and Cuban relatives could enter the United States for short visits.³⁷⁶ The

³⁶⁸ Lizette Alvarez. "In Search of A Fresh Start." *The Miami Herald*, July 27, 1991: B1.

³⁶⁹ Alvarez. "In Search of A Fresh Start."

³⁷⁰ Alvarez. "In Search of A Fresh Start."

³⁷¹ Lizette Alvarez. "Krome Parole Policy Relaxed to Ease Crowding." *The Miami Herald*, May 3, 1991: B1.

³⁷² Alvarez. "Krome Parole Policy Relaxed to Ease Crowding."

³⁷³ Alvarez. "Krome Parole Policy Relaxed to Ease Crowding."

³⁷⁴ Alfonso Chardy and Ana Santiago. "Sending Items to Cuba Is Costly, Complicated." *The Miami Herald*, September 8, 1991: A14.

³⁷⁵ Chardy and Santiago. "Sending Items to Cuba Is Costly, Complicated."

³⁷⁶ Chardy, Alfonso. "Dade Firms Cash in On Cuban Crisis Travel, Shipping Boost Economies." *The Miami Herald*, September 8, 1991: A1.

State Department developed such a backlog of 28,000 travel visa requests and so many people applied for asylum upon arrival that State indefinitely suspended the issuance of visas in late July 1991.³⁷⁷ Courier services transported over 100,000 packages per year from South Florida to Cuba, and CANF estimated that the Cuban government would pocket over \$135 million from shipping expenses in 1991.³⁷⁸ CANF estimated exiles remitted about \$9 million in 1990.³⁷⁹ FIU's Dr. Antonio Jorge estimated that exiles subsidize 20-25% of Cuba's \$500+ million deficit and generate 22.5% of Cuba's \$900 million annual hard currency reserves.³⁸⁰ By May 1991, seventy-six companies had registered with the U.S. Treasury Department for travel and commercial activities with Cuba.³⁸¹ Hardliners opposed sending goods or remittances to Cuba, but others with family on the island felt that providing for family was more important, even if the Cuban government did take a cut.³⁸²

The National Endowment for Democracy allotted twice as much money toward Cuba projects in 1991 than in 1990, totaling over \$460,000 in 1991.³⁸³ Among the recipients were The American Institute of Freedom Labor Development, the Republican and Democratic parties' international affairs institutes, CANF, Frank Calzon's Of Human

³⁷⁷ Chardy. "Dade Firms Cash in On Cuban Crisis Travel, Shipping Boost Economies."

³⁷⁸ Chardy and Santiago. "Sending Items to Cuba Is Costly, Complicated."; Chardy. "Dade Firms Cash in On Cuban Crisis Travel, Shipping Boost Economies."

³⁷⁹ Chardy and Santiago. "Sending Items to Cuba Is Costly, Complicated."

³⁸⁰ Chardy and Santiago. "Sending Items to Cuba Is Costly, Complicated."

³⁸¹ Chardy and Santiago. "Sending Items to Cuba Is Costly, Complicated."

³⁸² Chardy and Santiago. "Sending Items to Cuba Is Costly, Complicated."

³⁸³ Alfonso Chardy. "Pro-Democracy Group Doubles Cuba Funds." *The Miami Herald*, December 2, 1991: B1.

Rights, Jose Antonio Lanuza's Center for Cuban Democracy, Gustavo Arcos's program, and Ricardo Bofill's Cuban Committee for Human Rights.³⁸⁴

In 1991, the NED contributed \$462,132 for seven Cuba projects, \$282,132 more than the four they funded in 1990.³⁸⁵ The NED authorized \$66,000 more in January.³⁸⁶ The NED funded the Youth Coordinator of Democratic Associations, with which David Moya continued to work after leaving the island.³⁸⁷ Other projects they funded were a Radio Marti program about democracy, CANF, the Center for Cuban Democracy, and Cruz Varela's Criterio Alternativo as associated with Montaner's Cuban Liberal Union.³⁸⁸ Some island dissidents welcomed CANF's help, but others viewed Mas Canosa as a destabilizing force.³⁸⁹ Miami exile politics affected the unity of dissidents on the island.³⁹⁰

The Bush administration cosigned allowing packages to Cuba via charter flights and limited proceeds to Cuba for toll-calls, but Cuba wanted mail via commercial flights and world average rates of toll-call revenues.³⁹¹

³⁸⁴ Chardy. "Pro-Democracy Group Doubles Cuba Funds."

³⁸⁵ Chardy. "Dissident Groups Multiply."

³⁸⁶ Chardy. "Dissident Groups Multiply."

³⁸⁷ Chardy. "Dissident Groups Multiply."

³⁸⁸ Chardy. "Dissident Groups Multiply."; Lydia Martin. "The Unbearable Heaviness Of Being Poet Struggles to Be An 'Individual' Despite Pressures From The Two Sides Of Her Native Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, August 16, 1994: E1.

³⁸⁹ Chardy. "Dissident Groups Multiply."

³⁹⁰ Chardy. "Dissident Groups Multiply."

³⁹¹ Christopher Marquis and Mimi Whitefield. "Democracy in Cuba: 2 Strategies." *The Miami Herald*, September 18, 1992: 8A.

Hardliners largely determined which exiles and dissidents dominated the discourse. They also often served as the gatekeepers for whether and how to provide aid to Cuba. They deemed who was worthy of support and whether the benefits of that support (financial or otherwise) outweighed the costs. Hardliners' analysis operated on an assumption that isolation would ultimately work better than openness to undermine the Cuban regime.

TV Marti

Radio Marti had been one of CANF's pinnacle accomplishments during the Reagan years. Opponents questioned the efficacy and quality control, but Radio Marti was one of the few information sources in Cuba that did not filter through Cuban government censorship when the government was unable to block signals. CANF and its allies hoped to expand and offer television broadcasts.

Plans for Television Marti pressed forward, but they received more resistance than Radio Marti. The U.S. House of Representatives was debating a bill for TV Marti at the time.³⁹² The House passed the appropriations bill.³⁹³ The debate continued into the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.³⁹⁴ At the annual CANF Cuban Independence Day celebration, Senator Connie Mack told the crowd he expected TV Marti to be up and running by 1990.³⁹⁵ President Bush expressed his support for TV Marti at a Cuban

³⁹² Dibble. "Equipment Woes Let Cuban TV Slip Through."

³⁹³ Mirta Ojito. "TV Marti Forecast to Start by 1990." *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 1989: B2.

³⁹⁴ R.A. Zaldivar. "TV Marti Funding Fight Gears Up." *The Miami Herald*, May 11, 1989: A7.

³⁹⁵ Ojito. "TV Marti Forecast to Start by 1990."

independence celebration in Washington, D.C., and challenged Fidel Castro to hold a plebiscite on the path to free and fair elections in Cuba.³⁹⁶ CANF worked to locate TV Marti in Miami because of the ready source of talent, but some in Washington and the community feared that exile politics would harm the station.³⁹⁷

Ernesto Betancourt accused Mas Canosa of forcing Betancourt from his position as Director of Radio Marti after the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) transferred him to another job.³⁹⁸ Critics feared that Betancourt's removal would hurt the objectivity and credibility of Radio Marti while further increasing CANF's monopoly on the organization, whose Cuban-American board members were all members of CANF.³⁹⁹ Ronaldo Bonachea became acting director.⁴⁰⁰ Additionally, Radio Marti ousted Carlos Alberto Montaner and Antonio Navarro because their ties to exile groups made them ineligible per government regulations.⁴⁰¹ By 1990, Radio Marti had become the most popular radio station in Cuba.⁴⁰² Separately, CANF began testing the airwaves for their radio program targeted at Cuba, "The Voice of the Foundation."⁴⁰³

³⁹⁶ Mirta Ojito. "Bush Dares Castro to OK a Plebiscite." *The Miami Herald*, May 23, 1989: A11.

³⁹⁷ R.A. Zaldivar. "Would Exile Friction Harm Local Studios?" *The Miami Herald*, December 14, 1989: A19.

³⁹⁸ Sandra Dibble and Andres Viglucci. "Director Says He Was Forced Out of Radio Marti." *The Miami Herald*, March 13, 1990: A1.; Sandra Dibble. "Radio Marti Chief Ordered to Clear Office." *The Miami Herald*, March 15, 1990: B8.; "Time to Reduce the Static." *The Miami Herald*, December 5, 1993: M2.

³⁹⁹ "Unplug the Connection." *The Miami Herald*, March 17, 1990: A26.; "Jamming at The Bowl." *The Miami Herald*, May 3, 1990: A28.

⁴⁰⁰ Mirta Ojito. "Radio Marti Gets Acting Director." *The Miami Herald*, April 24, 1990: A6.

⁴⁰¹ Sandra Dibble. "Radio Marti Ousts Broadcasters, Cites Politics." *The Miami Herald*, September 21, 1990: B2.

⁴⁰² Elinor Burkett and Liz Balmaseda. "Radio Pepe." *The Miami Herald*, May 19, 1990: E1.

⁴⁰³ "Local." *The Miami Herald*, November 10, 1989: B4.

TV Marti geared up for its official debut in 1990. TV Marti made its first test broadcast to Cuba on March 27, 1990.⁴⁰⁴ Cuba blocked the signal within fifteen minutes.⁴⁰⁵ TV Marti's early months lacked viewership, and Cubans called it "*La T.V. que no se ve,*" or "The T.V. that isn't seen."⁴⁰⁶

A House Appropriations subcommittee voted in May 1991 to eliminate funding for TV Marti, despite the administration's request for \$20.5 million for the fiscal year 1992.⁴⁰⁷ Antonio Navarro served as the TV Marti director.⁴⁰⁸ The Cuban government had managed to block signals for much of the island.⁴⁰⁹ An unnamed CANF official suggested that TV Marti could become more critical in the event of Fidel Castro becoming "'distracted' by other problems or face 'civil war conditions.'"⁴¹⁰ Mas Canosa remained confident that Congress would restore TV Marti's funding and blamed Arkansas Rep. Bill Alexander for his attempts to expand U.S. agriculture into Cuban markets.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁴ Mimi Whitefield. "TV Marti Debuts, But Cuba Jams Signal Broadcast Knocked Off Air In 15 Minutes in Havana." *The Miami Herald*, March 28, 1990: A1.

⁴⁰⁵ Whitefield. "TV Marti Debuts, But Cuba Jams Signal Broadcast Knocked Off Air In 15 Minutes in Havana."

⁴⁰⁶ Mimi Whitefield. "Miami Exile Community Hot Study Topic in Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, August 16, 1990: A17.; Andres Oppenheimer. "Tough Times in Cuba: Anxiety But No Defiance." *The Miami Herald*, October 21, 1990: A1.

⁴⁰⁷ Christopher Marquis. "House Panel Votes to Kill TV Marti But Supporters Vow Fierce Battle." *The Miami Herald*, May 31, 1991: A1.

⁴⁰⁸ Marquis. "House Panel Votes to Kill TV Marti But Supporters Vow Fierce Battle."

⁴⁰⁹ Marquis. "House Panel Votes to Kill TV Marti But Supporters Vow Fierce Battle."

⁴¹⁰ Marquis. "House Panel Votes to Kill TV Marti But Supporters Vow Fierce Battle."

⁴¹¹ Alfonso Chardy. "Exile Group 'Confident' TV Marti Will Stay On." *The Miami Herald*, June 1, 1991: A4.

A federal General Accounting Office investigation found reasons to believe that T.V. Marti favored CANF over other exile groups in its news coverage after Representative Bill Alexander (D-AR) requested a report.⁴¹² A TV Marti insider had recently repeatedly warned of CANF's influence.⁴¹³ Director of TV Marti Antonio Dieguez denied the allegations.⁴¹⁴

The GAO had Voice of America begin investigating allegations of biased news coverage in favor of CANF positions at Radio Marti.⁴¹⁵ The VOA found little substantial evidence of systematic bias but updated its review process by creating a review panel to meet quarterly.⁴¹⁶ Soon to be Acting Director Rolando Bonachea fired all the research analysts at the station after one prompted the investigation.⁴¹⁷ The presidential advisory board, which Mas Canosa still chaired, recommended that T.V. and Radio Marti headquarters move from Washington to Miami.⁴¹⁸

Radio and TV Marti institutionalized Cuban-American influence within the U.S. Government over information streaming to Cuba. Because of federal information neutrality, quality-control, and employment standards, the concern over whether and to

⁴¹² Joel Gutierrez. "TV Marti's Balance Questioned." *The Miami Herald*, March 18, 1992: A13.

⁴¹³ Gutierrez. "TV Marti's Balance Questioned."

⁴¹⁴ Gutierrez. "TV Marti's Balance Questioned."

⁴¹⁵ Mimi Whitefield. "Radio Marti News Studied." *The Miami Herald*, November 19, 1992: A24.; "Time to Reduce The Static." *The Miami Herald*, December 5, 1993: M2.

⁴¹⁶ Mimi Whitefield. "For Radio Marti, 'A Matter of Semantics'." *The Miami Herald*, December 10, 1992: A22.; Mimi Whitefield. "Panel Meets to Review TV Marti." *The Miami Herald*, December 12, 1992: A24.

⁴¹⁷ Christopher Marquis. "Left, Right Fight for The Soul Of Radio Marti." *The Miami Herald*, June 22, 1993: A1.

⁴¹⁸ Alfonso Chardy. "TV, Radio Marti HQ May Move to Miami." *The Miami Herald*, December 3, 1992: B1.

what degree Cuban-Americans adhered to federal standards became a constant source of friction both within the U.S. Government and with the Cuban government, who consistently denounced it as exile imperial propaganda.

New Institutions and Exile Politics

New Cuban exile organizations arose at the end of the Cold War era. The international system and Cuba's domestic politics and economy fluctuated. Cuban-American political influence increased dramatically during this period through the establishment of several new organizations. Although hardliners still dominated the Miami Cuban community leadership, other viewpoints formed new organizations to represent their interests at a critical juncture, address new problems, and challenge Mas Canosa's dominance. In turn, Cuban officials recognized the significant role of the diaspora and sought to monitor and understand them, protect national security, and undermine critics while elevating friendlier voices.

The three poles of Mas Canosa's influence laid in Washington, Miami, and Cuba.⁴¹⁹ Over five years, CANF directors and relatives gave \$455,000 to political campaigns and the Free Cuba PAC, which in turn had donated over \$1 million to congressional candidates over a decade.⁴²⁰ There were rarely costs and sometimes big benefits to furthering CANF policies, but the costs for opposing them were high.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁹ Peter Slevin. "Washington Gives Cuban Foundation Clout, Legitimacy." *The Miami Herald*, October 11, 1992: A20.

⁴²⁰ Slevin. "Washington Gives Cuban Foundation Clout, Legitimacy."

⁴²¹ Slevin. "Washington Gives Cuban Foundation Clout, Legitimacy."

People tended to exaggerate Mas Canosa's influence and methods; most politicians were of a similar anti-communist mind-frame anyway, it appeared.⁴²² Mas Canosa employed code-switching in the way he operated within Washington circles versus Miami Cuban circles.⁴²³ In Miami, people loved CANF's community outreach programs, and over 250,000 of them contributed to the foundation.⁴²⁴

Jose Antonio Font, who stepped down as staff director of CANF, resigned from his trusteeship at CANF to organize a new Cuban-American group in Washington, D.C.⁴²⁵ The Council for Cuban Democracy promised to be a more democratic organization in its decision-making than CANF, allowing people of all economic classes and political perspectives to join, and to focus on public policy and education.⁴²⁶ CANF reacted by opening membership to people who could make monthly donations of any amount—as opposed to the thousands of dollars the directors and trustees had been paying for membership.⁴²⁷ However, shortly thereafter, Marazul Charters owner Francisco Aruca founded a new Cuban-American organization, the Cuban-American Coalition.⁴²⁸ This new group had an inclusive membership policy, a history of donating

⁴²² Slevin. "Washington Gives Cuban Foundation Clout, Legitimacy."

⁴²³ Slevin. "Washington Gives Cuban Foundation Clout, Legitimacy."

⁴²⁴ "Thousands of Backers Hail the Foundation." *The Miami Herald*, October 11, 1992: A21.; Peter Slevin. "Organization Helps Screen Immigrants." *The Miami Herald*, October 11, 1992: A21.

⁴²⁵ Dugger, Celia W. "New Exile Group Forms in D.C." *The Miami Herald*, March 7, 1989: B2.

⁴²⁶ Dugger. "New Exile Group Forms in D.C."

⁴²⁷ "Cuban American Group Seeking More Members." *The Miami Herald*, March 29, 1989: B1.

⁴²⁸ Luciano Garcia. "Newly Formed Exile Group Seeks Closer Links with Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, June 25, 1989: B2.

individually, and the financial strength to make a difference.⁴²⁹ Its primary goal would be more open relations between exiles and their homeland.⁴³⁰ They aimed to be both centrist and pluralist.⁴³¹ However, they lacked a focused message.⁴³²

When Cuban dissident Elizardo Sanchez returned to Cuba from Miami, the Castro regime arrested him.⁴³³ Curiously, the Miami Cuban community failed to defend some political prisoners due to their skepticism of the activists' intentions.⁴³⁴ The community still feared communist infiltrators and dual agents, and Sanchez aroused suspicion.⁴³⁵ In contrast, Jorge Mas Canosa reconciled with Gustavo Arcos Bergnes and stated in a letter to Arcos's organization in January 1991 that CANF supported Arcos.⁴³⁶

Two Cuban-Americans, William Schuss and Jose Basulto, cofounded Brothers to the Rescue in 1991 in response to the drowning of a young girl escaping Cuba by raft.⁴³⁷

⁴²⁹ Balmaseda. "New Cuban Lobby Still Seeking Focus."

⁴³⁰ Garcia. "Newly Formed Exile Group Seeks Closer Links with Cuba."

⁴³¹ Ojito. "Cubans Form Group to Vary Exile Ideology."

⁴³² Balmaseda. "New Cuban Lobby Still Seeking Focus."

⁴³³ Christopher Marquis. "Jailing of Cuban Dissident Met By Silence in Miami." *The Miami Herald*, August 22, 1989: B1.

⁴³⁴ Marquis. "Jailing of Cuban Dissident Met By Silence in Miami."; Charles Whited. "Jailed Cuban Prof Gets the Cold Shoulder." *The Miami Herald*, August 29, 1989: B1.

⁴³⁵ Marquis. "Jailing of Cuban Dissident Met By Silence in Miami."

⁴³⁶ Pablo Alfonso. "Mas Delivers A Conciliatory Letter to Arcos In Cuba Talks Controversy." *The Miami Herald*, January 29, 1991: B3.

⁴³⁷ Brecher, Elinor J. "Maggie Schuss, 'mother' of Brothers to the Rescue, dies." *The Miami Herald*, September 13, 2011.

CANF helped Brothers to the Rescue raise money for their efforts in rescuing Cuban refugees stuck at sea.⁴³⁸

Like Cuban exile organizations on the U.S. side of the Florida Straits, the number and types of dissident groups on the island multiplied in the post-Soviet Special Period.⁴³⁹ The Cuban Committee for Human Rights—a project of Ricardo Bofill, Elizardo Sanchez, Eddy Lopez, Enrique Hernandez, and Adolfo Rivero Caro—had been documenting human rights abuses since 1976.⁴⁴⁰ Gustavo Arcos, Daniel Azpillaga, Omar del Pozo, and Roberto Luque Escalona joined the project as well.⁴⁴¹ Sanchez split from the Committee in the mid-1980s, arguing that they needed to do more than denounce human rights abuses to effect change in Cuba.⁴⁴² By 1992, there were over 1,000 activists on the island and 50 dissident groups.⁴⁴³

Unidad Cubana, an organization that represented 150 exile organizations, formed in April 1992 to develop common goals for Cuba's liberation and a democratic transition period.⁴⁴⁴ CANF, Alpha 66, Brigade 2506, La Cumbre Patriotica participated.⁴⁴⁵

Miami's Radio Progreso broadcasted an interview with Cuban foreign minister Ricardo Alarcon in which he appealed to exiles to normalize relations with their

⁴³⁸ Lizette Alvarez. "More Pilots to Join Searches For Rafters." *The Miami Herald*, May 16, 1991: B4.

⁴³⁹ Alfonso Chardy. "Dissident Groups Multiply." *The Miami Herald*, February 9, 1992: B1.

⁴⁴⁰ Chardy. "Dissident Groups Multiply."

⁴⁴¹ Chardy. "Dissident Groups Multiply."

⁴⁴² Chardy. "Dissident Groups Multiply."

⁴⁴³ Chardy. "Dissident Groups Multiply."

⁴⁴⁴ "Miami United Cuba Group Plans Assembly." *The Miami Herald*, April 23, 1992: B2.

⁴⁴⁵ "Miami United Cuba Group Plans Assembly."

homeland and engage in reciprocal talks.⁴⁴⁶ Alarcon appealed to exiles as being a part of one Cuban nation.⁴⁴⁷ However, he assured them that socialism would continue.⁴⁴⁸ The Cuban Democratic Coalition's Luis Zuniga interpreted the comments as wanting to keep the exile community divided between pro-dialogue forces and "right-wing, intolerant terrorists."⁴⁴⁹ The second purpose Zuniga noted is his conflation of the issue as being Cuba versus the United States rather than Castro against the Cuban people.⁴⁵⁰

Another Cuban American group—the Cuban American Defense League—emerged to counter the influence of CANF by a couple that knew all too well the damage that CANF could do to reputations.⁴⁵¹

In December 1992, CANF—specifically Jorge Mas Canosa and Clara and Mario del Valle—created the Foundation for Human Rights in Cuba to publicize the worsening human rights situation in Cuba and chose Luis Zuniga to head it.⁴⁵²

Ultimately, leadership reinforced that hardline policies remained most popular among the Cuban-American community while most communist countries worldwide were democratizing. Isolationist policies provided a strong contrast as Neoliberal

⁴⁴⁶ Santiago, Ana E. "Cuban Minister Addresses Exiles." *The Miami Herald*, August 21, 1992: A1.

⁴⁴⁷ Santiago. "Cuban Minister Addresses Exiles."

⁴⁴⁸ Santiago. "Cuban Minister Addresses Exiles."

⁴⁴⁹ Santiago. "Cuban Minister Addresses Exiles."

⁴⁵⁰ Santiago. "Cuban Minister Addresses Exiles."

⁴⁵¹ Peter Slevin. "Probe Urged of Cuban Group." *The Miami Herald*, October 20, 1992: B2.

⁴⁵² Alfonso Chardy. "Ex-Prisoner to Head New Cuban Rights Group." *The Miami Herald*, December 24, 1992: B3.; Alfonso Chardy and Mirta Ojito. "Rift Grows Between Exile Chiefs." *The Miami Herald*, January 24, 1993: B1.; Mas Santos, Jorge. "Jorge Mas Santos: Uniting what Castro has divided." *The Miami Herald*, April 6, 2013.

institutionalism and economics prevailed in the international system. The Cuban-Americans that preferred engagement found sympathizers and organized, but they remained minority voices.

Dominoes Falling

The Bush years were pivotal for Cuba. The Cuban regime found itself in a precarious position at the end of the Cold War. Military juntas controlled much of Latin America in the 1970s, and communist regimes ruled much of Eastern Europe and large parts of Asia since the end of World War II. Many nations in these regions democratized, and few communist regimes remained after democratic citizen movements, economic shocks, government mismanagement, corruption, and international pressure toppled authoritarians worldwide. The collapse of communism and the fall of the Soviet Union had reverberating effects in Cuba. It appeared inevitable that every country would soon adopt the Neoliberal “new world order” that embodied democracy, individual rights, and capitalism. The cry for democracy throughout the communist world led to hopes among Cuban-Americans that the Castro government would fall or at least become more open. Because of this, they were more motivated to push the Bush administration to pursue their political agenda. Yet, the new international system required reassessing the strategies they were using to achieve their goals. It also put the leadership in closed societies on high alert for challenges to their authority.

Cuban Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez conceded that Cuban officials were holding talks with liberal sectors of the exile community, but he did not say

which.⁴⁵³ Rodriguez classified the exile community into three groups: (1) the “reactionary and ultrarightist” hardliners like Mas Canosa and Valladares, (2) the majority that wanted to be able to visit family on the island, and (3) ex-reactionaries who now preferred to combat Castro through dialogue, possibly referring to Montaner’s coalition or allies.⁴⁵⁴ The government reached out to the third group.⁴⁵⁵

Miami Herald writer Alfonso Chardy divided exile groups into four factions: the lobbying faction, the dialogue-for-elections faction, the dialogue-for-reform group, and the no-dialogue faction.⁴⁵⁶ The dialogue groups acknowledged beginning talks with the Cuban government.⁴⁵⁷ CANF was the principal organization for the lobby faction.⁴⁵⁸ The Cuban Democratic Platform promoted dialogue-for-elections.⁴⁵⁹ The dialogue-for-reform exiles—such as Vladimir Ramirez, the Cuban Social Democratic Party, and the Cuban American Council—were mostly liberal exiles who agreed with socialism but not as currently constituted under Castro.⁴⁶⁰ The Cuban Patriotic Junta and the Cuban People’s Orthodox Party fell into the no-dialogue faction.⁴⁶¹ Those who opposed the hardline

⁴⁵³ Pablo Alfonso. "Cuban Reports Talks with Exile Community." *The Miami Herald*, October 26, 1990: 12A.

⁴⁵⁴ Alfonso. "Cuban Reports Talks with Exile Community."

⁴⁵⁵ Alfonso. "Cuban Reports Talks with Exile Community."

⁴⁵⁶ Chardy. "Cuban Exile Groups Wield Increasing Clout."

⁴⁵⁷ Chardy. "Cuban Exile Groups Wield Increasing Clout."

⁴⁵⁸ Chardy. "Cuban Exile Groups Wield Increasing Clout."

⁴⁵⁹ Chardy. "Cuban Exile Groups Wield Increasing Clout."

⁴⁶⁰ Chardy. "Cuban Exile Groups Wield Increasing Clout."

⁴⁶¹ Chardy. "Cuban Exile Groups Wield Increasing Clout."

tactics feared that strong-arm tactics would allow Castro to scapegoat Cuban exiles and mobilize his population under a banner of nationalism.⁴⁶²

In June 1989, the Cuban government arrested several of its own high-ranking, popular military officers on reports of drug trafficking, even though the government itself likely sanctioned the activities.⁴⁶³ The execution of the officials, especially Arnaldo Ochoa, even stirred controversy in Cuba.⁴⁶⁴ Miami Cubans hoped that it signaled an opening for dissent in Castro's regime.⁴⁶⁵ Exile journalist Augustin Tamargo noticed a change in strategy among the exile community as they used the opportunity to support dissent on the island rather than exclusively resorting to advocating an exile coup.⁴⁶⁶ Ex-political prisoner Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo reacted, "With no hesitation, Fidel Castro eliminates any person he believes is an obstacle to his plans to stay in power forever." Florida Senator Bob Graham called a special hearing in the U.S. Senate about Cuba's involvement in drug trafficking.⁴⁶⁷ FIU professor Antonio Jorge, Jorge Mas Canosa, and former Cuban official Manuel de Beunza attended.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶² Whitefield. "U.S. Relation With Cuba Likely to Remain On Ice."

⁴⁶³ Liz Balmaseda. "Drug Case Fuels Rumors in Miami." *The Miami Herald*, June 23, 1989: A1.; Joel Gutierrez. "Letter on Cuba's Drug Trafficking Verified." *The Miami Herald*, August 1, 1992: A24.; Balmaseda, Liz. "Chaos, Change, Common Future: The Newspaper Meets the Exile." *The Miami Herald*, October 6, 2002: L1.

⁴⁶⁴ "Reaction to Cuba Executions." *The Miami Herald*, July 14, 1989: A10.

⁴⁶⁵ Balmaseda. "Drug Case Fuels Rumors in Miami."

⁴⁶⁶ Balmaseda. "Drug Case Fuels Rumors in Miami."

⁴⁶⁷ Mirta Ojito. "2 Drug Planes Flew Over Cuba, Admiral Says." *The Miami Herald*, August 12, 1989: A14.

⁴⁶⁸ Ojito. "2 Drug Planes Flew Over Cuba, Admiral Says."

Nevertheless, there was still a high degree of sympathy for militants. Hundreds of businesses shut down, and 1,500 people marched in Little Havana on June 29, 1989, to protest Orlando Bosch's deportation scheduled for July 14.⁴⁶⁹ The U.S. Justice Department began considering parole for Bosch when they realized that thirty-one countries on six continents refused to accept him.⁴⁷⁰

The fall of the Berlin Wall on November 8, 1989, further elevated exile hopes for imminent change in Cuba.⁴⁷¹ More Cuban exile organizations were forming across the political spectrum and becoming increasingly active.⁴⁷² Some Cuba analysts hoped that a new chief of mission at the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, Jose Antonio Arbesu, signaled a new approach to Cuba's diplomatic relations with the United States in early 1990.⁴⁷³ CANF also became more open to the idea of negotiating with lower-level Cuban leaders.⁴⁷⁴ While the foundation was engaging in "glasnost," FIU professor Carlos Moore claimed that the Cuban government employed "reverse perestroika," reaching out to

⁴⁶⁹ David Hancock. "Pro-Bosch Strike Shuts Hundreds of Shops." *The Miami Herald*, June 30, 1989: A1.

⁴⁷⁰ David Hancock. "U.S. To Allow 3,000 Cubans To Come Here from Panama." *The Miami Herald*, June 6, 1990: B2.

⁴⁷¹ Liz Balmaseda. "Dade Cubans Share the Joy, Rekindle Hope." *The Miami Herald*, November 11, 1989: A1.; De Valle, Elaine. "Berlin Wall Anniversary Bittersweet for Exiles." *The Miami Herald*, November 10, 1999: B1.

⁴⁷² Alfonso Chardy. "Cuban Exile Groups Wield Increasing Clout." *The Miami Herald*, November 4, 1990: B1.

⁴⁷³ Mimi Whitefield. "Cuban Envoy in Washington Maneuvers Amid Deep Freeze." *The Miami Herald*, February 20, 1990: A12.

⁴⁷⁴ Pedro Sevcec. "Exile Group Opens Door to Talks With Some Cuba Leaders." *The Miami Herald*, December 2, 1989: B1.; Sandra Dibble. "Local." *The Miami Herald*, December 17, 1989: C1.

Miami's white exiles rather than further engaging with the black population on the island.⁴⁷⁵

U.S. Senators Connie Mack and Bob Graham from Florida traveled to Washington and Moscow with Cuban exile representatives to discuss the future of Soviet-Cuban relations and business opportunities for Soviets in Florida.⁴⁷⁶

Representatives of the U.S. contingent suggested lifting the U.S. embargo on Cuba if the Soviet Union would end its subsidies to Cuba and if Cuba would democratize.⁴⁷⁷ Cuban-American critics of CANF's approach, including anti-Castro groups, lamented their lack of representation at the meetings; exiles remained divided over the best strategy and how quickly transition should occur.⁴⁷⁸

Government task forces, think tanks, and exile organizations rigorously prepared for a post-Castro Cuba. Many believed that Castro's government would inevitably collapse like other communist governments in Eastern Europe and Latin America. Several Cuba analysts foresaw an impending succession crisis in Cuba.⁴⁷⁹ Florida Governor Bob Martinez formed the Commission on a Free Cuba to analyze the predicted impact on Florida of Castro's fall from power.⁴⁸⁰ He appointed Mas Canosa to lead the

⁴⁷⁵ Dorothy Gaiter. "The Black Cubans, The White Exiles, and Fidel Castro." *The Miami Herald*, December 22, 1989: A27.

⁴⁷⁶ Chardy. "Soviet View of Cuba Shifting, Visitors Say."

⁴⁷⁷ Chardy. "Soviet View of Cuba Shifting, Visitors Say."

⁴⁷⁸ Dibble. "Soviet Visitors Excite Exiles Cuban Community Shows Changing Attitude Toward Dialogue."; Chardy. "Soviet View of Cuba Shifting, Visitors Say."

⁴⁷⁹ Mimi Whitefield. "Signs Emerge of Succession Crisis in Castro's Cuba, Experts Report." *The Miami Herald*, February 24, 1990: A24.

⁴⁸⁰ Sandra Dibble. "Governor Forms Panel on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, February 6, 1990: B1.; Sandra Dibble. "Think Tank Seeks Wide-Ranging Plan for Life After Castro." *The Miami Herald*, February 22,

commission.⁴⁸¹ *The Miami Herald's* Sergio Lopez-Miro chided the Governor for pandering to Cuban exiles by "peddling hope to an uprooted and traumatized generation of emigres."⁴⁸²

Indeed, even though there were still skeptics, many exile groups actively prepared for regime change. Alpha 66 ran militant training camps in the Everglades.⁴⁸³ The Cuban People's Party, the Association of Veterans of Special Missions, and hundreds of members of Cuban Municipalities in Exile offered their help to rebuild a post-Castro Cuba.⁴⁸⁴ Huber Matos's organization, Cuba Independiente y Democratica, prepared a transition plan, as did CANF and others.⁴⁸⁵ The ALF-CIO offered its services to Cuban labor unions.⁴⁸⁶ Even the Miami police created a contingency plan.⁴⁸⁷ The Cuban Social Democratic Party presented their proposal in September 1990 at the OAS.⁴⁸⁸

1990: B1.; Karen Branch. "Martinez Wants Public Meetings by Cuba Panel." *The Miami Herald*, February 23, 1990: B1. ; "Free Cuba Commission Gets 6 New Members." *The Miami Herald*, February 14, 1990: B4.

⁴⁸¹ Dibble. "Governor Forms Panel on Cuba."; "Free Cuba Commission Gets 6 New Members." *The Miami Herald*, February 14, 1990: B4.

⁴⁸² Sergio Lopez-Miro. "Governor Should Not Play with The Longing of Exiles." *The Miami Herald*, February 8, 1990: A23.

⁴⁸³ Mirta Ojito. "Exiles Step Up Plans for A New Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, February 18, 1990: B1.

⁴⁸⁴ Ojito. "Exiles Step Up Plans for A New Cuba."

⁴⁸⁵ Ojito. "Exiles Step Up Plans for A New Cuba."; Pablo Alfonso. "Panel Offers A Plan for Governing New Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, March 3, 1990: B1.

⁴⁸⁶ David Hancock. "Unions Make Post-Castro Plans." *The Miami Herald*, April 2, 1990: B2.

⁴⁸⁷ Sandra Dibble. "If Fidel Falls, Police Want Party In OB, Park." *The Miami Herald*, March 8, 1990: B1.; Sandra Dibble. "Miami Police Plan for Revelry After Castro's Fall." *The Miami Herald*, March 8, 1990: B2.

⁴⁸⁸ Alfonso Chardy. "Cuban Exile Groups Wield Increasing Clout." *The Miami Herald*, November 4, 1990: B1.

The Miami Cuban community was not the only group planning for Castro's fall. The White House and Capitol Hill made contingency plans and increased pressure to end Castro's rule. President Bush challenged Castro to hold free elections on several occasions.⁴⁸⁹ On March 19, 1990, Bush outlined three conditions for normalizing relations with Cuba: free elections, a free-market economy, and a reduction in military power.⁴⁹⁰ Additionally, the administration recommended rewarding the new Panamanian and Nicaraguan governments with \$800 million in aid as a signal to Castro.⁴⁹¹ The State Department rejected Castro's threats to open ports for mass emigration.⁴⁹² State Department spokesman Richard Boucher responded, "We reject Castro's attempt to export his internal problems to the United States by encouraging people to leave. Cuba's problems can only be resolved at home through democratic processes and freedom of speech."⁴⁹³ CANF spokesman Tony Costa underscored that another boatlift would only enable Castro to buy time because it would open the escape valve for dissent.⁴⁹⁴ Officials in the U.S. Government signaled that there would be no significant changes in U.S.-Cuba policy, especially since it no longer presented a significant security threat.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁸⁹ Martin McReynolds. "Washington Making Plans for The End of Castro's Era." *The Miami Herald*, March 27, 1990: 10A.

⁴⁹⁰ McReynolds. "Washington Making Plans for The End of Castro's Era."

⁴⁹¹ McReynolds. "Washington Making Plans for The End of Castro's Era."

⁴⁹² Luis Feldstein Soto and Sandra Dibble. "U.S. To Cuba: Don't Export Problems Democracy, Not Exodus, Is Remedy for Island's Unrest, Washington Says." *The Miami Herald*, July 28, 1990: A1.

⁴⁹³ Feldstein Soto and Dibble. "U.S. To Cuba: Don't Export Problems Democracy, Not Exodus, Is Remedy for Island's Unrest, Washington Says."

⁴⁹⁴ Feldstein Soto and Dibble. "U.S. To Cuba: Don't Export Problems Democracy, Not Exodus, Is Remedy for Island's Unrest, Washington Says."

⁴⁹⁵ Whitefield. "U.S. Relation With Cuba Likely to Remain on Ice."

Engagement was no longer on the agenda.⁴⁹⁶ The idea fell out of favor among legislators because there were already policymaking structures for Cuba within the government that would be less subject to bias.⁴⁹⁷ Members of Congress's Cuban Freedom Caucus introduced a bill to create a presidential advisory committee on the subject and suggested that CANF could make recommendations for committee members.⁴⁹⁸ CANF, which recommended the committee two years earlier, distanced itself from the proposal's current iteration.⁴⁹⁹

CANF held a rally at the Orange Bowl to send a message of freedom for Cuba to the world and support Cubans in the homeland.⁵⁰⁰ Ronald Reagan and Armando Valladares both attended as honorees. CANF thanked Reagan for his role in Radio/TV Marti and the fall of communism; they thanked Valladares, U.S. envoy to the UNCHR, drawing the United Nations' attention to Cuba's human rights abuses.⁵⁰¹ Jeb Bush emceed, and Valladares, Mas Canosa, and Reagan spoke to a crowd of 20,000.⁵⁰² The guayabera-clad former president called on Castro to hold free elections.⁵⁰³ Radio Marti

⁴⁹⁶ McReynolds. "Washington Making Plans for The End of Castro's Era."

⁴⁹⁷ Christopher Marquis. "Proposed Advisory Group on Cuba Losing U.S. Congressional Support." *The Miami Herald*, September 19, 1990: A7.

⁴⁹⁸ McReynolds. "Washington Making Plans for The End of Castro's Era."

⁴⁹⁹ Marquis. "Proposed Advisory Group on Cuba Losing U.S. Congressional Support."

⁵⁰⁰ Sandra Dibble. "Exiles Await Reagan At Rally for Free Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, April 28, 1990: B1.

⁵⁰¹ "Reagan, Valladares To Be Honored." *The Miami Herald*, March 15, 1990: B3.; Liz Balmaseda. "The Ironic Diplomacy of Armando Valladares Human Rights Ambassador Has Turned Against Some Who Share His Hatred for Castro." *The Miami Herald*, October 7, 1990: H5.

⁵⁰² Dibble. "Exiles Await Reagan At Rally for Free Cuba."; Ivan Roman and Sandra Dibble. "Reagan Aims Words to Cuba From Miami." *The Miami Herald*, April 29, 1990: B1.

⁵⁰³ Roman and Dibble. "Reagan Aims Words to Cuba From Miami."

broadcasted the event to Cuba, including Mas Canosa's remarks, despite the federal government mandate to not broadcast exile groups.⁵⁰⁴

The downfalls of Panamanian president Manuel Noriega and Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega reinforced the perception that Cuba was next.⁵⁰⁵ Exiles organized a flotilla to the edge of Cuban waters scheduled for Cuban Independence Day 1990 to send a message of support to Cubans on the island.⁵⁰⁶ Eighty percent of Cuba's trade was with former Soviet bloc countries.⁵⁰⁷ With communist governments collapsing, the continued economic recession in Latin America, and potential loss of Soviet patronage, Cuba was seeking new economic solutions for "a special period in time of peace."⁵⁰⁸ Exiles with different opinions on strategies, like Tony Varona and Gustavo Arcos, all agreed that "the people of Cuba will determine their own destiny, with the help of the exiles."⁵⁰⁹

Cuban exiles hope to reclaim or seek compensation for their lost property when Castro was gone. The last large-scale U.S. Government effort to get Cuba to reimburse the owners of confiscated property in Cuba had occurred from 1967 to 1972 with the

⁵⁰⁴ Dibble. "Exiles Await Reagan At Rally for Free Cuba."; Roman and Dibble. "Reagan Aims Words to Cuba From Miami."; "Jamming at The Bowl." *The Miami Herald*, May 3, 1990: A28.

⁵⁰⁵ Dugger and Fernandez. "Cuban Exiles Say Fall of Ortega Makes Castro's Demise Inevitable."

⁵⁰⁶ Sandra Dibble. "Anti-Castro Flotilla to Skirt Cuban Waters." *The Miami Herald*, April 14, 1990: B2.

⁵⁰⁷ Whitefield. "Cuba Asking Soviets to Stall On Cash Trade Switch From Barter Economy In Works."

⁵⁰⁸ Whitefield. "Cuba Asking Soviets to Stall On Cash Trade Switch From Barter Economy In Works."; Christopher Marquis. "Analyst: Castro Frazzled, Paranoid." *The Miami Herald*, October 12, 1990: A7.; Andres Oppenheimer. "Tough Times in Cuba: Anxiety But No Defiance." *The Miami Herald*, October 21, 1990: A1.

⁵⁰⁹ Lawrence. "Who Will Determine Cuba's Destiny?"

Federal Claims Settlement Commission (FCSC) by the Department of Justice.⁵¹⁰ People who were U.S. citizens when the Cuban government seized their property and had proof of ownership could file a claim with the FCSC.⁵¹¹ The FCSC filings did not cover Cuban citizens' property loss, for which the Cuban government insisted they had provided compensation under Law 851.⁵¹² So, the University of Miami's Research Institute for Cuban Studies and Miami Metro Commissioner Barry Schreiber created a private Expropriated Cuban Properties Registry in 1990 for all nationalized Cuban property.⁵¹³ Rafael Cabezas, Alberto Muller, Tony Varona, the World Federation of Cuban Political Prisoners, and others feared that the project would give Castro's government another excuse to vilify Miami Cubans as greedy and vengeful.⁵¹⁴

Cuban Government Versus Miami Exiles

Meanwhile, the Cuban government was studying Miami Cuban exiles for its rectification process.⁵¹⁵ To this end, they created the Center for Study of Political

⁵¹⁰ "Completed Programs - Cuba." Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.justice.gov/fcsc/claims-against-cuba>.

⁵¹¹ Sandra Dibble. "Registry for Cuba Assets Sparks Inquiries, Anger Paints Exiles As Greedy, Vengeful, Some Say." *The Miami Herald*, August 12, 1990: B1.

⁵¹² Dibble. "Registry for Cuba Assets Sparks Inquiries, Anger Paints Exiles As Greedy, Vengeful, Some Say."

⁵¹³ Dibble. "Registry for Cuba Assets Sparks Inquiries, Anger Paints Exiles As Greedy, Vengeful, Some Say."

⁵¹⁴ Dibble. "Registry for Cuba Assets Sparks Inquiries, Anger Paints Exiles As Greedy, Vengeful, Some Say."

⁵¹⁵ Mimi Whitefield. "Miami Exile Community Hot Study Topic in Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, August 16, 1990: A17.

Alternatives at the University of Havana.⁵¹⁶ The director of the center, Mercedes Arce, noted that Cubans on each side of the Florida Straits had many misconceptions about each other.⁵¹⁷ Analysts at a CANF panel concluded that it meant Fidel Castro was getting paranoid and preparing for the worst.⁵¹⁸

CANF released a report in March 1991 that contended that the Castro government derived nearly \$235 million in 1990 from Cuban-American exile travel and shipments to the island compared to the Treasury Department's \$48 million estimate.⁵¹⁹ Despite many hardliners' stance of cutting off all U.S. travel to Cuba, many in the Cuban community still wanted to send relief to their relatives even though they did not want the Cuban government to enrich itself in the process.⁵²⁰

An April 1991 Sergio Bendixen poll showed that 47% of Cuban-Americans thought Castro would remain in power for several more years, while 42% felt that he would be gone within the year.⁵²¹ Cuban-Americans over 50 years old were much more likely to think that Castro would be gone within the year than Cuban-Americans under 50.⁵²² A majority opposed dialogue with the Castro regime, but a majority also favored

⁵¹⁶ Whitefield. "Miami Exile Community Hot Study Topic in Cuba."

⁵¹⁷ Whitefield. "Miami Exile Community Hot Study Topic in Cuba."

⁵¹⁸ Christopher Marquis. "Analyst: Castro Frazzled, Paranoid." *The Miami Herald*, October 12, 1990: A7.

⁵¹⁹ Christopher Marquis. "Cuba Profits from Exiles' Ties, Group Says." *The Miami Herald*, March 27, 1991: A13.

⁵²⁰ Marquis. "Cuba Profits from Exiles' Ties, Group Says."

⁵²¹ Ivan Roman. "Hope for Speedy End To Castro Era Fading, Poll Shows." *The Miami Herald*, May 9, 1991: B1.

⁵²² Roman. "Hope for Speedy End To Castro Era Fading, Poll Shows."

providing humanitarian aid to the Cuban people.⁵²³ This polling showed early signs of generation gaps that would fuel growing opposition to isolationist policies. Hardline ideologies still overwhelmingly predominated, though, as the Cold War drew to a close. Most Cuban-Americans who disagreed with using isolationist policies to hasten Castro's fall did not feel comfortable expressing their opinions publicly.

Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Bernard Aronson made a speech at CANF's annual Cuban Independence Day celebration calling for elections in Cuba as a quid pro quo for engagement.⁵²⁴ At a CANF meeting in Washington, he and President Bush pledged to ease tensions if Cuba agreed to internationally-monitored elections, free political prisoners, allow the United Nations to investigate human rights abuses, and cease aiding leftist guerillas in other countries.⁵²⁵ Aronson stipulated that this must include allowing opposing political parties, free press, and OAS-supervised elections.⁵²⁶ The remarks were broadcasted on Radio Marti and replayed at the CANF Cuban Independence Day celebration in Miami. Jorge Mas Canosa, however, added that Fidel and Raul Castro must also be gone before elections.⁵²⁷

⁵²³ Roman. "Hope for Speedy End To Castro Era Fading, Poll Shows."

⁵²⁴ Alfonso Chardy. "U.S. May Shift Attitude If Castro Oks Election." *The Miami Herald*, May 11, 1991: A1.

⁵²⁵ Christopher Marquis and Alfonso Chardy. "U.S. Offers New Initiative on Cuba Bush Outlines Conditions For Improved Relations." *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 1991: A1.

⁵²⁶ Marquis and Chardy. "U.S. Offers New Initiative on Cuba Bush Outlines Conditions For Improved Relations."

⁵²⁷ Marquis and Chardy. "U.S. Offers New Initiative on Cuba Bush Outlines Conditions For Improved Relations."

Jorge Mas Canosa announced at a Miami news conference that he and other CANF associates had been holding secret talks with senior Cuban government officials starting in 1989 to prepare for a post-Castro Cuba, despite his public stance up until then of no dialogue, but various U.S. and Cuban government officials in Washington were unaware of the meetings and could not verify the accuracy of the statement.⁵²⁸ The news conference announced a commission to prepare for a Cuban transition to a capitalist system, known as Mission Marti.⁵²⁹ Commission members included economist Arthur Laffer, former NSA William Clark, Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, and Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.⁵³⁰ Jeb Bush hosted the meeting, and Ronald Reagan gave his blessing.⁵³¹

Various journalists, academics, and political activists aligned with various Cuban exile organizations met together to draft common principles at a Pro-Unity Commission.⁵³² Among them were Antonio Jorge, Manuel Antonio De Varona, Modesto Castaner, Armando Perez Roura, Tomas Garcia Fuste, Ariel Remos, and Roberto Suarez.

⁵²⁸ Alfonso Chardy. "Exile Says He Met Cuban Officials Topic Was Future After Castro." *The Miami Herald*, May 18, 1991: A1.; Christopher Marquis and Alfonso Chardy. "U.S. Offers New Initiative on Cuba Bush Outlines Conditions For Improved Relations." *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 1991: A1.

⁵²⁹ Chardy. "Exile Says He Met Cuban Officials Topic Was Future After Castro."; Marquis and Chardy. "U.S. Offers New Initiative on Cuba Bush Outlines Conditions For Improved Relations."; Betancourt, Ernesto F. "U.S. Policy Toes Exile Group's Line." *The Miami Herald*, September 13, 1991: A21.

⁵³⁰ Alfonso Chardy. "Exile Says He Met Cuban Officials Topic Was Future After Castro." *The Miami Herald*, May 18, 1991: A1.

⁵³¹ Betancourt, Ernesto F. "U.S. Policy Toes Exile Group's Line."

⁵³² Alfonso Chardy. "Group Selective in Exile Unity Effort." *The Miami Herald*, June 17, 1991: B1.

However, they intentionally left out pro-dialogue organizations. Sixty-five organizations signed a unity statement on July 12, 1991, before a full Dade County Auditorium.⁵³³

Eight Cuban-American state legislators called on President Bush to pressure the Soviet Union to remove Castro to receive aid.⁵³⁴ They were Sen. Javier Souto, Sen. Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Sen. Roberto Casas, Rep. Miguel DeGrandy, Rep. Luis Morse, Rep. Rudy Garcia, Rep. Carlos Valdes, and Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart.⁵³⁵ Luis Rojas and Alberto Gutman did not.⁵³⁶

Senators Jesse Helms (N.C.) and Connie Mack (F.L.) sponsored bills to cut off U.S. aid to the Soviet Union and not allow them into the International Monetary Fund, respectively, until they stopped supporting Cuba financially and diplomatically.⁵³⁷ CANF was vital in lobbying for the amendments.⁵³⁸ Other members of Congress pushing to condition aid to the USSR based on Cuba were Senator Bob Graham (D-FL), Representative Barney Frank (D-MA), Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Representative Bill McCollum (R-FL), Representative Jon Kyl (R-AZ), and Representative John Miller (R-WA).

⁵³³ Alfonso Chardy. "65 Groups Rally Against Fidel Castro." *The Miami Herald*, July 13, 1991: B1.

⁵³⁴ Alfonso Chardy. "Legislators Press Bush Over Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, June 21, 1991: A9.

⁵³⁵ Chardy. "Legislators Press Bush Over Cuba."

⁵³⁶ Chardy. "Legislators Press Bush Over Cuba."

⁵³⁷ Alfonso Chardy. "Senate Links U.S. Aid To Soviet Cutoff Of Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, July 25, 1991: A1.

⁵³⁸ Chardy. "Senate Links U.S. Aid to Soviet Cutoff Of Cuba."

Several Cuban exiles testified before a U.S. House of Representatives panel on July 31, 1991, regarding how the U.S. Government should approach Cuba's situation.⁵³⁹ Representative Robert Torricelli (D-NJ) complained that the embargo had not worked for the past thirty years, so Congress should put more pressure on Castro.⁵⁴⁰ Jorge Mas Canosa, Jose Sorzano, Jaime Suchlicki, and Tony Varona all agreed that increased pressure and cutting off Castro's money supply would be the best approach.⁵⁴¹ Mas Canosa argued:

Recognizing, as all of us have, that economic failure became a chief catalyst of democratic reform throughout the Soviet bloc, U.S. policy must focus on Castro's pursuit of Western capital and actively dissuade foreign countries and businesses from filling the financial void left by the Soviet Union.

More specifically, Mas Canosa recommended disallowing foreign subsidiaries of U.S. companies to do business with Cuba, forcing ships that enter Cuban waters to wait six months before they enter U.S. ports, and preventing Cuban goods from entering the United States via third countries, especially considering NAFTA was in the negotiation stage.⁵⁴² In contrast, CODEHU's Ramon Cernuda and the Center for Cuban Democracy's Enrique Baloyra encouraged a national reconciliation process that dissidents like Elizardo

⁵³⁹ Christopher Marquis. "Exiles Differ Before Congress on Roads To Changes In Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, August 1, 1991: A9.

⁵⁴⁰ Marquis. "Exiles Differ Before Congress on Roads To Changes In Cuba."

⁵⁴¹ Marquis. "Exiles Differ Before Congress on Roads To Changes In Cuba."

⁵⁴² Marquis. "Exiles Differ Before Congress on Roads To Changes In Cuba."

Sanchez endorsed.⁵⁴³ They would condition normalization, ending the embargo, and returning the Guantanamo base on a national debate to initiate a democratic transition.⁵⁴⁴

On September 13, *The Miami Herald* published Ernesto Betancourt's op-ed criticizing the Bush administration for allowing CANF to determine U.S. policy toward Cuba at a critical time.⁵⁴⁵ His sources in Cuba reported disenchantment with the Castro regime and the foundation, causing them to hedge their bets that Castro will be less detrimental for their future than his removal and the potential for vengeful exiles to impose their policies on the island.⁵⁴⁶ CANF purported to have buyers willing to pay \$15 billion for 60% of Cuban land and assets, not accounting for the nationalism that prevailed even as Marxism declined.⁵⁴⁷ Betancourt asserted that CANF advocated U.S. intervention privately, as did 56% of the Cuban-American community, but denied it publicly.⁵⁴⁸ By siding with CANF, the administration undermined dissident preferences within Cuba.⁵⁴⁹ He concluded, "Cuba can no longer be a Soviet surrogate. Neither should it be an American colony. The time has come to let Cuba be Cuba."⁵⁵⁰

Whereas dissidents had not been the focus of the anti-Castro crusade previously, exiles on all sides of the debate regarding Cuba were increasingly coordinating with like-

⁵⁴³ Marquis. "Exiles Differ Before Congress on Roads To Changes In Cuba."

⁵⁴⁴ Marquis. "Exiles Differ Before Congress on Roads To Changes In Cuba."

⁵⁴⁵ Betancourt. "U.S. Policy Toes Exile Group's Line."

⁵⁴⁶ Betancourt. "U.S. Policy Toes Exile Group's Line."

⁵⁴⁷ Betancourt. "U.S. Policy Toes Exile Group's Line."

⁵⁴⁸ Betancourt. "U.S. Policy Toes Exile Group's Line."

⁵⁴⁹ Betancourt. "U.S. Policy Toes Exile Group's Line."

⁵⁵⁰ Betancourt. "U.S. Policy Toes Exile Group's Line."

minded internal opposition for them to take the lead.⁵⁵¹ Even CANF established formal ties to dissidents in the fall of 1991.⁵⁵² Dissidents had been stepping up their anti-Castro efforts on their own and creating coalitions.⁵⁵³ Unfortunately, the factions among exiles were affecting dissident efforts at creating alliances.⁵⁵⁴

The Treasury Department instituted new limits on the amount of money Cuban-Americans visiting the island could spend on travel.⁵⁵⁵ Private Miami agencies charged \$500-700 for Cuban-American travel, but the Treasury set the maximum was \$250 for airplane tickets, \$250 for processing.⁵⁵⁶ Journalists, on the other hand, paid \$225 for airfare and \$36 for a visa.⁵⁵⁷ Processing Cuban-American visas required far more paperwork than that for other Americans permitted to travel to Cuba. CANF and allies like Senator Connie Mack were continually pressing to close loopholes in the embargo.⁵⁵⁸

One of the biggest problems for pro-capitalist forces to promote business in Cuba was the lack of available capital, so Jorge Mas Canosa pursued Wall Street firms' potential to issue bonds that would help revive the Cuban economy after Castro.⁵⁵⁹ Jaime

⁵⁵¹ Alfonso Chardy. "Exiles Increasing Contact with Dissidents In Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 16, 1991: A1.

⁵⁵² Chardy. "Exiles Increasing Contact with Dissidents In Cuba."

⁵⁵³ Chardy. "Exiles Increasing Contact with Dissidents In Cuba."

⁵⁵⁴ Chardy. "Exiles Increasing Contact with Dissidents In Cuba."

⁵⁵⁵ Christopher Marquis. "U.S. To Limit Spending Allowed on Cuba Travel." *The Miami Herald*, September 19, 1991: A1.; Christopher Marquis. "U.S. Avoids Tough Talk on Castro." *The Miami Herald*, September 22, 1991: A14.

⁵⁵⁶ Marquis. "U.S. To Limit Spending Allowed on Cuba Travel."

⁵⁵⁷ Marquis. "U.S. To Limit Spending Allowed on Cuba Travel."

⁵⁵⁸ Marquis. "U.S. To Limit Spending Allowed on Cuba Travel."

⁵⁵⁹ Alfonso Chardy. "Bond Issue Sought to Aid New Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 27, 1991: B1.

Suchlicki consulted businesses on prospects.⁵⁶⁰ Even the Bacardis and Fanjuls were considering returning.⁵⁶¹ The Latin Builders Association was looking at facilitating a construction boom.⁵⁶² Exiles were saving money to return.⁵⁶³ Local and state officials and Miami businesses were considering local improvements that could accommodate increased trade.⁵⁶⁴ Former Cuban military officer, Bay of Pigs officer, and D.C. National Guard officer Erneido Oliva prepared to provide leadership to rebuild the armed forces of a democratic Cuba.⁵⁶⁵ Mas Canosa's solution to this potential acrimony with Cubans living on the island was for exiles to buy back their properties and compensate the current owners rather than staking their claims.⁵⁶⁶

Miami exile groups redoubled their paramilitary training.⁵⁶⁷ Cuba sentenced three Miami exiles to death for trying to infiltrate the island on December 29, 1991, with a cache of weapons.⁵⁶⁸ Families of the three visited Washington, D.C., with the help of

⁵⁶⁰ Lizette Alvarez and Alfonso Chardy. "Planning A Post-Castro Bonanza Firms Big and Small Gear Up To Flood Cuba With Goods." *The Miami Herald*, September 29, 1991: A1.

⁵⁶¹ Alvarez and Chardy. "Planning A Post-Castro Bonanza Firms Big and Small Gear Up To Flood Cuba With Goods."

⁵⁶² Alvarez and Chardy. "Planning A Post-Castro Bonanza Firms Big and Small Gear Up To Flood Cuba With Goods."

⁵⁶³ Alvarez and Chardy. "Planning A Post-Castro Bonanza Firms Big and Small Gear Up To Flood Cuba With Goods."

⁵⁶⁴ Alvarez and Chardy. "Planning A Post-Castro Bonanza Firms Big and Small Gear Up To Flood Cuba With Goods."

⁵⁶⁵ Don Bohning. "Soldier Renews His Battle for Castro's Overthrow His Mission: To Hasten 'A Free Cuba'." *The Miami Herald*, December 27, 1992: A22.

⁵⁶⁶ Tamayo. "Divining Cuba's Future Soviet Transformations Augur Both Ill and Well For Cubans."

⁵⁶⁷ Gehrke. "Lawmaker Pushes for Tighter Embargo."

⁵⁶⁸ Gehrke. "Lawmaker Pushes for Tighter Embargo."

CANF, and the White House formally requested that Cuba stay the executions, to no avail.⁵⁶⁹ Andres Vargas Gomez and Armando Perez-Roura promoted a petition to request that the White House sanction renewed Cuban exile military action against Castro.⁵⁷⁰

Eleven exile organizations that often competed banded together to sign an open letter opposing the foreign investment in Cuba that the Castro regime was trying to attract.⁵⁷¹ CANF, Social Democratic Coordinating Group of Cuba, Independent and Democratic Cuba, the Cuban Committee for Human Rights, the Cuban Democratic Revolutionary Directorate, the Rebel Army in Exile, the Ex Club, Liberty and Life, the Pro Human Rights Party of Cuba, and the Cuban Liberal Union resoundingly condemned investments like Spanish hotels, French oil drilling, and other recent corporate arrivals.⁵⁷² They diverged on the topic of confiscation; Domingo Moreira said it was a possibility, but Ramon Cernuda said that confiscations would too closely mirror what the Castro government did in the early years of the revolution.⁵⁷³ Around the same time, several dissident groups signed a document requesting that the United States lift the embargo and negotiate Guantanamo's return.⁵⁷⁴ They demanded that the Cuban government respect

⁵⁶⁹ Christopher Marquis. "U.S. Asks Cuba To Rethink Executions." *The Miami Herald*, January 15, 1992: A9.

⁵⁷⁰ "Miami Federal Court Noriega Trial Now Delayed Until Feb. 3." *The Miami Herald*, January 22, 1992: B2.

⁵⁷¹ Mimi Whitefield. "Exile Groups Condemn Investment in Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, May 6, 1992: A17.

⁵⁷² Whitefield. "Exile Groups Condemn Investment in Cuba."

⁵⁷³ Whitefield. "Exile Groups Condemn Investment in Cuba."

⁵⁷⁴ Whitefield. "Exile Groups Condemn Investment in Cuba."

universal rights but also wanted Cuba to maintain its sovereignty, free of foreign interference.⁵⁷⁵

As the international system fluctuated and security threat assessments shifted, strategies adapted, but there was less consensus among the community and with Washington on to what degree Cuba posed a threat, how to combat it, and how to promote a more open society. Jorge Mas Canosa, Democratic Florida Senator Bob Graham, and Democratic New Jersey Representative Robert Torricelli led Washington and Miami to coalesce around the first major legislative update to the Cuban embargo since the 1960s. The fact that the 1992 presidential election coincided with the legislative debates helped to push the bill over the finish line.

The Cuban Democracy Act of 1992

The battle over the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 (CDA), also known as the Torricelli Act, began in January of that year.⁵⁷⁶ The chairman of the House subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs Representative Robert Torricelli (D-NJ), working closely with CANF and Senator Bob Graham (D-FL), spearheaded the effort and sponsored the bill.⁵⁷⁷ “Torricelli quickly identified Cuba as a hot-button issue in a region relegated to the back burner by the Bush administration.”⁵⁷⁸ His goal was to cut off all support to the

⁵⁷⁵ Whitefield. "Exile Groups Condemn Investment in Cuba."

⁵⁷⁶ Donna Gehrke. "Lawmaker Pushes for Tighter Embargo." *The Miami Herald*, January 13, 1992: A8.

⁵⁷⁷ Gehrke. "Lawmaker Pushes for Tighter Embargo."; Tom Fiedler. "How Candidates Were Squeezed on Castro Policy." *The Miami Herald*, April 26, 1992: C1.

⁵⁷⁸ Christopher Marquis. "Embargo Bill's Success Testifies to Exiles' Clout." *The Miami Herald*, September 28, 1992: A1.

flailing Castro regime, insisting that there would be no compromise.⁵⁷⁹ Mas wrote a draft with the sticks, and Torricelli added the carrots.⁵⁸⁰ He formally introduced a draft of the bill to the public at the Miami Congressional Workshop on Political, Economic, and Security Issues in the Western Hemisphere weeks before introducing the bill to Congress.⁵⁸¹ Florida Representatives Dante Fascell and Larry Smith supported the bill early on.⁵⁸²

Representative Torricelli visited CANF at their January 1992 celebration of Jose Marti's birthday.⁵⁸³ Torricelli declared his intention of intensifying pressure at a precarious time for Castro, declaring, "No more time. No more compromise. It is the end!"⁵⁸⁴ Torricelli's financial contributions from Cuban-Americans were also increasing.⁵⁸⁵ Eighteen Hispanic Miamians contributed nearly \$12,000 to his campaign in 1991.⁵⁸⁶

Early drafts of the CDA outlined several "carrot and stick" provisions to increase pressure on Castro.⁵⁸⁷ These included requiring the president to seek foreign cooperation

⁵⁷⁹ Gehrke. "Lawmaker Pushes for Tighter Embargo."

⁵⁸⁰ Marquis. "Embargo Bill's Success Testifies to Exiles' Clout."

⁵⁸¹ Gehrke. "Lawmaker Pushes for Tighter Embargo."

⁵⁸² Marquis. "Embargo Bill's Success Testifies to Exiles' Clout."

⁵⁸³ "Congressman to Talk On Cuba At Foundation Meeting Tonight." *The Miami Herald*, January 28, 1992: B2.; David Hancock. "Exiles Cheer Lawmaker's Cuba Plan." *The Miami Herald*, January 29, 1992: B1.

⁵⁸⁴ Hancock. "Exiles Cheer Lawmaker's Cuba Plan."

⁵⁸⁵ Alfonso Chardy. "Phone Link May Ring Up Cash for Cuba Havana Would Get Funds From Improved Service With The U.S." *The Miami Herald*, February 23, 1992: A1.

⁵⁸⁶ Chardy. "Phone Link May Ring Up Cash for Cuba Havana Would Get Funds From Improved Service With The U.S."

⁵⁸⁷ Hancock. "Exiles Cheer Lawmaker's Cuba Plan."

with the Cuban trade embargo,⁵⁸⁸ denying U.S. aid to countries that subsidize the regime,⁵⁸⁹ prohibiting foreign subsidiaries of U.S. companies from new trade with Cuba, and eliminating tax breaks for those already operating.⁵⁹⁰ In 1990, U.S. subsidiaries' trade with Cuba had hit a record of \$705 million.⁵⁹¹ The CDA would provide medicine, upgraded telephone lines, direct mail service, and assistance to dissidents.⁵⁹²

Jorge Mas Canosa changed his mind about normalizing telephone services and helped to convince the Bush administration to authorize State and the Treasury to allow AT&T to improve communications with the island.⁵⁹³ Jorge Dominguez said that Mas conceded this measure to obtain bipartisan support.⁵⁹⁴ Proponents of this measure justified that increased contact with islanders would erode Castro's control over information and outweigh any payments that the Castro regime would receive.⁵⁹⁵ Torricelli expressed confidence in the "corrosive effect of communications."⁵⁹⁶ However,

⁵⁸⁸ Hancock. "Exiles Cheer Lawmaker's Cuba Plan."

⁵⁸⁹ Hancock. "Exiles Cheer Lawmaker's Cuba Plan."; Chardy. "Phone Link May Ring Up Cash for Cuba Havana Would Get Funds From Improved Service With The U.S."

⁵⁹⁰ Hancock. "Exiles Cheer Lawmaker's Cuba Plan."; Tom Fiedler. "How Candidates Were Squeezed on Castro Policy." *The Miami Herald*, April 26, 1992: C1.; Christopher Marquis. "Bush Gives Support to Cuba Bill." *The Miami Herald*, May 6, 1992: A1.

⁵⁹¹ Chardy. "Phone Link May Ring Up Cash for Cuba Havana Would Get Funds From Improved Service With The U.S."

⁵⁹² David Hancock. "Exiles Cheer Lawmaker's Cuba Plan." *The Miami Herald*, January 29, 1992: B1.

⁵⁹³ Chardy. "Phone Link May Ring Up Cash for Cuba Havana Would Get Funds From Improved Service With The U.S."

⁵⁹⁴ Marquis. "Embargo Bill's Success Testifies to Exiles' Clout."

⁵⁹⁵ Chardy. "Phone Link May Ring Up Cash for Cuba Havana Would Get Funds From Improved Service With The U.S."

⁵⁹⁶ Christopher Marquis and Mimi Whitefield. "Democracy in Cuba: 2 Strategies." *The Miami Herald*, September 18, 1992: A8.

many of those who had long petitioned for improved telephone communication with Cuba opposed the Torricelli bill's tightening of the embargo.⁵⁹⁷ Cuba rejected the offer, skeptical of the motives.⁵⁹⁸

The CDA would disallow ships that trade in Cuban ports from entering U.S. ports,⁵⁹⁹ and it would insist that a transitional government hold free and fair elections within six months or the United States would deny aid.⁶⁰⁰ It essentially created a blueprint for U.S.-Cuba policy in a democratic transition and limited presidential authority on U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba.⁶⁰¹ The guidelines on shipping and U.S. subsidiaries had previously been a part of the embargo until October 1975.⁶⁰²

A Sergio Bendixen poll of Miami-Dade Cuban-Americans demonstrated this sentiment.⁶⁰³ Two-thirds believed that infighting about exile groups prolonged Castro's regime.⁶⁰⁴ Half viewed CANF as the most respected exile organization.⁶⁰⁵ Nearly half thought that both exiles and Cubans on the island should lead the next government, while

⁵⁹⁷ Chardy. "Phone Link May Ring Up Cash for Cuba Havana Would Get Funds From Improved Service With The U.S."

⁵⁹⁸ Chardy. "Phone Link May Ring Up Cash for Cuba Havana Would Get Funds From Improved Service With The U.S."

⁵⁹⁹ David Hancock. "Exiles Cheer Lawmaker's Cuba Plan." *The Miami Herald*, January 29, 1992: B1.

⁶⁰⁰ Alfonso Chardy. "Pro-Dialogue Exiles Blast Move to Tighten Embargo Against Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, February 15, 1992: B4.

⁶⁰¹ Mimi Whitefield. "Bill Would Shape U.S. Policies on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, October 4, 1992: A8.

⁶⁰² Whitefield. "Bill Would Shape U.S. Policies on Cuba."

⁶⁰³ Carl Goldfarb. "City's New Elite Addressing Issues of Community." *The Miami Herald*, April 29, 1992: A1.

⁶⁰⁴ Goldfarb. "City's New Elite Addressing Issues of Community."

⁶⁰⁵ Goldfarb. "City's New Elite Addressing Issues of Community."

a third felt that only Cuban islanders should.⁶⁰⁶ Forty-four percent supported Mas Canosa as the next president of Cuba—far surpassing other options—and forty-seven percent took his side in the *Miami Herald* dispute.⁶⁰⁷

Twelve pro-dialogue Cuban-American activists met with Representative Torricelli in Miami to express their opposition to and concerns with his bill to tighten the embargo for fear that it would strengthen Castro's power.⁶⁰⁸ Torricelli disagreed with the dialogue proponents, confident that it would facilitate Castro's departure.⁶⁰⁹ Ramon Cernuda compared the bill to the Platt Amendment.⁶¹⁰

GOP presidential candidates touted their Cuban policies as they campaigned in Miami, where nearly 70% of countywide Republican voters were Hispanic.⁶¹¹ Patrick Buchanan promoted a stricter stance on Cuba, while Carlos Salman and Armando Codina co-chaired President Bush's campaign and Jeb Bush made rounds on Spanish-language radio for his father.⁶¹² Contrary to the Cuba focus in the campaign, a *Miami Herald* poll found that the top three issues for Cuban-Americans in the 1992 election were the

⁶⁰⁶ Goldfarb. "City's New Elite Addressing Issues of Community."

⁶⁰⁷ Goldfarb. "City's New Elite Addressing Issues of Community."

⁶⁰⁸ Alfonso Chardy. "Pro-Dialogue Exiles Blast Move to Tighten Embargo Against Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, February 15, 1992: B4.

⁶⁰⁹ Chardy. "Pro-Dialogue Exiles Blast Move to Tighten Embargo Against Cuba."

⁶¹⁰ Chardy. "Pro-Dialogue Exiles Blast Move to Tighten Embargo Against Cuba."

⁶¹¹ Anne Bartlett. "GOP Candidates Work Hard for Cuban Americans' Votes." *The Miami Herald*, March 5, 1992: A17.

⁶¹² Bartlett. "GOP Candidates Work Hard for Cuban Americans' Votes.;" "Miami Noriega Defense Close to Resting Case." *The Miami Herald*, March 10, 1992: B2.

economy, healthcare, and education.⁶¹³ Nevertheless, candidates routinely centered Cuba policy when soliciting Cuban-American votes. CANF contributed to and benefited from this narrative of Cuba-centric voting as it lobbied politicians.

A House Foreign Affairs subcommittee held a hearing on the CDA.⁶¹⁴ For the first time, dissidents on the island weighed in on U.S. legislation by issuing statements and audio recordings of their opinions.⁶¹⁵ Ramon Cernuda conveyed Elizardo Sanchez, Gustavo Arcos, and Osvaldo Paya's "Declaration of Goodwill" and opposition to tightening the embargo in the hearing.⁶¹⁶ They feared that external pressure would give the Cuban government an excuse to exert more repressive policies, breach sovereignty, and harm the island economically.⁶¹⁷ Several others supported strengthening the embargo.⁶¹⁸

Pressure from Torricelli, the Cuban-American community, and presidential campaign competitors increasingly painted President Bush into a corner domestically as he hesitated to support the Cuban Democracy Act in full.⁶¹⁹ Internationally, he was concerned about its effect on transnational corporations, foreign allies, post-Soviet

⁶¹³ Bartlett. "GOP Candidates Work Hard for Cuban Americans' Votes."

⁶¹⁴ Mimi Whitefield. "Dissidents in Cuba Lobby U.S. Taking 2 Sides On Embargo Bill." *The Miami Herald*, March 31, 1992: A1.

⁶¹⁵ Whitefield. "Dissidents in Cuba Lobby U.S. Taking 2 Sides On Embargo Bill."

⁶¹⁶ Whitefield. "Dissidents in Cuba Lobby U.S. Taking 2 Sides On Embargo Bill."

⁶¹⁷ Whitefield. "Dissidents in Cuba Lobby U.S. Taking 2 Sides On Embargo Bill."

⁶¹⁸ Whitefield. "Dissidents in Cuba Lobby U.S. Taking 2 Sides On Embargo Bill."

⁶¹⁹ Christopher Marquis. "Bush May Compromise on Cuba Embargo Bill." *The Miami Herald*, April 9, 1992: A22.; Christopher Marquis. "Bush Gives Support to Cuba Bill." *The Miami Herald*, May 6, 1992: A1.

relations, and U.S.-Cuban relations.⁶²⁰ His administration expressed willingness to accept the bill with specific provisions, but they were concerned that it would ostracize foreign partners.⁶²¹ It could harm their efforts to re-establish relations with Russia, arguably infringe on the sovereignty of allies, and shift the focus of anti-Castro activism from Cuba to the United States.⁶²² Moreover, it could damage the North American Free Trade Agreement negotiations then underway.⁶²³ On the other hand, they welcomed the penalties for violations of the Trading with the Enemy Act and encouraged expanding seizure and forfeiture rules.⁶²⁴ Torricelli signaled that he was more than willing to embarrass Bush for not unequivocally accepting the bill.⁶²⁵

Although they denied it in public, reports surfaced of Torricelli and Ros-Lehtinen fighting over the CDA behind the scenes.⁶²⁶ Ros-Lehtinen preferred a harder line against Castro than the bill proposed, even though CANF backed the bill.⁶²⁷ She took umbrage with and killed the cultural, educational, and scientific exchanges, unlimited travel for human rights activists, a statement of no U.S. hostility toward Cuba, and opening

⁶²⁰ Tom Fiedler. "How Candidates Were Squeezed on Castro Policy." *The Miami Herald*, April 26, 1992: C1.

⁶²¹ Marquis. "Bush May Compromise on Cuba Embargo Bill."

⁶²² Marquis. "Bush May Compromise on Cuba Embargo Bill."

⁶²³ Christopher Marquis. "Embargo Bill's Success Testifies to Exiles' Clout." *The Miami Herald*, September 28, 1992: A1.

⁶²⁴ Marquis. "Bush May Compromise on Cuba Embargo Bill."

⁶²⁵ Marquis. "Bush May Compromise on Cuba Embargo Bill."; David Hancock. "Bush Acts to Squeeze Cuba Trade Parcels from Miami? It's Up to Castro Now." *The Miami Herald*, April 19, 1992: A1.

⁶²⁶ Christopher Marquis. "Torricelli Cuba Bill Source of Bad Blood with Ros-Lehtinen." *The Miami Herald*, April 14, 1992: A16.

⁶²⁷ Marquis. "Torricelli Cuba Bill Source of Bad Blood with Ros-Lehtinen."

reciprocal news bureaus in Washington and Havana.⁶²⁸ Despite her continued reservations, she came to support it.⁶²⁹

Bush and one of his foreign policy advisors, Bernard Aronson, struggled to compromise with Torricelli, but they met with Mas throughout the spring.⁶³⁰ President Bush instituted an executive order implementing two of the bill's provisions on April 18 as a short-term compromise.⁶³¹ The executive order barred ships that trade with Cuba from entering U.S. ports and granted charter flights permission to ship humanitarian aid to individual Cuban families.⁶³² He appeared to withdraw support of upgrading Cuba's telephone infrastructure out of fear that it would benefit Castro financially.⁶³³ Cuban officials said that the country would likely reject packages from the United States until commercial flights resumed.⁶³⁴ The day after the announcement, Cuban authorities

⁶²⁸ Marquis. "Torricelli Cuba Bill Source of Bad Blood with Ros-Lehtinen."; Marquis. "Embargo Bill's Success Testifies to Exiles' Clout."

⁶²⁹ Marquis. "Embargo Bill's Success Testifies to Exiles' Clout."

⁶³⁰ Tom Fiedler. "How Candidates Were Squeezed on Castro Policy." *The Miami Herald*, April 26, 1992: C1.

⁶³¹ David Hancock. "Bush Acts to Squeeze Cuba Trade Parcels From Miami? It's Up to Castro Now." *The Miami Herald*, April 19, 1992: A1.; Christopher Marquis. "Bush Lead On Cuba Policy 'Astute' Appropriates Mild Measures." *The Miami Herald*, April 21, 1992: A8.; Fiedler. "How Candidates Were Squeezed on Castro Policy."

⁶³² Hancock. "Bush Acts to Squeeze Cuba Trade Parcels from Miami? It's Up to Castro Now."

⁶³³ Hancock. "Bush Acts to Squeeze Cuba Trade Parcels from Miami? It's Up to Castro Now."

⁶³⁴ Marquis. "Bush Lead On Cuba Policy 'Astute' Appropriates Mild Measures."

arrested three dissidents: Carmen Arias, Omar Lopez Montenegro, and Dr. Omar del Pozo.⁶³⁵ The U.S. State Department called for their release and five others.⁶³⁶

Jorge Mas Canosa simultaneously sought Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton's endorsement for the Torricelli bill that spring, noting that Clinton would receive more support and donations from the Cuban community if he did.⁶³⁷ At a fundraiser in Little Havana on April 23, Clinton said, "I like it," when the topic of the CDA came up.⁶³⁸ Clinton's Cuban-American sister-in-law also urged him to take a hardline on Cuba to improve his popularity with Cuban-Americans.⁶³⁹ Clinton had also been actively studying the Cuban-American community since 1990.⁶⁴⁰ "He, apparently, believes that no group is better qualified to advise him on Cuba than those who were driven from it."⁶⁴¹ Former Clinton campaign staffer Jeff Eller provided another explanation for Clinton's eagerness to court Cuban-Americans:

We all knew that there was no percentage in wooing the Cuban vote. It's a Republican vote. But the way Clinton works is that if there are ten people in a room and nine like him but one doesn't, he becomes completely focused and hell-bent on getting that one guy to like him. And that's what happened with him and

⁶³⁵ Mimi Whitefield. "U.S. Calls for Release Of 8 Jailed Dissidents in Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, April 23, 1992: A31.

⁶³⁶ Whitefield. "U.S. Calls for Release Of 8 Jailed Dissidents In Cuba."; Mimi Whitefield. "Cuban Dissident Reyes Tried." *The Miami Herald*, October 31, 1992: A11.

⁶³⁷ Fiedler. "How Candidates Were Squeezed on Castro Policy."

⁶³⁸ Fiedler. "How Candidates Were Squeezed on Castro Policy."

⁶³⁹ Smith, Adam C. "Hillary Clinton's connections to Florida are complicated." *The Miami Herald*, October 19, 2016.

⁶⁴⁰ Tom Fiedler. "A Look Behind Bill Clinton's Cuba Stance." *The Miami Herald*, August 28, 1994: M4.

⁶⁴¹ Fiedler. "A Look Behind Bill Clinton's Cuba Stance."

the Miami exiles. In order to get the Holdouts to like him, he ended up giving them everything they wanted.⁶⁴²

Upon hearing that his challenger, Bill Clinton, approved of the CDA and was making inroads with a community to which Bush had close connections, the pressure was still on Bush to cosign the full CDA after implementing the executive order.⁶⁴³ Bush relented and agreed to support the bill a couple of weeks later despite international allies' objections.⁶⁴⁴

The House Foreign Affairs Committee approved the CDA in June with some amendments.⁶⁴⁵ One allowed the president to grant exceptions in the ban on aid, trade agreements, or debt forgiveness to countries supporting Cuba.⁶⁴⁶ The sale of medicines and medical equipment would be contingent on inspections ensuring they reach the proper destinations.⁶⁴⁷ The version of the bill introduced imposed \$50,000 fines on top of existing criminal penalties on Americans traveling to Cuba without authorization for cultural, scientific, or educational activities.⁶⁴⁸ The Senate began subcommittee hearings on an identical bill that Senator Bob Graham introduced with 51 cosponsors in August.⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴² Bardach, *Cuba Confidential*, 129.

⁶⁴³ Fiedler. "How Candidates Were Squeezed on Castro Policy."; Christopher Marquis. "Stiffer Rules on Cuba Enforced: First Ship Turned Away from Port." *The Miami Herald*, September 15, 1992: A11.

⁶⁴⁴ Christopher Marquis. "Bush Gives Support to Cuba Bill." *The Miami Herald*, May 6, 1992: A1.

⁶⁴⁵ Christopher Marquis. "House Committee Backs Torricelli's Bill on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, June 5, 1992: A10.

⁶⁴⁶ Marquis. "House Committee Backs Torricelli's Bill on Cuba."

⁶⁴⁷ Marquis. "House Committee Backs Torricelli's Bill on Cuba."

⁶⁴⁸ Marquis. "House Committee Backs Torricelli's Bill on Cuba."

⁶⁴⁹ Christopher Marquis. "Torricelli Cuba Bill Makes Way to Senate." *The Miami Herald*, August 5, 1992: A10.; "Committees - S.2918 - 102nd Congress (1991-1992): Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 | Congress.Gov | Library of Congress." Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/102nd->

Subcommittee Chairman Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) opposed the bill imposing a U.S. litmus test regarding Cuba on other countries, punishing allies and U.S. businesses as collateral damage in targeting Castro, so he delayed bringing it before the subcommittee.⁶⁵⁰ Dodd returned a campaign contribution from CANF in the spring, whereas Torricelli accepted nearly \$27,000 in donations from them in the previous year.⁶⁵¹ The panel of witnesses the subcommittee called testified that it would cost U.S. companies \$700 million and strengthen Castro's anti-American propaganda.⁶⁵² Other reasons members of the community and Congress opposed the CDA included the likely shortage of food and medicine for the Cuban people, embargos in general harming agriculture interests, and the effect on U.S. jobs associated with multinational firms.⁶⁵³ Island Cubans generally viewed the bill as neo-imperialist, like the Platt Amendment.⁶⁵⁴

[congress/senate-bill/2918/committees?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22bob+graham%22%5D%7D&r=7&s=7](https://www.congress.gov/bill/102nd-congress/senate-bill/2918/committees?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22bob+graham%22%5D%7D&r=7&s=7).

[bill/2918/cosponsors?q={%22search%22:\[%22bob+graham%22\]}&r=7&s=7&searchResultViewType=expanded](https://www.congress.gov/bill/102nd-congress/senate-bill/2918/cosponsors?q={%22search%22:[%22bob+graham%22]}&r=7&s=7&searchResultViewType=expanded)

⁶⁵⁰ Marquis. "Torricelli Cuba Bill Makes Way to Senate."; Christopher Marquis. "Cuba Bill To Cost U.S. Firms Millions." *The Miami Herald*, August 6, 1992: A22.; Christopher Marquis. "Senate OKs Bill to Limit Cuba Trade." *The Miami Herald*, September 19, 1992: A1.; "Committees - S.2918 - 102nd Congress (1991-1992): Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 | Congress.Gov | Library of Congress." Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/102nd-congress/senate-bill/2918/committees?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22bob+graham%22%5D%7D&r=7&s=7>.

⁶⁵¹ Christopher Marquis. "Cuba Bill To Cost U.S. Firms Millions." *The Miami Herald*, August 6, 1992: A22.

⁶⁵² Marquis. "Cuba Bill To Cost U.S. Firms Millions."

⁶⁵³ Marquis. "Embargo Bill's Success Testifies to Exiles' Clout."

⁶⁵⁴ Marquis. "Embargo Bill's Success Testifies to Exiles' Clout."

Bill Clinton's Cuban-American campaign picked up the pace and increased effort in the last stretch.⁶⁵⁵ His Southern strategy had him repeatedly visiting Little Havana with Mas's encouragement and the most positive reception for a Democratic candidate since JFK.⁶⁵⁶ Pro-embargo Cuban-American Chairman of the Democratic Party Simon Ferro was excited about Clinton and became one of Clinton's point men on Cuba and a contender for high-level leadership positions in the State Department.⁶⁵⁷ One poll showed that Clinton led Bush 56 to 38 percent among likely Dade county voters, 60 percent of whom also did not like the direction in which the country was headed.⁶⁵⁸ Cuban-Americans donated to his campaign and appreciated how Clinton's endorsement forced Bush's hand on the CDA.⁶⁵⁹ Bush nevertheless still led Clinton 72 to 23 percent among Cuban-Americans, but that was still twice as good as the previous Democratic candidate Michael Dukakis.⁶⁶⁰ Clinton also courted the political and financial support of Alfonso Fanjul, who become co-chairman of Clinton's campaign and put him in touch with Jorge Mas Canosa.⁶⁶¹

Former friends in Tallahassee, Javier Souto and Lincoln Diaz-Balart, battled for the unopposed Republican nomination for the newly-created, Hispanic-majority Florida

⁶⁵⁵ Tom Fiedler. "Clinton Clearly Fight for Florida Voters." *The Miami Herald*, August 13, 1992: A1.

⁶⁵⁶ Fiedler. "Clinton Clearly Fight for Florida Voters."

⁶⁵⁷ Fiedler. "Clinton Clearly Fight for Florida Voters."; Alfonso Chardy and Luis Feldstein Soto. "The Insider Miami Attorney May Become Clinton's Point Man on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, December 21, 1992: A1.

⁶⁵⁸ Fiedler. "Clinton Clearly Fight for Florida Voters."

⁶⁵⁹ Fiedler. "Clinton Clearly Fight for Florida Voters."

⁶⁶⁰ Fiedler. "Clinton Clearly Fight for Florida Voters."

⁶⁶¹ Smith. "Hillary Clinton's connections to Florida are complicated."

District 21 seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.⁶⁶² Souto portrayed Diaz-Balart as a former Democrat, opportunistic, trophy candidate of CANF and the wealthy, Miami, Cuban political establishment.⁶⁶³ Their conservative platforms were mostly the same, and Cuba loomed largely; many asked Diaz-Balart about his family's relationship to Castro, but Souto did not specifically mention it while arguing that he was tougher on Cuba than his competitor.⁶⁶⁴ Meanwhile, Cuban-American lawyer Magda Montiel Davis challenged Ros-Lehtinen as a Democrat in Congressional District 18.⁶⁶⁵ Montiel Davis filed FEC complaints against Spanish-language radio stations for personal attacks.⁶⁶⁶

The Senate passed the CDA in mid-September 1992 despite Senator Dodd's attempts at a filibuster.⁶⁶⁷ As the presidential election neared and polls showed the candidates were tied in Florida, both Clinton and Bush more enthusiastically lobbied for the CDA's passage, each expressing written support to Congress members.⁶⁶⁸ About a week after the Senate, the House approved the bill as an amendment to the Defense

⁶⁶² Andres Viglucci. "Former Friends Now Foes in Hot Congressional Race." *The Miami Herald*, August 16, 1992: B1.

⁶⁶³ Viglucci. "Former Friends Now Foes in Hot Congressional Race."

⁶⁶⁴ Viglucci. "Former Friends Now Foes in Hot Congressional Race."

⁶⁶⁵ Ivan Roman. "Democrat Launches Bid to Unseat Ros-Lehtinen." *The Miami Herald*, September 11, 1992: B6.

⁶⁶⁶ Liz Balmaseda. "Old Guard Sends New Message to Miami Cubans." *The Miami Herald*, October 24, 1992: B1.

⁶⁶⁷ Christopher Marquis. "Senate OKs Bill to Limit Cuba Trade." *The Miami Herald*, September 19, 1992: A1.

⁶⁶⁸ Christopher Marquis. "Bush, Clinton Endorse Tightening Restrictions on Cuba Trade." *The Miami Herald*, September 23, 1992: A4.

Authorization Bill.⁶⁶⁹ Jorge Mas Canosa beamed over the CDA passing despite opposition from major newspapers and “the business-industrial complex.”⁶⁷⁰ The passage was the biggest victory for CANF to date and perhaps the most notable since Radio Marti.⁶⁷¹ The support of Clinton ensured that CANF could maintain influence regardless of who won the presidency in November.⁶⁷² The CDA consolidated U.S.-Cuba policy for the first time.⁶⁷³ However, the Cuban diaspora did not unanimously approve of the bill.⁶⁷⁴ Ramon Cernuda, as a spokesman for many Cuban dissidents, disapproved of the bill’s violation of Cuban sovereignty and its effect on the Cuban people.⁶⁷⁵ He said, “We do not accept the Torricelli bill as a legitimate law. It seeks to starve the people of Cuba in the name of human rights and democratic values.”⁶⁷⁶ Canada and the United Kingdom legislated countermeasures, considering the law an encroachment on their sovereignty.⁶⁷⁷ Over a dozen other countries also had laws negating foreign countries’ trade restrictions on their own companies.⁶⁷⁸ The Cuban government launched a massive propaganda campaign with incendiary language, courted allies, and incited demonstrations against the

⁶⁶⁹ Christopher Marquis. "House: Tighten Embargo on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 25, 1992: A1.; Marquis. "Embargo Bill's Success Testifies to Exiles' Clout."

⁶⁷⁰ Marquis. "House: Tighten Embargo on Cuba."

⁶⁷¹ Marquis. "Embargo Bill's Success Testifies to Exiles' Clout."

⁶⁷² Marquis. "Embargo Bill's Success Testifies to Exiles' Clout."

⁶⁷³ Marquis. "Embargo Bill's Success Testifies to Exiles' Clout."

⁶⁷⁴ Alfonso Chardy. "Exiles Dismiss U.N. Embargo Vote." *The Miami Herald*, November 26, 1992: B1.

⁶⁷⁵ Marquis. "House: Tighten Embargo on Cuba."

⁶⁷⁶ Marquis. "House: Tighten Embargo on Cuba."

⁶⁷⁷ Mimi Whitefield. "Bill Would Shape U.S. Policies on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, October 4, 1992: A8.

⁶⁷⁸ Whitefield. "Bill Would Shape U.S. Policies on Cuba."

legislation as it awaited President Bush's signature.⁶⁷⁹ Cuban Catholic bishops objected to the bill and the Cuban government.⁶⁸⁰

MMW/Strategic Communications worked with CANF to release a 48-page report in 1991 on Cuba's imminent transition.⁶⁸¹ It proposed a Blue Ribbon Commission on the Economic Reconstruction of Cuba.⁶⁸² CANF researchers questioned arriving refugees for data and useful information.⁶⁸³ Mas Canosa and CANF developed relationships with policy-makers, scholars, corporations, and other heavy-hitters and distributed the newsletter *Cuba Survey* to them.⁶⁸⁴ It used that influence in Washington, D.C., and planned to transfer it to a new Cuba.⁶⁸⁵ The videotapes they smuggled to the island carried a message of the foundation's purpose to combat the communist government's narrative about exile leadership.⁶⁸⁶

About three hundred usually reserved leaders in the exile community endorsed Bill Clinton for president the day before President George H.W. Bush signed the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992.⁶⁸⁷ They even organized a political action committee for

⁶⁷⁹ Whitefield. "Bill Would Shape U.S. Policies on Cuba."

⁶⁸⁰ Whitefield. "Bill Would Shape U.S. Policies on Cuba."

⁶⁸¹ Peter Slevin. "Jorge Mas Canosa: The Road to Havana." *The Miami Herald*, October 11, 1992: A1.

⁶⁸² Slevin. "Jorge Mas Canosa: The Road to Havana."

⁶⁸³ Slevin. "Jorge Mas Canosa: The Road to Havana."

⁶⁸⁴ Slevin. "Jorge Mas Canosa: The Road to Havana."

⁶⁸⁵ Slevin. "Jorge Mas Canosa: The Road to Havana."

⁶⁸⁶ Slevin. "Jorge Mas Canosa: The Road to Havana."

⁶⁸⁷ Liz Balmaseda. "Old Guard Sends New Message to Miami Cubans." *The Miami Herald*, October 24, 1992: B1.

Clinton.⁶⁸⁸ Former political prisoner Eloy Gutierrez Menoya called them the mainstream, poor and working-class “silent current” that included Bay of Pigs veterans, dissidents, and former political prisoners among their ranks.⁶⁸⁹

President Bush signed the CDA before a Republican audience in Miami, excluding even the Democratic members of Congress that works on the bill like Torricelli and Graham.⁶⁹⁰ A week before the election and a few days after Bush signed the CDA in Miami, Clinton hosted a rally in Miami that attracted 18,000 people.⁶⁹¹ Cuban-Americans viewed him as the first Democratic candidate to reach out to the Cuban-American community in a long time, and CANF commended him on his outreach and commitment to a free Cuba in a written statement.⁶⁹² He campaigned heavily in Florida in the final stretch even though no Democratic presidential candidate had won Florida since 1976.⁶⁹³ Before the visit, CANF thanked him for his help on the CDA and arranged a meeting for when Clinton came to town.⁶⁹⁴ While in Florida, he met with his sister-in-law Maria Arias, Representative Dante Fascell, pro-Israel Democratic fundraiser and CANF ally Jerry Berlin, Mas Canosa, and other members of CANF—Pepe Hernandez, Diego Suarez, and Armando Munoz—but it was reportedly to ensure continued support of the

⁶⁸⁸ Balmaseda. "Old Guard Sends New Message to Miami Cubans."

⁶⁸⁹ Balmaseda. "Old Guard Sends New Message to Miami Cubans."

⁶⁹⁰ Tom Fiedler. "Mas' Statement." *The Miami Herald*, October 28, 1992: A1.

⁶⁹¹ Fiedler. "Mas' Statement."

⁶⁹² Fiedler. "Mas' Statement."

⁶⁹³ Fiedler. "Mas' Statement."

⁶⁹⁴ Ivan Roman and Tom Fiedler. "Clinton-Mas Meeting Shocks Cuban Miami." *The Miami Herald*, October 29, 1992: P1.

“Graham-Torricelli Bill” rather than an endorsement of his candidacy; many still supported Bush.⁶⁹⁵ Many members of the predominantly Republican community expressed outrage on call-in radio programs.⁶⁹⁶ In response, Mas Canosa said, “I’m a Republican, my vote is for President Bush, but my work for Cuba is much more important than my partisan preferences.”⁶⁹⁷ The Free Cuba PAC had always been bipartisan, even though it tended to favor Republicans.⁶⁹⁸ FEC records show that in the 1991-1992 election season, the PAC donated over twice as much money to Democrats than Republicans.⁶⁹⁹

A Mason Dixon Political/Media poll released that week showed that Bush’s approval with Cuban-Americans had dropped from 73 percent to 55 percent, and Clinton’s had risen from 19 percent to 36 percent that month.⁷⁰⁰ A WLTV-TV 23 poll showed that Bush’s support among Cuban-American had dropped from 91 percent to 78 percent in four years; his non-Cuban Hispanic support dropped from 87 percent to 45 percent.⁷⁰¹ Thirteen percent of Cuban-Americans favored Clinton.⁷⁰² Republicans were still dominant in the community, but Clinton had successfully made inroads.

⁶⁹⁵ Fiedler. "Mas' Statement."; Roman and Fiedler. "Clinton-Mas Meeting Shocks Cuban Miami."; Smith. "Hillary Clinton's connections to Florida are complicated."

⁶⁹⁶ Roman and Fiedler. "Clinton-Mas Meeting Shocks Cuban Miami."

⁶⁹⁷ "Coming and Going." *The Miami Herald*, October 30, 1992: A24.

⁶⁹⁸ "Cuban PAC Often Bipartisan." *The Miami Herald*, November 3, 1992: B2.

⁶⁹⁹ "Cuban PAC Often Bipartisan." *The Miami Herald*, November 3, 1992: B2.

⁷⁰⁰ Fiedler. "Mas' Statement."

⁷⁰¹ "Coming and Going."

⁷⁰² "Coming And Going."

But the Clintons instinctively understood Florida's multiple personalities — rural, urban, suburban, southern, northern, midwestern.

“In a state that sometimes seems as complicated as a U.N. meeting, they had comfort levels with all the various components of Florida that other candidates would spend years trying to develop,” said longtime Clinton adviser Craig Smith, noting that they lived in Arkansas, were educated in the northeast and she grew up in the Chicago suburbs.⁷⁰³

““Nobody had ever seen anything like this before. The Clintons just flat out-organized everybody else,” said Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn.”⁷⁰⁴

Countries worldwide denounced the Cuban Democracy Act for violating sovereignty, paradoxically strengthening the Castro regime, undermining free trade, and damaging U.S. credibility at international trade negotiations.⁷⁰⁵ Canada and Britain instituted blocking measures.⁷⁰⁶ The European Commission threatened to protest at international forums.⁷⁰⁷ Countries across Latin America, who had long resented American extraterritorial interference, decried it: Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico made public statements.⁷⁰⁸ Argentine President Carlos Menem canceled his scheduled appearance at CANF's annual banquet in November 1992, reportedly due to tension over the CDA.⁷⁰⁹ The United Nations General Assembly voted on a Cuban resolution to condemn the CDA—59 for, three

⁷⁰³ Smith. "Hillary Clinton's connections to Florida are complicated."

⁷⁰⁴ Smith. "Hillary Clinton's connections to Florida are complicated."

⁷⁰⁵ Christopher Marquis. "Cuba Embargo-Tightening Law Angrily Attacked by U.S. Allies." *The Miami Herald*, October 30, 1992: A12.

⁷⁰⁶ Marquis. "Cuba Embargo-Tightening Law Angrily Attacked by U.S. Allies."

⁷⁰⁷ Marquis. "Cuba Embargo-Tightening Law Angrily Attacked by U.S. Allies."

⁷⁰⁸ Marquis. "Cuba Embargo-Tightening Law Angrily Attacked by U.S. Allies."; Christopher Marquis. "U.N. Supports Cuba On Trade Ban." *The Miami Herald*, November 25, 1992: A1.; "Castro's Propaganda Victory." *The Miami Herald*, November 27, 1992: A34.

⁷⁰⁹ "North Miami Female High School Student Slashed." *The Miami Herald*, October 23, 1992: B2.; Pablo Alfonso. "Menem's Miami Visit Off." *The Miami Herald*, November 17, 1992: A14.

against, and 71 abstentions.⁷¹⁰ Mas Canosa took to the radio to reject the U.N. resolution and assure people that it did not invalidate the CDA.⁷¹¹ The CDA gave the Castro regime ammunition for its anti-American propaganda at home and abroad.⁷¹²

Clinton won the 1992 presidential election. He lost Florida by a slim margin but performed much better than Democrats had in a long time.⁷¹³ Seventy-five percent of Cuban-Americans voted for Bush, twenty percent for Clinton, and five percent for Ross Perot.⁷¹⁴ There were three Cuban-Americans in Congress with the elections of Representative Lincoln-Diaz Balart and Representative Bob Menendez and the reelection of Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

Members of the Cuban exile community speculated that CANF would lose influence with the new administration.⁷¹⁵ However, the CDA ratification and additional Cuban-American representation on the Hill helped to fortify the embargo's longevity.

Conclusion

The Bush years oversaw a major transition as the Cold War ended and countries around the world democratized. The international system rapidly evolved from a bipolar system to a U.S. hegemonic system in which neoliberalism dominated. This transition

⁷¹⁰ Marquis. "U.N. Supports Cuba On Trade Ban."

⁷¹¹ Alfonso Chardy. "Exiles Dismiss U.N. Embargo Vote." *The Miami Herald*, November 26, 1992: B1.

⁷¹² "Castro's Propaganda Victory." *The Miami Herald*, November 27, 1992: A34.

⁷¹³ Smith. "Hillary Clinton's connections to Florida are complicated."

⁷¹⁴ Alfonso Chardy and Mirta Ojito. "Mas, Foundation May Face Competition in Shaping Cuba Policy." *The Miami Herald*, November 5, 1992: A22.

⁷¹⁵ Chardy and Ojito. "Mas, Foundation May Face Competition in Shaping Cuba Policy."

had a significant effect on Cuba's international status and relationship with the United States. Many Latin American countries were democratizing after military juntas, and former Soviet bloc countries were democratizing as well. Many expected or hoped for Cuba to be next. Exile organizations proliferated to represent a broader range of Cuban-American opinions and to prepare for a post-Castro Cuba. Cuban-American legislators won more elected offices at both the local and national levels. CANF and others successfully lobbied for TV Marti and the Cuba Democracy Act of 1992. Yet, the U.S. government struggled to accommodate refugees escaping Cuba as the Cuban economy crashed. Although Bush's presidency only lasted four years, it bridged the transition between Reagan's conservative agenda in the late Cold War era and Clinton's Neoliberal leadership in the post-Cold War, hegemonic era.

CHAPTER 4: BILL CLINTON'S FIRST TERM

Bill Clinton became the first Democratic U.S. President in twelve years. Republicans had held the executive office from 1969 to 1993, except for Jimmy Carter's one term. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States, as hegemon, promoted Neoliberalism abroad. It emphasized international institutions, diplomacy, democratization, human rights, and Washington Consensus economic policies. Yet, the United States willingly used force to spread these ideals. The embargo laid bare the paradoxes of promoting free-market capitalism via isolation and promoting democracy by force. All competing interests regarding Cuba policy defended their strategies in the language of human rights, but those which championed change found it difficult to overcome the structures maintaining the status quo despite the changing international system.

The USSR had dissolved and could no longer prop up the Cuban government financially. As Cuba entered its "Special Period" of tremendous poverty and scarcity, the precarious domestic situation reverberated throughout the region. It was a critical time for Cuba; the stakes were high. After a brief interlude following the Torricelli Act, Cuba policy turned turbulent during Clinton's first term. The rafter crisis, migration accords, the Helms-Burton Act, and a Cuban military attack on civilian U.S. aircraft brought Cuba to the forefront.

By the 1990s, the CANF entrenched itself as an integral figure in post-Cold War Cuba debates. CANF actively participated in the policy negotiations. Although less than a quarter of the Cuban-American community voted for Clinton, even after he pressured his

opponent into signing the Cuba Democracy Act, Clinton never stopped courting them. CANF had established its influence with Republican presidents, especially considering Cuban-Americans voted for Republicans in high numbers. Clinton was the first Democratic president that CANF faced, and they would have to devise new strategies to navigate party politics, and the lobby met the challenge. CANF's ability to remain effective under a Democratic administration in a post-Cold War international system arguably evidenced the height of its power.

The "In Crowd"

The transition to a Democratic administration in the White House meant replacing Republican-affiliated Cuban-Americans with party loyalists. However, Clinton still had to appease the Cuban-American electorate and members of Congress to remain viable in his next election. So, he sought Cuban-American Democratic advisors, donors, and compromise candidates for political appointments. Although CANF tended to favor Republican candidates, their bipartisan approach ensured that they remained relevant.

Cuban-American resistance to President-elect Bill Clinton began before he assumed office. Clinton nominated Cuban-American Mario Baeza, an Ivy League Manhattan lawyer, to be Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs.⁷¹⁶ Baeza, an Afro-Cuban-American from New Jersey, had made a trip to Cuba for a trade and investment conference in recent years.⁷¹⁷ As a result, many Miami Cuban-Americans

⁷¹⁶ Christopher Marquis and Mimi Whitefield. "Lawyer's Bid for Latin Job in Trouble." *The Miami Herald*, January 20, 1993: A1.

⁷¹⁷ Marquis and Whitefield. "Lawyer's Bid for Latin Job in Trouble."

questioned his beliefs.⁷¹⁸ Baeza worked behind-the-scenes to build allies in the community, maintain his reputation, and clarify his stance on Cuba.⁷¹⁹ Rumors spread, and he struggled even to get support from Miami Cuban Democrats and New Jersey Democrats.⁷²⁰ FIU sociologist Dr. Lisandro Perez argued that Baeza's primary activism in the African-American community contributed to the perception of him as a Cuban-American outsider.⁷²¹

Cuban-American backlash prompted the administration to suspend the nomination one day before the planned announcement.⁷²² The backlash baffled Clinton's team, who thought appointing a Cuban-American to a high leadership position would please them.⁷²³ Clinton chose career Foreign Service Officer Ambassador Alexander Watson for the job instead of selecting a political appointee.⁷²⁴ Additionally, Clinton called South Florida natives Janet Reno and Carol Browner to be Attorney General and EPA Administrator.⁷²⁵

⁷¹⁸ Marquis and Whitefield. "Lawyer's Bid for Latin Job in Trouble."

⁷¹⁹ Mimi Whitefield and Christopher Marquis. "Fight for Latin Post Heats Up Cuban American Meets with Critics." *The Miami Herald*, January 21, 1993: A16.

⁷²⁰ Whitefield and Marquis. "Fight for Latin Post Heats Up Cuban American Meets with Critics."

⁷²¹ Marquis and Whitefield. "Exile Reaction to Baeza Jolts Clinton."

⁷²² Whitefield and Marquis. "Former Ambassador Gains Support for Latin Post."

⁷²³ Marquis and Whitefield. "Lawyer's Bid for Latin Job in Trouble."; Marquis and Whitefield. "Exile Reaction to Baeza Jolts Clinton."

⁷²⁴ Christopher Marquis. "Clinton Considering Career Foreign Envoy for Latin-Affairs Job." *The Miami Herald*, January 30, 1993: A22.; Christopher Marquis. "Baeza Bid Is Scrapped." *The Miami Herald*, March 3, 1993: A1.

⁷²⁵ Smith, Adam. C. "Hillary Clinton's connections to Florida are complicated." *The Miami Herald*, October 19, 2016.

Clinton's sister-in-law, Maria Victoria Arias Rodham, who married Hillary's brother in 1985, clearly helped Clinton understand the Cuban-American community.⁷²⁶ She influenced Clinton's position on the embargo.⁷²⁷ Lulu Rodriguez, Simon Ferro, and Bob Graham also significantly influenced Clinton's Cuba policy.⁷²⁸ Years later, Clinton called Simon Ferro to be Ambassador to Panama.⁷²⁹ Clinton built up a relationship with "Alfy" Fanjul over the decade despite brother Pepe Fanjul's opposing political beliefs.⁷³⁰

Representative Bob Menendez (D-NJ) became one of Clinton's top informal advisors on Cuba. An anonymous White House source said, "Menendez is the de facto special adviser on Cuba.... His role was decisive in shaping Cuba policy."⁷³¹ Another affirmed, "Not only critical, but crucial."⁷³² He had a much better rapport with the President than the Republican Cuban-Americans in Congress.⁷³³ Menendez viewed Clinton's approach as more hardline, so he argued that the NSC and State Department were responsible for advice that promoted more normalization.⁷³⁴

⁷²⁶ Tom Fiedler. "A Look Behind Bill Clinton's Cuba Stance." *The Miami Herald*, August 28, 1994: M4.; Mirta Ojito and Alfonso Chardy. "Sisterly Advice." *The Miami Herald*, September 19, 1994: B1.

⁷²⁷ Alfonso Chardy and Christopher Marquis. "Foundation Loses Clout in Washington Clinton Taking Neutral Approach." *The Miami Herald*, September 20, 1993: A1.; Smith. "Hillary Clinton's connections to Florida are complicated."

⁷²⁸ Chardy and Marquis. "Foundation Loses Clout in Washington Clinton Taking Neutral Approach."

⁷²⁹ Smith. "Hillary Clinton's connections to Florida are complicated."

⁷³⁰ Balmaseda. "Two Chief Execs Hit It Off President's Cuban-Born Patron Simply Likes Him."

⁷³¹ Christopher Marquis. "Unlikely Voice Tilts U.S. Policy on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, May 26, 1996: A1.

⁷³² Marquis. "Unlikely Voice Tilts U.S. Policy on Cuba."

⁷³³ Marquis. "Unlikely Voice Tilts U.S. Policy on Cuba."

⁷³⁴ Marquis. "Unlikely Voice Tilts U.S. Policy on Cuba."

CANF remained the most prominent Cuban organization in Washington.⁷³⁵ However, it did not have the same degree of access to the Clinton administration compared to the two previous administrations.⁷³⁶ So, CANF sought new opportunities to influence the Clinton administration. The foundation contracted former U.S. Representative Larry Smith (D-Hollywood) to consult them and help them network with Democrats.⁷³⁷

Although Cuba was in a state of fluctuation and transition, it did not command the attention it had when it was an immediate Cold War security threat.⁷³⁸ Clinton's Cuban-American confidantes would become increasingly important behind the scenes in helping him navigate the impending crises as Cuba's internal situation became more precarious.

Civil Society Pluralism

People nationwide and abroad saw in the Clinton administration the possibility of a new approach to Cuba, and how they envisioned that process depended on their interests and ideology.⁷³⁹ Cuba's economy had not recovered from the collapse of the Soviet Union, but it also had not embraced the neoliberal world order as most other former communist Soviet allies had. The proliferation of exile and non-exile

⁷³⁵ Chardy And Marquis. "Foundation Loses Clout in Washington Clinton Taking Neutral Approach."

⁷³⁶ Chardy And Marquis. "Foundation Loses Clout in Washington Clinton Taking Neutral Approach."

⁷³⁷ "'I Will Die in This Jail,' A Defiant Gersten Says." *The Miami Herald*, April 5, 1993: B3.

⁷³⁸ Dario Moreno, interview by author, June 27, 2018.

⁷³⁹ Christopher Marquis. "Activists Turn D.C. Into A Soapbox as Fight Over Cuba Policy Intensifies." *The Miami Herald*, May 24, 1993: A1.

organizations seeking to address a post-communist transition in Cuba from different perspectives that began under George H. W. Bush continued under Clinton. Approaches to Cuba divided opinions in both Washington and Miami.

On Capitol Hill, some Congress members saw the new administration as an opportunity to shift policy on Cuba, so they brought experts to testify.⁷⁴⁰ The three Cuban-American representatives and Representative Torricelli clashed with witnesses over Cuba policy at the House's hearing on Latin America.⁷⁴¹ Meanwhile, Miami prosecutors drafted an indictment of Raul Castro and other Cuban government officials on drug trafficking charges.⁷⁴²

A wide array of organizations prepared plans for Cuba if it became the next communist country to transition into a democracy after the Cold War. Researchers from Florida International University's Cuba Research Institute presented a government-funded study on Cuba to the State Department.⁷⁴³ Dr. Jaime Suchlicki created a report for the U.S. government with 21 possible scenarios for Castro's fall.⁷⁴⁴ Several organizations—the Miami Chamber of Commerce, the Governor's Commission for a Free Cuba, the Cuban-American Bar Association (CABA), the Alliance of Young Cubans, and the Bridge of Young Cuban Professionals—invited speakers like

⁷⁴⁰ Christopher Marquis. "Spat Over Cuba Policy Erupts 2 Sides Covet Clinton Support." *The Miami Herald*, February 4, 1993: A1.

⁷⁴¹ Marquis. "Spat Over Cuba Policy Erupts 2 Sides Covet Clinton Support."

⁷⁴² Samuels, Christina A. "Personal Attacks Mark District 11 Runoff Race." *The Miami Herald*, April 8, 1993: 3.

⁷⁴³ Christopher Marquis. "In Closed-Door Session, Panel Considers Post-Castro Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, May 26, 1993: A15.

⁷⁴⁴ Alfonso Chardy. "Plans Grow for A Post-Castro Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, October 31, 1993: B1.

Representative Torricelli and Jorge Mas Canosa to speak.⁷⁴⁵ Federal, state, and local Miami government and business leaders prepared contingency plans.⁷⁴⁶ The University of Miami's North-South Center prepared a plan for the development and reconstruction of Cuba.⁷⁴⁷ Expropriated property owners arranged to reclaim their property or for possible government auctions of their property.⁷⁴⁸ CABA's property symposium discussed foreign businesses buying up seized property from the Cuban government and potential legal options.⁷⁴⁹ Suchlicki had an ongoing registry of the confiscated properties and recommended options for legislation.⁷⁵⁰ The Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy debated property rights in the event of a transition and the half a million expropriated properties in question.⁷⁵¹ CANF's Blue Ribbon Commission hosted a Washington conference to discuss transitioning Cuba toward a market economy.⁷⁵²

Additional Cuba-centric organizations formed in the early 1990s, representing a broader range of exile opinions. Cambio Cubano and the Cuban Committee for Democracy (CCD) were both formed after Clinton's election.⁷⁵³ Former commando Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo's Cambio Cubano opposed the now-ratified Cuban Democracy Act

⁷⁴⁵ Chardy. "Plans Grow for A Post-Castro Cuba."

⁷⁴⁶ Chardy. "Plans Grow for A Post-Castro Cuba."

⁷⁴⁷ Chardy. "Plans Grow for A Post-Castro Cuba."

⁷⁴⁸ Chardy. "Plans Grow for A Post-Castro Cuba."

⁷⁴⁹ Chardy. "Land Owners: Stop Castro Plan."

⁷⁵⁰ Chardy. "Land Owners: Stop Castro Plan."

⁷⁵¹ Mimi Whitefield. "Property at Stake in A Free Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, August 15, 1993: B4.

⁷⁵² Marquis. "In Closed-Door Session, Panel Considers Post-Castro Cuba."

⁷⁵³ Chardy And Marquis. "Foundation Loses Clout in Washington Clinton Taking Neutral Approach."

and advertised his proposal for dialogue with the Cuban government in major newspapers.⁷⁵⁴ His metamorphosis from insurgent to dialoguero angered many who felt he betrayed *la causa*, but Cernuda and others welcomed the change.⁷⁵⁵ Menoyo founded Cambio Cubano in late 1992 to promote dialogue and directly challenge CANF's monopoly on exile politics.⁷⁵⁶ Bernardo Benes, who rose to prominence during Carter's Dialogue, was an outspoken ally.⁷⁵⁷ Cambio Cubano advocated a national conversation, peaceful transition, conditioning easing the embargo on improvements in Cuba, permitting exiles to ship necessities to Cuba, communications expansion, and educational travel exchanges.⁷⁵⁸ Similarly, Samuel Martinez Lara led hundreds of former political prisoners and ex-dissidents to form a Miami chapter of the Cuban Pro-Human Rights Party, a middle ground between the wealthy pro- and anti-dialogue organizations that did not represent the Cuban opposition well.⁷⁵⁹

A diverse group of Cuban-Americans nationwide formed the Cuban Committee for Democracy (CCD) as an alternative voice to CANF for Cuba policy.⁷⁶⁰ They promoted negotiation to achieve a peaceful transition but had yet to solidify all their

⁷⁵⁴ Mimi Whitefield. "Ex-Political Prisoner Urges Castro To Join Exiles in A Dialogue." *The Miami Herald*, March 19, 1993: A1.

⁷⁵⁵ Alfonso Chardy. "Ex-Commando Trades Arms for Dialogue." *The Miami Herald*, June 27, 1993: B1.

⁷⁵⁶ Chardy. "Ex-Commando Trades Arms for Dialogue."

⁷⁵⁷ Chardy. "Ex-Commando Trades Arms for Dialogue."

⁷⁵⁸ Chardy. "Ex-Commando Trades Arms for Dialogue."

⁷⁵⁹ Alfonso Chardy. "Group Tries Different Approach in Dialogue Debate." *The Miami Herald*, September 20, 1993: A8.

⁷⁶⁰ Alfonso Chardy. "New Group Seeks New Cuba Policy." *The Miami Herald*, August 20, 1993: B1.

positions.⁷⁶¹ CCD held its first major public conference in Washington DC in December 1993, intending to convince the administration to ease the embargo on Cuba and open negotiations.⁷⁶² “There is a strong assumption in U.S. public opinion that exiles are monolithic, but this is not true,” Miyares said. “We are pluralistic.”⁷⁶³ Early CCD projects focused on a newsletter, a radio program, congressional briefings, and meetings with foreign leaders.⁷⁶⁴

Dissidents and human rights activists flourished in Cuba and increased pressure.⁷⁶⁵ They formed alliances among one another and with groups in the United States. Freedom House’s Frank Calzon estimated that they increased threefold, up to a hundred, in three years.⁷⁶⁶ They represented a full spectrum of viewpoints and sometimes quarreled with one another and jostled for power but formed the makings of a pluralist civil society.⁷⁶⁷ CANF supported sixty-four groups in total, and their *Voice of the Foundation* radio station called a few like-minded dissidents each day for reports.⁷⁶⁸

Although there was more representation for different viewpoints, Miami exiles still tended to favor isolationist policies and viewed newcomers with skepticism. Sergio

⁷⁶¹ Chardy. "New Group Seeks New Cuba Policy."; Liz Balmaseda. "Other Voices Are Emerging in Cuban Miami." *The Miami Herald*, August 21, 1993: B1.

⁷⁶² Alfonso Chardy. "New Group Favors Easing U.S. Policy on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, December 3, 1993: B3.

⁷⁶³ Chardy. "New Group Favors Easing U.S. Policy on Cuba."

⁷⁶⁴ "News Update." *The Miami Herald*, July 11, 1994: B2.

⁷⁶⁵ Mimi Whitefield. "Cuba's Woes Embolden Castro Foes." *The Miami Herald*, August 29, 1993: A1.

⁷⁶⁶ Whitefield. "Cuba's Woes Embolden Castro Foes."

⁷⁶⁷ Whitefield. "Cuba's Woes Embolden Castro Foes."

⁷⁶⁸ Whitefield. "Cuba's Woes Embolden Castro Foes."

Bendixen released a poll in May 1994 that surveyed over 400 Cuban exiles born in Cuba, and over 75% were fifty years old or more.⁷⁶⁹ Bendixen found that CANF had an 83% approval rating, Mas Canosa had a 77% favorability rating, and Armando Valladares had 66% favorability.⁷⁷⁰ Cuban pilot defector Orestes Lorenzo and dissident Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo had disapproval ratings of 36% and 64%.⁷⁷¹ The results may have suggested that exiles viewed more recent and more moderate exiles skeptically.⁷⁷² Any dialogue with the Cuban government would have to include leaders whom the exile community trusted.⁷⁷³ Other results showed that half disapproved of sending items other than medicine to Cuba, and 39% believed that a post-Castro Cuba leader should be someone on the island rather than from the exile community.⁷⁷⁴ The poll results may have been emblematic of the shift toward increasingly supporting dissidents.⁷⁷⁵ For example, Ramon Saul Sanchez was becoming a leading figure among Cuban exiles.⁷⁷⁶ He advocated nonviolent means, despite his commando past, and led many high-profile protests.⁷⁷⁷

⁷⁶⁹ Alfonso Chardy. "Poll: Mas Canosa Popular to Exiles." *The Miami Herald*, May 5, 1994: B8.

⁷⁷⁰ Chardy. "Poll: Mas Canosa Popular to Exiles."

⁷⁷¹ Chardy. "Poll: Mas Canosa Popular to Exiles."

⁷⁷² Chardy. "Poll: Mas Canosa Popular to Exiles."

⁷⁷³ Chardy. "Poll: Mas Canosa Popular to Exiles."

⁷⁷⁴ Chardy. "Poll: Mas Canosa Popular to Exiles."

⁷⁷⁵ Chardy. "Poll: Mas Canosa Popular to Exiles."

⁷⁷⁶ Fiedler. "Two Different, Competing Visions of Cuba's Future."; Marquis. "For Exiles, A Thrill."; John Lantigua. "Bit Player Becomes Big Player as Exile Community Leader." *The Miami Herald*, August 13, 1995: B1.

⁷⁷⁷ Lantigua. "Bit Player Becomes Big Player as Exile Community Leader."

Cuban exile women also established themselves in the political arena.⁷⁷⁸ Torano created an informal group to advance women leaders, nicknamed the Cuban Women's Non-Group, after reading an inflammatory newspaper quote from Jorge Mas Canosa about why CANF had so few women directors: "When you get all those guys with secretaries, with planes, with Rolls-Royces, you've got very strong opinions in that type of meeting. We had two ladies there and it was uncomfortable for them, so they withdrew."⁷⁷⁹ Several organized the 1991 Future of Women in a Free Cuba conference to assert a role in rebuilding Cuba.⁷⁸⁰

Important debates about Cuba policy and the future of Cuba were happening within the Cuban-American community, but, unfortunately, many Miami Cubans did not feel safe to openly express opinions that diverged from the hardliners. There also remained a gulf between the embargo and the neoliberal world order's embrace of open dialogue and trade.

Aid and Immigration

The number of Cuban defectors increased during the Special Period. The dire economic conditions in Cuba left people desperate. The drastic influx of refugees raised concerns about security and state capacity to absorb them. Friends and family in the United States had to choose between providing financial support to their loved ones

⁷⁷⁸ Alfonso Chardy. "Not for Men Only." *The Miami Herald*, October 4, 1993: B1.

⁷⁷⁹ Chardy. "Not for Men Only."; Dugger, Celia W. "Cuban Lobby Scales to Top of Capitol Hill." *The Miami Herald*, April 11, 1988: A1.

⁷⁸⁰ Chardy. "Not for Men Only."

versus not taking a risk that that financial support would help prop up the Castro regime, which caused heated policy debates. Who should receive aid and how became increasingly complex given the humanitarian situation. CANF maintained a hard line, often eclipsing other viewpoints, and actively worked in Washington to isolate Cuban communist officials while protecting Cuban refugees.

Miami Cuban radio, including CANF's *Voz de la Fundacion*, hosted many refugees on the air to testify about Cuba's current state and petition for asylum.⁷⁸¹ The newer defectors included many disillusioned former communists.⁷⁸² Cuban islanders often learned about people leaving via Radio Marti broadcasting refugees' stories.⁷⁸³

Following President Bush's lead of cutting political refugee resettlement aid from twelve months to eight months in 1992, President Clinton cut the eligibility for financial assistance and medical assistance to five months in 1993.⁷⁸⁴ It did not affect the refugees coming as part of the Exodus program but did affect many Cuban and Haitian refugees in Florida.⁷⁸⁵ The federal budget had cut 10% from refugee programs.⁷⁸⁶ The ceiling for federally funded refugees dropped from 131,624 in 1992 to 122,000 in 1993.⁷⁸⁷

⁷⁸¹ Lydia Martin. "Cuban Defectors on Radio Give Voice to Discontent." *The Miami Herald*, January 23, 1993: A1.

⁷⁸² Martin. "Cuban Defectors on Radio Give Voice to Discontent."

⁷⁸³ Martin. "Cuban Defectors on Radio Give Voice to Discontent."

⁷⁸⁴ David Hancock. "Clinton Orders Sharp Cuts in Aid to Political Refugees." *The Miami Herald*, March 3, 1993: A1.

⁷⁸⁵ Hancock. "Clinton Orders Sharp Cuts in Aid to Political Refugees."

⁷⁸⁶ Hancock. "Clinton Orders Sharp Cuts in Aid to Political Refugees."

⁷⁸⁷ Hancock. "Clinton Orders Sharp Cuts in Aid to Political Refugees."

The need to send humanitarian aid became increasingly dire for Cuban families, as Cuban-Americans agonized over how to help their families without propping up the Cuban government.⁷⁸⁸ Groups under Unidad Cubana's umbrella called for a 90-day halt of shipments of non-essential items to Cuba.⁷⁸⁹ Cuban Unity held an anti-embargo demonstration in Miami on October 9, 1993, that attracted 100,000 people.⁷⁹⁰ A new Florida law, the 1993 Free Cuba Act, prevented the state from giving money to Florida businesses that trade with Cuba.⁷⁹¹ Governor Chiles, Representative Torricelli, and CANF were present at the signing of state Representative Eladio Armesto-Garcia's bill, which reinforced the Torricelli Act's provisions by preventing state investment in countries sanctioned by the CDA.⁷⁹² The Cuban government, which had never prohibited direct food shipments, stopped refusing direct food shipments because the need had become so dire.⁷⁹³ Cuba had previously denied shipments because it said they could feed themselves.⁷⁹⁴ Cuba also doubled the maximum amount of money an exile could carry into Cuba from \$1000 to \$2000.⁷⁹⁵ The business of food shipments was growing in

⁷⁸⁸ Mirta Ojito And Peter Slevin. "Cuba's Woes A Dilemma for Exiles How to Help Kin, But Not Castro?" *The Miami Herald*, April 12, 1993: A1.

⁷⁸⁹ Ojito and Slevin. "Cuba's Woes A Dilemma for Exiles How to Help Kin, But Not Castro?"

⁷⁹⁰ Alfonso Chardy. "New Group Favors Easing U.S. Policy on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, December 3, 1993: B3.

⁷⁹¹ Ojito And Slevin. "Cuba's Woes A Dilemma for Exiles How to Help Kin, But Not Castro?"; Oscar Musibay. "Law Bans State Investment in Firms Dealing with Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 1993: B2.

⁷⁹² Musibay. "Law Bans State Investment in Firms Dealing with Cuba."

⁷⁹³ Alfonso Chardy. "Struggling Cuba Eases Policies on Food, Cash." *The Miami Herald*, May 17, 1993: B1.

⁷⁹⁴ Chardy. "Struggling Cuba Eases Policies on Food, Cash."

⁷⁹⁵ Chardy. "Struggling Cuba Eases Policies on Food, Cash."

Miami as food and medicine were more in demand than clothing and previously popular household items.⁷⁹⁶

Cuban exiles set up a transit home for rafters arriving in the United States, monitored rafter reports, and monitored calls of families looking for refugee relatives.⁷⁹⁷ Desperate rafters, some of whom never learned to swim, risked storms, waves, dehydration, starvation, sharks, broken or flimsy vessels, and more to cross the sea to the United States, Mexico, or other Caribbean islands, and many did not survive.⁷⁹⁸ Deflecting blame for human rights abuses and a disastrous economy in Cuba, Cuban newspapers blamed U.S. policy and Cuban exiles for exploiting rafters and adult guardians for endangering their families.⁷⁹⁹ The Cuban Adjustment Act afforded Cubans a much easier legal path than any other nationality, and former top INS officials wanted to repeal it.⁸⁰⁰ The State Department's approval rate for Cuban travel applications dropped from 80% in 1991 to 45% in 1992.⁸⁰¹ About 11-12% of Cuban visitors overstayed their visas in the United States, and immigration laws enabled them to stay

⁷⁹⁶ Chardy. "Struggling Cuba Eases Policies on Food, Cash."

⁷⁹⁷ Mirta Ojito. "A Haven for Cuban Rafters." *The Miami Herald*, April 16, 1993: A1.; Scott Hiasen. "Refugee Aid Rates Praise for Officer." *The Miami Herald*, July 17, 1993: B1.

⁷⁹⁸ "Haiti Aristide Opponents Show Support for Army." *The Miami Herald*, December 6, 1993: 6A.; Cynthia Corzo And Andres Viglucci. "Family Pays Awful Price for Freedom." *The Miami Herald*, December 8, 1993: A1.

⁷⁹⁹ "Exiles Exploit Rafters' Plight Like Vultures, Cuba Charges." *The Miami Herald*, December 14, 1993: A12.

⁸⁰⁰ Peter Slevin. "Policy on Cuban Immigration Tangled in Contradiction." *The Miami Herald*, May 23, 1993: A22.

⁸⁰¹ Slevin. "Policy on Cuban Immigration Tangled in Contradiction."

legally.⁸⁰² Between January 1992 and May 1993, over 3,200 rafters fled Cuba, and the rate was increasing.⁸⁰³ The Coast Guard rescued 430 rafters in the first four months of 1992 and 626 in the first four months of 1993.⁸⁰⁴ The number of Cuban requests for visas skyrocketed as the age limitations lowered, and the approval rate dropped just as precipitously.⁸⁰⁵ "In 1988, just 3,681 Cubans applied for visas. In 1990, as the age threshold dropped below 60 years, 38,380 applied. In 1992, with the threshold down to 20-year-olds, the number of applicants rose to 66,168."⁸⁰⁶ The qualifications for "refugee" status were also a factor.⁸⁰⁷ The United States admitted many refugees because it signaled the Castro regime's lack of legitimacy, according to Dr. Deborah Anker.⁸⁰⁸ However, it also worked as a safety valve for Castro to rid himself of opposition.⁸⁰⁹ The immigration paperwork to live in the United States was easier for Cubans who reached U.S. shores by raft than those who applied abroad for a coveted visa.

CANF's Exodus program, which had brought about 10,000 third-country Cubans to the United States, appeared to be nearing an end in 1994.⁸¹⁰ The federal government

⁸⁰² Slevin. "Policy on Cuban Immigration Tangled in Contradiction."

⁸⁰³ Slevin. "Policy on Cuban Immigration Tangled in Contradiction."

⁸⁰⁴ Slevin. "Policy on Cuban Immigration Tangled in Contradiction."

⁸⁰⁵ Slevin. "Policy on Cuban Immigration Tangled in Contradiction."

⁸⁰⁶ Slevin. "Policy on Cuban Immigration Tangled in Contradiction."

⁸⁰⁷ Slevin. "Policy on Cuban Immigration Tangled in Contradiction."

⁸⁰⁸ Slevin. "Policy on Cuban Immigration Tangled in Contradiction."

⁸⁰⁹ Slevin. "Policy on Cuban Immigration Tangled in Contradiction."

⁸¹⁰ Garcia Azuero, Francisco. "3rd-Nation Program for Cubans May End." *The Miami Herald*, May 27, 1994: B1.; Garcia Azuero, Francisco. "Cuban Group's Exodo Program May Close." *The Miami Herald*, May 27, 1994: B1.; Chardy, Alfonso. "Cuban Exiles Exodo: Festival Will Commemorate Anniversary of

considered not renewing federal funding for the program since they had brought over the Cubans who were stuck in third countries in 1988 and did not want to encourage others to migrate to third countries just to take advantage of the program.⁸¹¹ They also wished to discourage the Cuban government from selling exit visas and taking advantage of emigrants.⁸¹²

South Florida charities provided relief to Cubans after Hurricane Lili, but exiles debated the aid.⁸¹³ Radio hosts said it violated Helms-Burton and that the government would simply seize all the assistance, but most exiles, including CANF, supported humanitarian relief.⁸¹⁴ The Catholic church even received bomb threats for their relief efforts.⁸¹⁵ The unprecedented levels of aid, which was to bypass the government and go directly to the Cuban people, showed the overall support that Cuban exiles had for Cuban people apart from the government.⁸¹⁶ Factors contributing to the softened approach included a modest Catholic Church resurgence on the island, a recent exodus of

Cuban American National Foundation's Exodo - Festival Honors Program That Brought Thousands of Cubans to the U.S." *The Miami Herald*, September 21, 2008: B1.

⁸¹¹ Garcia Azuero. "3rd-Nation Program for Cubans May End."

⁸¹² Garcia Azuero. "3rd-Nation Program for Cubans May End."

⁸¹³ "Victims of Lili Need Help." *The Miami Herald*, October 19, 1996: 22A.; Armando Correa. "War of The Airwaves Over Cuba Aid." *The Miami Herald*, October 22, 1996: B1.; "The Aid-To-Cuba Debate." *The Miami Herald*, October 22, 1996: 18A.; Fabiola Santiago. "Lili Aid A Sign of New Exile Attitude Hand Is Extended to People of Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, October 23, 1996: A1.

⁸¹⁴ Armando Correa. "War of The Airwaves Over Cuba Aid." *The Miami Herald*, October 22, 1996: B1.; Fabiola Santiago. "Lili Aid A Sign of New Exile Attitude Hand Is Extended to People of Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, October 23, 1996: A1.

⁸¹⁵ Armando Correa. "War of The Airwaves Over Cuba Aid." *The Miami Herald*, October 22, 1996: B1.; Roth, Daniel Shoer. "Daniel Shoer Rothview From El Nuevo Herald: Differences set aside to help Cubans." *The Miami Herald*, September 18, 2008: B3.

⁸¹⁶ Santiago. "Lili Aid A Sign of New Exile Attitude Hand Is Extended to People of Cuba."

immigrants with family ties, and increased communication channels.⁸¹⁷ Clinton waived the March 1996 provision banning flights between the United States and Cuba so that the charitable organizations could send the 300,000 pounds of goods they had collected directly there and get there faster instead of passing through a third country.

CANF, as well as Cuban-American legislators, remained the most significant factor in ensuring that Cuban-Americans had a seat at the table in various issues related to Cuba. Cuban-Americans still held leverage over the immigration debate for Cuban migrants even if they did not set the overall U.S. immigration debate agenda. If and to what degree the embargo should allow loopholes for humanitarian assistance was particularly vexing and would remain a constant dilemma in Cuba policy debates. CANF had more freedom to maneuver when Cuba was a lower priority on the security and foreign policy agenda, and lower-level leadership made more of the decisions, but that changed with the 1994 rafter crisis. The sudden, massive influx of refugees challenged national security and state capacity.

The Rafter Crisis and Negotiations

In July 1994, the Cuban coast guard sank a tugboat full of 72 people trying to escape and killed over half of those aboard.⁸¹⁸ The Coast Guard brought the survivors of

⁸¹⁷ Santiago. "Lili Aid A Sign of New Exile Attitude Hand Is Extended to People of Cuba."

⁸¹⁸ Cynthia Corzo. "Ordeal at Sea: 30 Cubans Died in Ramming." *The Miami Herald*, July 16, 1994: A1.; Cynthia Corzo. "Sinking of Tugboat Off Cuba 'Brutal,' Clinton Says." *The Miami Herald*, July 19, 1994: A10.; Cancio Isla, Wilfredo. "Author: Cuban Tug's Sinking Was Avoidable." *The Miami Herald*, July 13, 2001: 8A.

the boat named *13 de Marzo* back to Cuba and imprisoned the men.⁸¹⁹ Clinton called it a “human tragedy” at the National Council of La Raza’s annual convention.⁸²⁰ The Cuban government held symbolic wakes for the victims.⁸²¹

Fidel Castro blamed U.S. policy for the exponential increase in illegal emigration from Cuba.⁸²² U.S. officials said that he was deflecting blame for his policies causing the crisis: “It’s been his government’s policies that have brought Cuba to its present state.”⁸²³ Castro threatened to lift restrictions on departures, as he had with Camarioca and Mariel.⁸²⁴ To prevent another Mariel, the U.S. Government cracked down on potential boatlifts and detained human smugglers.⁸²⁵

A rash of hijackings during the summer of 1994 boiled over until Castro removed barriers for exiting Cuba, resulting in a massive wave of rafters.⁸²⁶ In August 1994, Fidel Castro declared that the government would stop policing rafters fleeing the country, and

⁸¹⁹ Corzo. "Ordeal at Sea: 30 Cubans Died in Ramming."; Almanzar, Fernando. "Survivor Finally in Miami Husband and Son Lost In '94 Sinking." *The Miami Herald*, May 27, 1999: B1.

⁸²⁰ Corzo. "Sinking of Tugboat Off Cuba 'Brutal,' Clinton Says."

⁸²¹ Corzo. "Sinking of Tugboat Off Cuba 'Brutal,' Clinton Says."

⁸²² "Castro Threatens an Exodus He Says U.S. Is Responsible for Hijackings, Unrest Exiles Lash Out at Havana 'Blackmail'." *The Miami Herald*, August 6, 1994: A1.; Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 468.; Martin Merzer and Mimi Whitefield. "U.S. Actions 'Absurd,' A Defiant Castro Says Cuban Admits Unleashing Exodus." *The Miami Herald*, August 25, 1994: A1.; Christopher Marquis. "U.S.-Cuba Discussion Hits Snag Havana Wants Date for Broader Talks." *The Miami Herald*, September 3, 1994: A1.

⁸²³ Merzer and Whitefield. "U.S. Actions 'Absurd,' A Defiant Castro Says Cuban Admits Unleashing Exodus."

⁸²⁴ "Castro Threatens an Exodus He Says U.S. Is Responsible for Hijackings, Unrest Exiles Lash Out at Havana 'Blackmail.'"; "Not This Time, Fidel!" *The Miami Herald*, August 8, 1994: A10.

⁸²⁵ Garcia, Manny. "Tough Talk from Castro, U.S. Speedboat, 3 Exiles Seized in Crackdown on Smuggling." *The Miami Herald*, August 12, 1994: A1.

⁸²⁶ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 468-469.; Merzer And Whitefield. "U.S. Actions 'Absurd,' A Defiant Castro Says Cuban Admits Unleashing Exodus."

the number of refugees hitting the water exploded.⁸²⁷ On August 19, Clinton announced that rafters would not be granted asylum in contrast to the policy enacted since the Cuban Adjustment Act passed.⁸²⁸ Clinton ended remittances and charter flights.⁸²⁹ Clinton's chief of staff threatened to blockade Cuba as the Coast Guard intercepted over a thousand refugees per day.⁸³⁰ U.S. officials apprehended about 37,000 rafters that summer.⁸³¹ U.S. authorities diverted refugees who arrived on the Florida coast to detention centers while the Coast Guard took anyone they intercepted at sea to a Guantanamo naval base refugee camp.⁸³² They arrested human smugglers.⁸³³ Detention center visitors searched for their relatives; other loved ones called CANF, the Justice Department, radio stations, and refugee centers for information on rafters' whereabouts.⁸³⁴ Countless rafters disappeared.

⁸²⁷ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 469.

⁸²⁸ Andres Viglucci And Christopher Marquis. "U.S. To Let in More Rafters from Camps 10,000 Cubans May Be Eligible." *The Miami Herald*, November 16, 1994: A1.

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⁸³⁰ Robles, Frances. "U.S. Hints at Blockade Goal Is to Keep Heat on Castro Weekend Exodus Soars Past 2,300." *The Miami Herald*, August 22, 1994: A1.; Merzer And Whitefield. "U.S. Actions 'Absurd,' A Defiant Castro Says Cuban Admits Unleashing Exodus."; Christopher Marquis. "U.S.-Cuba Discussion Hits Snag Havana Wants Date for Broader Talks." *The Miami Herald*, September 3, 1994: A1.

⁸³¹ Joan Thompson. "24 Cuban Criminals at Base Sent Home." *The Miami Herald*, May 2, 1995: B1.

⁸³² Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 470-71.; Marilyn Garateix. "At Krome, A Long Wait, Hugs, Tears Families Line Up to Visit Relatives." *The Miami Herald*, August 22, 1994: A1.; Christopher Marquis. "For Clinton, Too Many Pitfalls, Too Few Choices." *The Miami Herald*, August 24, 1994: A1.; Merzer And Whitefield. "U.S. Actions 'Absurd,' A Defiant Castro Says Cuban Admits Unleashing Exodus."; Marquis. "U.S.-Cuba Discussion Hits Snag Havana Wants Date for Broader Talks."

⁸³³ Robles. "U.S. Hints at Blockade Goal Is to Keep Heat on Castro Weekend Exodus Soars Past 2,300."; Lantigua, John. "A Violent Gesture as Rafters Keep On, Bomb Hits Pro-Dialogue Office." *The Miami Herald*, September 5, 1994: A14.

⁸³⁴ Garateix. "At Krome, A Long Wait, Hugs, Tears Families Line Up to Visit Relatives."; Marilyn Garateix. "Lucky Find Relatives, Others Find Despair." *The Miami Herald*, August 22, 1994: A10.; Gonzalez, Aminda Marques. "Vigil for Rafters Unites A Network of Strangers." *The Miami Herald*, September 4, 1994: A18.

Miami Cubans were livid that the Clinton administration had decided to intercept rafters at sea with the prospect of repatriation.⁸³⁵ The situation was so tense and so pressing that Attorney General Janet Reno, a South Florida native, managed to schedule a meeting with Miami representatives during Clinton's 48th birthday party.⁸³⁶ Governor Lawton Chiles, Mas Canosa, Metro Commission Chairman Arthur Teele, Miami City Manager Cesar Odio, Luis Lauredo, and Maria Elena Torano caught a flight on Mas's private jet for the meeting with Clinton, Reno, Vice President Al Gore, and their advisors.⁸³⁷ Clinton agreed to all the group's recommendations except the naval blockade: eliminate remittances and private packages, eliminate charter flights, and enhance Radio/TV Marti signals.⁸³⁸

With no end to the crisis in sight, the Clinton administration relented and resumed migration negotiations with Cuban officials.⁸³⁹ Guantanamo held over 16,000 Cuban rafters by then.⁸⁴⁰ The governments had had these talks twice a year since 1984.⁸⁴¹ Cuba sought to broaden the discussions to the embargo, but the United States kept them strictly

⁸³⁵ John Lantigua. "Miami Chamber Leader: Foster U.S.-Cuba Talks." *The Miami Herald*, August 24, 1994: A13.

⁸³⁶ Lantigua. "Miami Chamber Leader: Foster U.S.-Cuba Talks."

⁸³⁷ Lantigua. "Miami Chamber Leader: Foster U.S.-Cuba Talks."

⁸³⁸ Bardach, *Cuba Confidential*, 126-27.; Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 471.; Lantigua. "Miami Chamber Leader: Foster U.S.-Cuba Talks."; Merzer And Whitefield. "U.S. Actions 'Absurd,' A Defiant Castro Says Cuban Admits Unleashing Exodus."; Tom Fiedler. "A Look Behind Bill Clinton's Cuba Stance." *The Miami Herald*, August 28, 1994: M4.

⁸³⁹ Marquis. "U.S. Agrees to Resume Cuba Migration Talks."

⁸⁴⁰ Marquis. "U.S.-Cuba Discussion Hits Snag Havana Wants Date for Broader Talks."

⁸⁴¹ Marquis. "U.S. Agrees to Resume Cuba Migration Talks."

to migration, in part to appease exiles.⁸⁴² Moreover, the Cuban Democracy Act had enshrined the stipulations for further engagement for Cuba, and the administration had to abide by it.⁸⁴³ The Mariel excludables became a political bargaining chip once again.⁸⁴⁴

Clinton deferred to Cuban exiles because of lessons he had learned from Mariel. The only Arkansas governor race he lost occurred in 1980 after he agreed to take in Marielitos at Fort Chaffee, and they rioted.⁸⁴⁵ The President likely saw himself in Governor Chiles, who was in the middle of a tough reelection campaign.⁸⁴⁶ Chiles begged the administration to control the mass migration.⁸⁴⁷ When Clinton heard from Chiles, he said to Gabriel Garcia Marquez, with whom he was vacationing, "Castro has already cost me one election. He can't have two."⁸⁴⁸ Clinton had a long-term strategy of courting Cuban voters, and he was not about to let this event harm upcoming elections.⁸⁴⁹

The conditions at South Florida's Krome Detention Center and the Guantanamo refugee camp caused outrage in the community. Prominent Miami exiles formed an ad

⁸⁴² Marquis. "U.S. Agrees to Resume Cuba Migration Talks."; Marquis. "U.S.-Cuba Discussion Hits Snag Havana Wants Date for Broader Talks."

⁸⁴³ Marquis. "U.S.-Cuba Discussion Hits Snag Havana Wants Date for Broader Talks."

⁸⁴⁴ Mirta Ojito. "Mariel Detainees Still A Bargaining Chip 14 Years Later." *The Miami Herald*, September 5, 1994: A14.

⁸⁴⁵ Fiedler. "A Look Behind Bill Clinton's Cuba Stance."; Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 469.; Erikson, *The Cuba Wars*, 140.; Bardach, *Cuba Confidential*, 129.

⁸⁴⁶ Fiedler. "A Look Behind Bill Clinton's Cuba Stance."

⁸⁴⁷ Fiedler. "A Look Behind Bill Clinton's Cuba Stance."

⁸⁴⁸ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 469.

⁸⁴⁹ Fiedler. "A Look Behind Bill Clinton's Cuba Stance."

hoc citizens' Cuba Crisis Steering Committee to monitor Krome's conditions.⁸⁵⁰ Their first priority was to petition AG Janet Reno and sue INS to release over one hundred children from the facilities, using U.S. Representatives Ros-Lehtinen and Diaz-Balart as leverage.⁸⁵¹ Jorge Mas Canosa arranged with the Governor of Puerto Rico to take in 3,000 children if the federal government accepted the offer.⁸⁵² Odio of the committee suggested that INS give the over 30,000 refugees in detention at Guantanamo and elsewhere preference for the visas that the 1994 migration agreement allotted to Cubans for the year 1995.⁸⁵³ Frustrated Miamians protested the rafters' continued internment, worried that expel them to Cuba.⁸⁵⁴ Local, state, and national political figures advocated for their release.⁸⁵⁵ They condemned the U.S. government for violating children's human

⁸⁵⁰ "Cuba Crisis Steering Committee." *The Miami Herald*, September 8, 1994: A16.; Charles Strouse. "Campaign Afoot to Free the Krome Kids." *The Miami Herald*, September 8, 1994: A16.

⁸⁵¹ Strouse. "Campaign Afoot to Free the Krome Kids."; Joanne Cavanaugh. "Children, Mothers Leaving Krome U.S. Eases Policy on Cuban Refugees." *The Miami Herald*, September 16, 1994: A1.; Alfonso Chardy. "64 Cubans To Leave Krome." *The Miami Herald*, October 5, 1994: A9.; Mirta Ojito And Christopher Marquis. "Asylum Given to Hundreds of Rafters Elderly, Young and Sick Refugees to Win Freedom." *The Miami Herald*, October 15, 1994: A1.

⁸⁵² Alfonso Chardy. "Puerto Rico Would Host 3,000 Guantanamo Kids." *The Miami Herald*, October 12, 1994: A18.; Karen Branch. "Guantanamo Kids' Hopes Rise, Fall with Latest Rumors." *The Miami Herald*, October 24, 1994: A1.

⁸⁵³ Chardy. "64 Cubans To Leave Krome."; Alfonso Chardy. "Chorus of Unity: Free the Detainees." *The Miami Herald*, October 7, 1994: A1.; Alfonso Chardy. "Only Seven Rafters Still Detained at Texas Center." *The Miami Herald*, January 16, 1995: B2.

⁸⁵⁴ Chardy. "Chorus of Unity: Free the Detainees."

⁸⁵⁵ Chardy. "Chorus of Unity: Free the Detainees."; Christopher Marquis. "Cubans Reeling as U.S. Yanks the Welcome Mat." *The Miami Herald*, November 20, 1994: A1.

rights.⁸⁵⁶ Non-Hispanics Floridians worried about the consequences of the sudden influx of immigrants.⁸⁵⁷

The U.S. Government slowly released waves of refugees from detention, starting with children, their guardians, and humanitarian cases.⁸⁵⁸ Some U.S. diplomats feared that letting in the refugees could jeopardize the migration accord.⁸⁵⁹ Governor Chiles also remained concerned about how it could affect his reelection campaign.⁸⁶⁰ Cuban-Americans banded together to sponsor the rafters.⁸⁶¹ The ad hoc committee pushed a proposal that, like the Exodus program, would ensure sponsorship for the detainees and that they would not accept public assistance for at least a year if the government

⁸⁵⁶ Chardy. "Chorus of Unity: Free the Detainees."; Marquis. "Cubans Reeling as U.S. Yanks the Welcome Mat."

⁸⁵⁷ Chardy. "Chorus of Unity: Free the Detainees."; Marquis. "Cubans Reeling as U.S. Yanks the Welcome Mat."

⁸⁵⁸ Cavanaugh. "Children, Mothers Leaving Krome U.S. Eases Policy on Cuban Refugees."; Chardy. "64 Cubans To Leave Krome."; Ojito and Marquis. "Asylum Given to Hundreds of Rafters Elderly, Young and Sick Refugees to Win Freedom."; Lizette Alvarez And Alfonso Chardy. "Clinton's Shift Could Boost Support for Mas Canosa." *The Miami Herald*, October 15, 1994: A20.; Karen Branch. "Guantanamo Kids' Hopes Rise, Fall with Latest Rumors." *The Miami Herald*, October 24, 1994: A1.; Andres Viglucci And Christopher Marquis. "U.S. To Let in More Rafters from Camps 10,000 Cubans May Be Eligible." *The Miami Herald*, November 16, 1994: A1.; Lizette Alvarez. "U.S. Likely to Allow Release of Families Gradual Action at Guantanamo." *The Miami Herald*, December 2, 1994: A27.

⁸⁵⁹ Viglucci And Marquis. "U.S. To Let in More Rafters from Camps 10,000 Cubans May Be Eligible."

⁸⁶⁰ Viglucci and Marquis. "U.S. To Let in More Rafters from Camps 10,000 Cubans May Be Eligible."

⁸⁶¹ "Cuban Exiles, Others to Pay Refugees' Way." *The Miami Herald*, November 19, 1994: A22.

authorized their entry.⁸⁶² They called the resulting project, which also helped Haitian refugee children, Operation Angel.⁸⁶³

The scale of the rafter crisis took a considerable toll on Cuban families. Policies indefinitely separated family members who fled to whichever country would take them.⁸⁶⁴

The rafter crisis was one of Clinton's most difficult foreign policy challenges of 1994.⁸⁶⁵ *Herald* writer Christopher Marquis reported four factors that constrained his maneuverability:

- The Cuban American lobby remains powerful.
- U.S. officials mistrust Castro.
- Castro seems unwilling to make any concessions.
- Foreign policy has never been a priority with Clinton.⁸⁶⁶

Exile politics were an explosive "third rail" for politicians to navigate, and Clinton was already considering the impact on his 1996 reelection campaign.⁸⁶⁷ Like Miami, Washington harbored a deep distrust toward the Cuban government due to previous

⁸⁶² Lizette Alvarez. "Exiles: Rafters' Care Won't Cost Taxpayers." *The Miami Herald*, December 4, 1994: A1.; Lizette Alvarez. "Cubans' Stories: Success, Hardship." *The Miami Herald*, December 25, 1994: B1.; Lizette Alvarez. "In Pitch to Free Cuban Refugees, Group Pledges to Pay Their Way." *The Miami Herald*, January 28, 1995: B1.

⁸⁶³ "On the Wings of Angels." *The Miami Herald*, February 25, 1995: A18.; David Lawrence, Jr. "For All of Us: A Chance to Become an Angel." *The Miami Herald*, February 26, 1995: M3.

⁸⁶⁴ John Lantigua. "Desperate to Flee, Families Ripped Apart." *The Miami Herald*, April 9, 1995: B1.

⁸⁶⁵ Marquis. "For Clinton, Too Many Pitfalls, Too Few Choices."

⁸⁶⁶ Marquis. "For Clinton, Too Many Pitfalls, Too Few Choices."

⁸⁶⁷ Bardach, *Cuba Confidential*, 129.; Marquis. "For Clinton, Too Many Pitfalls, Too Few Choices."

interactions, and Castro still adamantly clung to his “socialism or death” mantra.⁸⁶⁸ Likewise, Cuban officials did not trust the U.S. Government as a good-faith actor; Washington often moved the goalposts for engagement.⁸⁶⁹ Analysts and civil servants accused Clinton of not being interested in foreign policy and thus taking an ad hoc approach rather than creating a proactive plan.⁸⁷⁰

Migration Accords

The 1994 immigration agreement left many associated parties wanting.⁸⁷¹ It left the detained refugees’ fate unsettled and had Castro monitor the shores and halt refugees, which sympathetic actors viewed as repression.⁸⁷² The United States expected refugees to return home and apply for visas there.⁸⁷³ Unlike the 1984 migration agreement, which stipulated allowing up to 20,000 U.S. visas for Cuban immigrants per year, the 1994 accord set a minimum of 20,000 visas allocated to Cuban migrants annually.⁸⁷⁴ The agreement specified that if the United States rafters caught at sea, it would repatriate

⁸⁶⁸ Marquis. "For Clinton, Too Many Pitfalls, Too Few Choices."

⁸⁶⁹ Marquis. "For Clinton, Too Many Pitfalls, Too Few Choices."

⁸⁷⁰ Marquis. "For Clinton, Too Many Pitfalls, Too Few Choices."

⁸⁷¹ Fabiola Santiago. "Many Exiles Express Disappointment at Accord." *The Miami Herald*, September 10, 1994: A25.; Alvarez and Chardy. "Clinton's Shift Could Boost Support for Mas Canosa."

⁸⁷² Santiago. "Many Exiles Express Disappointment at Accord."; Joanne Cavanaugh. "Children, Mothers Leaving Krome U.S. Eases Policy on Cuban Refugees." *The Miami Herald*, September 16, 1994: A1.; Christopher Marquis. "Cubans Reeling as U.S. Yanks the Welcome Mat." *The Miami Herald*, November 20, 1994: A1.

⁸⁷³ Vignuzzi And Marquis. "U.S. To Let in More Rafters from Camps 10,000 Cubans May Be Eligible."

⁸⁷⁴ Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*.

them to Cuba.⁸⁷⁵ It was vague on rafters that made it to U.S. shores.⁸⁷⁶ Miami politicians—Rafael Penalver, Representative Lincoln Diaz-Balart, and Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen—said that the agreement legitimized Castro, violated international human rights laws, denied Cubans their unique status as victims of communism rather than economic migrants, gave Castro what he wanted (an escape valve), and did not address the Castro regime's failures.⁸⁷⁷ Representative Torricelli commended the negotiation for remaining tough on Castro and incentivizing dissidents to stay in Cuba to foment change.⁸⁷⁸ Mas Canosa received criticism for striking a deal with Clinton that paved the way for the accord; even though Mas Canosa was not present at the negotiations, many people within the community viewed him as partly responsible for it and, therefore, continued detention of rafters.⁸⁷⁹

The U.S. Government deliberated over 21,000 refugees still waiting in Guantanamo in May 1995.⁸⁸⁰ U.S. authorities deported over two dozen Mariel excludables that they found among the Guantanamo detainees.⁸⁸¹ The United States held

⁸⁷⁵ Chardy. "Chorus of Unity: Free the Detainees."

⁸⁷⁶ Chardy. "Chorus of Unity: Free the Detainees."

⁸⁷⁷ Santiago. "Many Exiles Express Disappointment at Accord."; Marquis. "Cubans Reeling as U.S. Yanks the Welcome Mat."

⁸⁷⁸ Santiago. "Many Exiles Express Disappointment at Accord."

⁸⁷⁹ Alvarez And Chardy. "Clinton's Shift Could Boost Support for Mas Canosa."; Fabiola Santiago. "Cuban Exile Leader Says He Didn't Support Refugee Detention Camps." *The Miami Herald*, November 29, 1994: B2.; Liz Balmaseda. "Refugees Have Again Become Political Pawns." *The Miami Herald*, May 6, 1995: B1.

⁸⁸⁰ John Lantigua. "Exiles Plan Protests Over Deportation Of 20 Cubans." *The Miami Herald*, May 1, 1995: B1.

⁸⁸¹ Joan Thompson. "24 Cuban Criminals at Base Sent Home." *The Miami Herald*, May 2, 1995: B1.

more secret migration talks with Cuba, agreeing to an accord in May.⁸⁸² The Clinton administration admitted the remaining 21,000 refugees at U.S. “safe haven” facilities into the United States and pledged to return any refugees apprehended at sea to Cuba thenceforth.⁸⁸³ Representative Menendez applauded Clinton cutting off Castro’s relief valve and encouraging dissenters to remain in Cuba to pressure Castro.⁸⁸⁴

The 1995 migration agreement sought to reduce the risk of rioting, prevent another mass departure, and give the United States more control over Florida’s borders again.⁸⁸⁵ It solved the human rights issue of long-term detention at Guantanamo.⁸⁸⁶ Although the United States did agree to send interdicted rafters back to Cuba (“wet foot, dry foot”), the 1994 agreement promised to admit *at least* 20,000 Cubans per year primarily via a lottery system, unlike the 1984 agreement, which provided *up to* 20,000 entry visas to Cubans per year. The Cuban government agreed not to punish repatriations.⁸⁸⁷ Cubans would no longer automatically be granted refugee or asylum

⁸⁸² Marquis, Christopher. "Joy, Outrage Greet Cuba Policy Shift 21,000 At Camp Coming to U.S. Future Rafters Will Be Sent Back." *The Miami Herald*, May 3, 1995: A1.

⁸⁸³ Alfonso Chardy And Tom Fiedler. "Goal Of 'No More Mariels' Led to Clinton's Painful Choice." *The Miami Herald*, May 3, 1995: A15.; Marquis. "Joy, Outrage Greet Cuba Policy Shift 21,000 At Camp Coming to U.S. Future Rafters Will Be Sent Back."

⁸⁸⁴ Chardy and Fiedler. "Goal Of 'No More Mariels' Led to Clinton's Painful Choice."; Tom Fiedler. "A Sensible Change of Direction by Clinton." *The Miami Herald*, May 7, 1995: M1.

⁸⁸⁵ "Best of Bad Options."

⁸⁸⁶ "Best of Bad Options."

⁸⁸⁷ "Best of Bad Options."

visas as victims of tyranny but would essentially be considered economic migrants unless determined otherwise.⁸⁸⁸

Cuban-American leaders were livid. The administration allegedly did not consult them on the decision, the U.S. Government cooperated with the Cuban government to halt refugees fleeing the regime and send them back, and Cubans lost some of their special immigration status.⁸⁸⁹ CANF withdrew funding for Operation Angel to force the government to assume the resettlement and federal aid expenses.⁸⁹⁰ Experts argued that the Cuban Adjustment Act and unquestioned parole of arrivals effectively encouraged illegal immigration.⁸⁹¹ Floridians with anti-immigrant sentiments were upset that Clinton caved and allowed nearly all of the Guantanamo refugees.⁸⁹² However, other Republicans considered the policy an immigration issue and supported the policy.⁸⁹³ The interdictions and repatriations began almost immediately.⁸⁹⁴

⁸⁸⁸ Lizette Alvarez. "Change in Strategy Began 8 Months Ago." *The Miami Herald*, May 3, 1995: A15.; Don Bohning and Christopher Marquis. "Exiles, Key GOP Legislators Vow to Fight Clinton's Cuba Policy." *The Miami Herald*, May 6, 1995: A22.

⁸⁸⁹ Chardy And Fiedler. "Goal Of 'No More Mariels' Led to Clinton's Painful Choice."; Marquis. "Joy, Outrage Greet Cuba Policy Shift 21,000 At Camp Coming to U.S. Future Rafters Will Be Sent Back."; Alvarez. "Change in Strategy Began 8 Months Ago."; "Best of Bad Options."; Tom Fiedler. "New Cuba Policy Politically Perplexing." *The Miami Herald*, May 5, 1995: A6.; Bohning and Marquis. "Exiles, Key GOP Legislators Vow to Fight Clinton's Cuba Policy."

⁸⁹⁰ Marquis. "Joy, Outrage Greet Cuba Policy Shift 21,000 At Camp Coming to U.S. Future Rafters Will Be Sent Back."; John Lantigua. "Most Refugees Will Qualify for Federal Aid." *The Miami Herald*, May 4, 1995: A19.

⁸⁹¹ Alvarez. "Change in Strategy Began 8 Months Ago."

⁸⁹² Fiedler. "New Cuba Policy Politically Perplexing."

⁸⁹³ Bohning And Marquis. "Exiles, Key GOP Legislators Vow to Fight Clinton's Cuba Policy."

⁸⁹⁴ Andres Viglucci And Lizette Alvarez. "Coast Guard Takes On 13 Cubans Rafters May Be First Returned to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, May 6, 1995: A1.; Cynthia Corzo. "Refugees Say Cuban Guards Used Force to Block Their Boat." *The Miami Herald*, May 25, 1995: A22.; Frances Robles. "Family,

The Clinton administration had its first challenge of what to do with Cubans who make it to the United States when fifteen Cubans arrived by plane and requested asylum a few days later.⁸⁹⁵ Hundreds of protestors blocked major Miami roadways, and two Miami Dade Community College professors and two others began a hunger strike over the new policy and the enactment starting.⁸⁹⁶ Police arrested Representative Diaz-Balart and Miami-Dade Commissioner Pedro Reboredo for blocking a sidewalk outside the White House as they protested.⁸⁹⁷ Cesar Odio switched his political registration from Democrat to independent.⁸⁹⁸ Exile groups created a new unity coalition, the Committee of United Cuban Exiles, in opposition to the new policy toward rafters.⁸⁹⁹ Many Miami Cubans felt abandoned and betrayed.⁹⁰⁰ The protests heightened ethnic divisions in Miami and divisions within the Cuban community.⁹⁰¹ Jorge Mas Canosa and about 2000 other

Foundation Plead for Rafter." *The Miami Herald*, June 12, 1995: B2.; Cynthia Corzo. "18 Detainees Will Be Returned to Cuba Today." *The Miami Herald*, December 5, 1995: B2.

⁸⁹⁵ Fiedler. "A Sensible Change of Direction by Clinton."

⁸⁹⁶ Andres Viglucci And John Lantigua. "Exile Protests Spread to Toll Plaza, Flagler Blockade Angers Midday Motorists." *The Miami Herald*, May 9, 1995: A1.; Andres Viglucci And John Lantigua. "Miami Cubans Protest Return of Rafters." *The Miami Herald*, May 10, 1995: A12.; Tony Pugh And Andres Viglucci. "Protests Underscore Divisions in Community." *The Miami Herald*, May 14, 1995: A1.; Robles, Frances. "Exiles to Strike At 2 P.M. Today March Planned on Calle Ocho." *The Miami Herald*, May 16, 1995: A1.

⁸⁹⁷ Viglucci and Lantigua. "Miami Cubans Protest Return of Rafters."

⁸⁹⁸ Viglucci And Lantigua. "Miami Cubans Protest Return of Rafters."

⁸⁹⁹ Alfonso Chardy. "Ex-Rivals Unite for Rafters." *The Miami Herald*, May 13, 1995: A15.

⁹⁰⁰ Lantigua. "Most Refugees Will Qualify for Federal Aid."; Bohning And Marquis. "Exiles, Key GOP Legislators Vow to Fight Clinton's Cuba Policy."; Alfonso Chardy. "Ex-Rivals Unite for Rafters." *The Miami Herald*, May 13, 1995: A15.

⁹⁰¹ Pugh and Viglucci. "Protests Underscore Divisions in Community."

Cuban-Americans protested outside of the White House.⁹⁰² Cuban police reportedly punished deportees and dissidents despite the migration accord, according to relatives and CANF.⁹⁰³ CANF released a lengthy public statement attacking the repatriation decision.⁹⁰⁴

Clinton's actions created a rift between him and the Cuban-American lobby, so the interest group turned back to the Republicans for help despite many Republicans' reservations about immigration, the embargo, and government expenditures on exile programs like Radio and TV Marti.⁹⁰⁵ Representative Connie Mack introduced a bill to compel the administration to provide advance knowledge of all meetings with Cuban officials.⁹⁰⁶ Senator Phil Gramm (R-TX) reportedly discussed with CANF the possibility of shutting down the U.S. Interests Section in Havana over rumors of secret negotiations with Clinton's team.⁹⁰⁷

Clinton chose Richard Nuccio to be the newly created Special Advisor to the President and Secretary of State for Cuba to help placate Miamians.⁹⁰⁸ Clinton broadcasted on South Florida television stations a statement explaining his controversial

⁹⁰² Christopher Marquis. "Cuban Exiles Protest at White House." *The Miami Herald*, June 9, 1995: A6.

⁹⁰³ Armando Correa. "Returned Rafter Reports Beating Cuban Police Unaware of Hands-Off Guarantees." *The Miami Herald*, May 20, 1995: A15.; John Lantigua. "Local." *The Miami Herald*, June 28, 1995: B1.

⁹⁰⁴ Fiedler. "A Sensible Change of Direction by Clinton."

⁹⁰⁵ Christopher Marquis. "A Crisis in Clout for Exiles Support for Lobbies Is Waning in D.C." *The Miami Herald*, May 14, 1995: A1.

⁹⁰⁶ "Local." *The Miami Herald*, June 3, 1995: B2.

⁹⁰⁷ "Senator May Try to Close U.S. Mission in Havana." *The Miami Herald*, September 16, 1995: A16.

⁹⁰⁸ Christopher Marquis. "State Department Official Named New Czar for Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, May 26, 1995: A14.

decision in response to the outcry.⁹⁰⁹ The reasons he listed for the migration agreement were (1) to prevent unrest at Guantanamo, (2) to prevent more mass waves that exceed the capacity of public and private resources, (3) to increase the Cuban immigration quota, and (4) to ensure the Cuban government obeyed its word. He assured listeners that they would not deport those facing political persecution and that the policy adhered to the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992.⁹¹⁰

In early July 1995, Ramon Saul Sanchez led a flotilla of boats and planes into Cuban territory to protest the regime.⁹¹¹ Cuban patrol boats gave warnings before hitting a boat carrying demonstrators.⁹¹² The collision injured Metro Commissioner Pedro Reboredo and two others.⁹¹³ The Cuban government had warned that they could sink vessels and down planes that crossed waters and airspace in the future.⁹¹⁴ He led a second protest flotilla on September 2.⁹¹⁵ The Clinton administration did not intervene; events in Bosnia commanded their attention.⁹¹⁶ The warnings would soon become even more prescient.

⁹⁰⁹ Lantigua. "Local."

⁹¹⁰ Lantigua. "Local."

⁹¹¹ Marquis, Christopher. "For Exiles, A Thrill." *The Miami Herald*, July 15, 1995: A1.

⁹¹² Marquis. "For Exiles, A Thrill."

⁹¹³ Marquis. "For Exiles, A Thrill."

⁹¹⁴ Marquis. "For Exiles, A Thrill."

⁹¹⁵ Viglucci, Andres. "Saluting 4 Fallen Brothers Orange Bowl Service, Gathering Off Cuba Set." *The Miami Herald*, February 28, 1996: A1.

⁹¹⁶ Marquis. "For Exiles, A Thrill."

While Cuban-Americans forcefully and effectively advocated on behalf of Cuban refugees, the migration agreements tested the limits to their ability to set policy.⁹¹⁷ However, it also illustrated their ability to constrain executive decision-making, even during crises. Reacting to Clinton's decisions, a senior State Department official remarked, "It shows U.S. policy can be rented out by a strong lobby, but it can't be owned by it."⁹¹⁸

The Helms-Burton Act

Bill Clinton had supported the Cuba Democracy Act (CDA) during his presidential campaign, forced Bush to ratify the legislation, and remained tough on Cuba. However, he had dragged his feet on supporting more comprehensive legislation, particularly during his first two years with a Democrat-controlled Congress. The opportunity for hardliners came when Republicans took back the House and Senate in the 1994 midterm elections. In a major blow to Clinton's agenda displaying nationwide dissatisfaction with Clinton's early presidential performance, Republicans won the majority in both Congressional chambers in the November 1994 election.

⁹¹⁷ Jorge Dominguez, interview by the author, May 8, 2018.

⁹¹⁸ Bohning and Marquis. "Exiles, Key GOP Legislators Vow to Fight Clinton's Cuba Policy."

Mas Canosa immediately started collaborating with them to write new legislation.⁹¹⁹ Mas Canosa sent an audacious letter to foreign embassies to warn them not to do business with Cuba.⁹²⁰ Mas Canosa alerted:

All democratic organizations in Cuba or abroad which oppose the Castro regime agree that any investments made during the present regime will be held in trust by a post-Castro government. This will be done for the benefit of the new republic and until a system can be established for the equitable return of the forfeited properties to their rightful owners....

An overthrow of this regime is inevitable. It is up to you to withdraw your present investment from the island or to decide not to proceed with any investment. There will certainly be more solid opportunities for investments in a future democratic Cuba. You are taking a major risk and will incur major losses by doing business in Cuba during the tenure of the dictatorship of Fidel Castro.

The letter excoriated them for investing in property that the government had seized illegally in a country that violated human rights.

Ultraconservative Jesse Helms (R-NC) became the Senate Foreign Relations Committee chair, and ultraconservative Dan Burton (R-IN) became chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee's Western Hemisphere Affairs Subcommittee.⁹²¹ Representatives Robert Torricelli and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen served on Burton's subcommittee.⁹²² The Senate Foreign Relations Committee's first bill under the new Republican-controlled Congress in 1995, and the first hearing for the Western

⁹¹⁹ Christopher Marquis. "Exile: Investments in Cuba Are 'An Act of Collaboration'." *The Miami Herald*, December 22, 1994: A19.

⁹²⁰ Marquis. "Exile: Investments in Cuba Are 'An Act of Collaboration'."

⁹²¹ Kornbluh and LeoGrande, *Back Channel to Cuba*, 296.; Christopher Marquis. "Republicans Put Cuba On Front Burner." *The Miami Herald*, March 6, 1995: A6.

⁹²² Kornbluh and LeoGrande, *Back Channel to Cuba*, 296.; Christopher Marquis. "Republicans Put Cuba On Front Burner." *The Miami Herald*, March 6, 1995: A6.

Hemisphere subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, concerned what would become the Cuban Liberty and Solidarity (Libertad) Act.⁹²³ The House panel featured hardliners from CANF and other groups.⁹²⁴ Helms promoted the bill to adoring crowds in Miami when he visited to celebrate the Bay of Pigs anniversary.⁹²⁵

The Libertad Act, also known as the Helms-Burton Act, responded to the Special Period and attempted to build on the Cuba Democracy Act's pressure on the Castro regime. Proponents believed that third countries propped up the dictatorship after the Soviet Union fell, enabling Castro and preventing popular discontent with the desperate economic conditions from fomenting into regime change. Members of Congress sought to codify existing embargo laws and guarantee that only an act of Congress could revert them rather than just executive action.

The legislation would discourage new investments in Cuba by penalizing companies and individuals that "traffic" in current U.S. citizens' confiscated property.⁹²⁶ U.S. citizens, regardless of whether they were citizens at the time of the takeover, would be able to sue foreign companies that make new investments on their confiscated property in Cuba.⁹²⁷ Canada, Mexico, and the European Union wrote official cables and made public statements that strongly opposed the proposals for violating existing trade

⁹²³ Marquis. "Republicans Put Cuba On Front Burner."

⁹²⁴ Marquis. "Republicans Put Cuba On Front Burner."

⁹²⁵ David Hancock And John Lantigua. "Hundreds Cheer Helms' Visit and Anti-Castro Fervor." *The Miami Herald*, April 18, 1995: B1.

⁹²⁶ Christopher Marquis. "U.S. Allies Angered by Bill to Tighten Cuba Embargo." *The Miami Herald*, April 8, 1995: A16.

⁹²⁷ Marquis. "U.S. Allies Angered by Bill to Tighten Cuba Embargo."

agreements, national sovereignty, and international law.⁹²⁸ Representative Diaz-Balart, who helped write the bill, argued that it was unethical for foreign countries to protect their commercial interests at the expense of propping up “tyranny.”⁹²⁹ Senator Helms and Representative Burton pushed their legislation more aggressively despite the administration’s opposition of stipulations that would violate international law, harm relationships with allies and trading partners, and restrict executive control over foreign policy.⁹³⁰

Detractors on the Hill called it the “Bacardi bill” because of the preferential provisions for sugar and liquor resulting from special interest lobbying.⁹³¹ CANF and Bacardi helped to fundraise for Jesse Helms in Miami.⁹³² The Fanjul sugar barons also pushed for the bill behind the scenes.⁹³³ Otto Reich headed a U.S.-Cuba Business Council in Washington, D.C., and perhaps not coincidentally, the legislation required the U.S. Government to create a United States-Cuba Council before recognizing a post-Castro Cuban government.⁹³⁴ Jorge Mas Canosa’s telecommunications investments would stand to benefit from the provision in the bill allowing U.S. aid for private telecommunications

⁹²⁸ Marquis. "U.S. Allies Angered by Bill to Tighten Cuba Embargo."

⁹²⁹ Marquis. "U.S. Allies Angered by Bill to Tighten Cuba Embargo."

⁹³⁰ Bohning And Marquis. "Exiles, Key GOP Legislators Vow to Fight Clinton's Cuba Policy."

⁹³¹ Christopher Marquis. "How Bacardi And Politics Mix: The Cuba Embargo Bill." *The Miami Herald*, July 17, 1995: C1.

⁹³² Marquis. "How Bacardi And Politics Mix: The Cuba Embargo Bill."

⁹³³ Marquis. "How Bacardi And Politics Mix: The Cuba Embargo Bill."

⁹³⁴ Marquis. "How Bacardi And Politics Mix: The Cuba Embargo Bill."

and media companies working in a post-Castro Cuba.⁹³⁵ Cuban exiles stressed that their primary motivation was independence and freedom for Cuba; cynics claimed that their actions were to benefit themselves, particularly respecting their property rights in Cuba.⁹³⁶

Cuba experts wondered if the United States would start to ease some sanctions.⁹³⁷ GOP and exile leaders threatened to write laws that would limit the President's authority over Cuba policy and cut off funding for unfavorable projects because of the recent policies and fears that the administration would loosen the embargo.⁹³⁸ CANF recognized Newt Gingrich for his support of the Libertad bill.⁹³⁹ The House Committee on International Relations (previously known as the Foreign Affairs Committee) discharged the Helms-Burton bill to the floor in summer 1995.⁹⁴⁰

The House of Representatives met to vote on the Helms-Burton bill on September 21, 1995.⁹⁴¹ Shortly before the Helms-Burton bill vote, Representative Lee Hamilton (D-IN) introduced a bill that would lift sanctions on food and medicine sales to Cuba, but his

⁹³⁵ Marquis. "How Bacardi And Politics Mix: The Cuba Embargo Bill."

⁹³⁶ Marquis. "How Bacardi And Politics Mix: The Cuba Embargo Bill."

⁹³⁷ Christopher Marquis. "Cuba Watchers Wait, Wonder Will U.S. Ease Some Sanctions?" *The Miami Herald*, May 4, 1995: A1.; Christopher Marquis. "A Crisis in Clout for Exiles Support for Lobbies Is Waning in D.C.." *The Miami Herald*, May 14, 1995: A1.

⁹³⁸ Bohning And Marquis. "Exiles, Key GOP Legislators Vow to Fight Clinton's Cuba Policy."

⁹³⁹ "Local." *The Miami Herald*, June 3, 1995: B2.

⁹⁴⁰ "H.R.927 - 104th Congress (1995-1996): Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 | Congress.Gov | Library of Congress." Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/104th-congress/house-bill/927>.; Marquis. "How Bacardi And Politics Mix: The Cuba Embargo Bill."

⁹⁴¹ Christopher Marquis. "Cuba Sanctions Face Critical Votes Today." *The Miami Herald*, September 21, 1995: A18.

colleagues rejected it.⁹⁴² The version of the legislation at the time included the Title III and Title IV provisions, a requirement to withhold U.S. aid to the former Soviet States if they supported Cuban intelligence or nuclear capacity development, a stipulation to deny aid to countries that trade with Cuba unless the President deemed the assistance was in the U.S. national interest, required USIA to convert TV Marti signals to UHF broadcasts, required the President to report on third-country assistance to Cuba, and barred remittances or lifting the embargo until Cuba met U.S. conditions for democracy.⁹⁴³ Representative Burton wanted to add more pressure to promote what he saw as Castro's impending fall.⁹⁴⁴ Representatives Menendez, Diaz-Balart, and Ros-Lehtinen all stalwartly defended the bill.⁹⁴⁵ Diaz-Balart warned: "The message is clear: They are going to have to choose between collaborating with Castro or participating in the U.S. market."⁹⁴⁶ In other words, they wanted to dissuade new investments and cause current investors to rethink their projects. The Representatives signaled that they would not back normalization efforts.⁹⁴⁷ The House passed the bill 294-130, and the debate continued in

⁹⁴² Marquis. "Cuba Sanctions Face Critical Votes Today."

⁹⁴³ Marquis. "Cuba Sanctions Face Critical Votes Today."; "Text - H.R.927 - 104th Congress (1995-1996): Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 | Congress.Gov | Library of Congress." Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/104th-congress/house-bill/927/text/eh>.

⁹⁴⁴ Marquis. "Cuba Sanctions Face Critical Votes Today."

⁹⁴⁵ Marquis. "Cuba Sanctions Face Critical Votes Today."

⁹⁴⁶ Christopher Marquis. "'A Clear Message' To Cuba House Vote Turns Screws Tighter." *The Miami Herald*, September 22, 1995: A1.

⁹⁴⁷ Marquis. "'A Clear Message' To Cuba House Vote Turns Screws Tighter."

the Senate.⁹⁴⁸ In the other chamber, Senator Helms struggled to push the bill through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.⁹⁴⁹

Clinton and his advisors threatened to veto the bill if Congress did not alter the provisions that ostracized international partners.⁹⁵⁰ “On September 8, Clinton’s special adviser for Cuba, Richard Nuccio, denounced the bill as an ‘extreme approach’ that infringes on the president’s ability to conduct foreign policy, antagonizes U.S. allies and corporate interests and jeopardizes ‘prospects for a peaceful democratic transition.’”⁹⁵¹ Secretary of State Warren Christopher wrote to Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich outlining problems with the bill: that it would “damage prospects for a peaceful transition,” limited the President’s policy options and ability to respond, interfered with U.S. aid to Russia, harmed relationships with allies, hurt U.S. business interests, and gave Castro ammo for anti-U.S. propaganda.⁹⁵² Others noted a marked difference between U.S. policy toward Cuba versus U.S. policy toward other remaining communist countries.⁹⁵³ The sponsors had made some changes eliminating penalties for third countries purchasing Cuban sugar, curtailing Title IV, and allowing more presidential discretion compared to the original bill.⁹⁵⁴ Mas Canosa promoted the legislation with at

⁹⁴⁸ Marquis. "A Clear Message' To Cuba House Vote Turns Screws Tighter."

⁹⁴⁹ Marquis. "Cuba Sanctions Face Critical Votes Today."

⁹⁵⁰ Marquis. "Cuba Sanctions Face Critical Votes Today."

⁹⁵¹ Marquis. "Cuba Sanctions Face Critical Votes Today."

⁹⁵² Marquis. "Cuba Sanctions Face Critical Votes Today."

⁹⁵³ Mimi Whitefield. "Stakes High in Cuba Claims Bill." *The Miami Herald*, October 2, 1995: BM13.

⁹⁵⁴ Marquis. "Cuba Sanctions Face Critical Votes Today."

least thirty lawmakers.⁹⁵⁵ Forty-seven Cuban dissidents signed a letter supporting it, and Helms released the letter.⁹⁵⁶ Supporters used U.S. electoral politics as leverage, reminding the President that Florida elections were at stake.⁹⁵⁷

The “right of action” provision, also known as Title III, which would allow U.S. citizens to sue third country entities in U.S. courts for “trafficking” in confiscated Cuban property, remained the most powerful and most controversial part of the bill.⁹⁵⁸ Third countries opposed how the bill attempted to strong-arm other countries into supporting U.S. policy and the extraterritorial provisions that encroached on their sovereignty and national interests; they argued that it was against international law and would harm cooperation with the United States in other areas.⁹⁵⁹ Perhaps surprisingly, many large multinational U.S. corporations opposed Title III because it would increase the number of claimants eligible for restitution beyond those 5,911 claims that the U.S. Foreign Claims Settlement Commission (FCSC) certified two decades prior.⁹⁶⁰ The FCSC limited claims to claimants that were U.S. nationals or U.S. corporations at the time of takeover; the new legislation expanded eligibility for lawsuits to persons who later became U.S. citizens.⁹⁶¹ These FCSC-certified corporate claims amounted to over \$1 billion and represented

⁹⁵⁵ Marquis. "Cuba Sanctions Face Critical Votes Today."

⁹⁵⁶ Marquis. "Cuba Sanctions Face Critical Votes Today."

⁹⁵⁷ Whitefield. "Stakes High in Cuba Claims Bill."

⁹⁵⁸ Marquis. "Cuba Sanctions Face Critical Votes Today."

⁹⁵⁹ Christopher Marquis. "Europe, U.S. Make Cuba Deal Congress Will Be Asked to Modify Helms-Burton." *The Miami Herald*, April 12, 1997: A1.

⁹⁶⁰ Whitefield. "Stakes High in Cuba Claims Bill."

⁹⁶¹ Whitefield. "Stakes High in Cuba Claims Bill."

almost 60% of the certified FCSC claims.⁹⁶² Estimates suggested that these claims could be up to \$100 billion total and result in 300,000-430,000 lawsuits.⁹⁶³ The Cuban government had limited resources to provide compensation for all the claims, and U.S. courts had a limited capacity to address a massive influx of lawsuits.⁹⁶⁴ Thus, large corporations, about thirty of whom were members of the Joint Corporate Committee on Cuban Claims, feared that the division of time, attention, and compensation would result in less for them.⁹⁶⁵ A U.S. attorney representing the Cuban government argued, "It privatizes foreign policy. It takes resolution of claims out of the hands of the president and puts it into the hands of Cuban Americans until they achieve the settlement they want."⁹⁶⁶

Meanwhile, Clinton made some small changes unilaterally to relax some U.S. policies toward Cuba that centered exchanging ideas to foster democracy.⁹⁶⁷ He allowed for more educational exchanges and to make it easier for Cuban-Americans to travel to Cuba.⁹⁶⁸ Cuban-Americans could now travel to Cuba for "emergency humanitarian purposes" once a year without first obtaining a Treasury Department license.⁹⁶⁹ They licensed Western Union to open bureaus in Cuba, not for remittances, but to wire money

⁹⁶² Whitefield. "Stakes High in Cuba Claims Bill."

⁹⁶³ Whitefield. "Stakes High in Cuba Claims Bill."

⁹⁶⁴ Whitefield. "Stakes High in Cuba Claims Bill."

⁹⁶⁵ Whitefield. "Stakes High in Cuba Claims Bill."

⁹⁶⁶ Whitefield. "Stakes High in Cuba Claims Bill."

⁹⁶⁷ Christopher Marquis. "A Crack in The Door to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, October 6, 1995: A1.

⁹⁶⁸ Marquis. "A Crack in The Door to Cuba."

⁹⁶⁹ Marquis. "A Crack in The Door to Cuba."

for paperwork fees or in case of emergencies.⁹⁷⁰ They permitted more goods and cash transfers to go to nongovernmental Cuban nonprofits that work in education, human rights, and the environment.⁹⁷¹ The new policies also allowed each country to open news bureaus in the other.⁹⁷² To buoy the embargo, Clinton increased funding to create an OFAC branch in Miami and hire more people working on sanctions enforcement in Washington.⁹⁷³

Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole sought to bring the Helms-Burton bill to a vote a few days after the liberalization policies' announcement.⁹⁷⁴ The Senate Foreign Relations Committee did not approve the bill despite Helms's chairmanship, but it went to the floor anyway.⁹⁷⁵ Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT) led a filibuster noting that Cubans would get special status over other nationalities and that Title III would burden U.S. courts.⁹⁷⁶ Senate Republicans rejected Title III, but Dole was determined to keep pushing it.⁹⁷⁷ Proponents edited Title III to reduce the number of eligible cases and provide foreign companies with a two-year grace period.⁹⁷⁸ The property in question would have

⁹⁷⁰ Marquis. "A Crack in The Door to Cuba."

⁹⁷¹ Marquis. "A Crack in The Door to Cuba."

⁹⁷² Marquis. "A Crack in The Door to Cuba."

⁹⁷³ Marquis. "A Crack in The Door to Cuba."

⁹⁷⁴ Christopher Marquis. "Dole to Bring Helms Bill to A Vote." *The Miami Herald*, October 11, 1995: A8.

⁹⁷⁵ Marquis. "Dole to Bring Helms Bill to A Vote."

⁹⁷⁶ Christopher Marquis. "A Clinton Victory on Cuba Bill Republicans Soften Sanctions, For Now." *The Miami Herald*, October 19, 1995: A1.

⁹⁷⁷ Marquis. "A Clinton Victory on Cuba Bill Republicans Soften Sanctions, For Now."

⁹⁷⁸ Christopher Marquis. "Republicans Revise Bill That Would Tighten Cuba Embargo." *The Miami Herald*, November 11, 1995: A16.

to be worth at least \$50,000 at the moment of seizure before adjusting for inflation.

Proponents risked alienating ordinary Cuban-Americans with smaller claims in favor of corporate interests.⁹⁷⁹

Clinton understood the importance of maintaining relations with Cuban-Americans for his 1996 reelection bid, but the risks of limiting presidential authority and ostracizing allies remained greater.⁹⁸⁰ It took another acute crisis with the Cuban government for Clinton to agree to ratify the Helms-Burton Act.

Brothers to the Rescue

On Saturday, February 24, 1996, Cuban MiG fighter jets killed four Cuban-Americans when they downed two Brothers to the Rescue civilian airplanes.⁹⁸¹ The Brothers to the Rescue planes had served a humanitarian purpose for years as they scanned the waterways around Cuba and Florida for rafters. They would call the sightings into the Coast Guard, who could then pick them up and bring them to safety until the ‘wet foot-dry foot’ announcement. They provided relief and supplies. However, they also antagonized the Cuban government by flying into their airspace and dropping anti-Castro leaflets.⁹⁸² The Cuban government had warned them and the U.S. Government for months that Cuba was prepared to defend its territory and retaliate. The day that Cuba

⁹⁷⁹ Marquis. "Republicans Revise Bill That Would Tighten Cuba Embargo."

⁹⁸⁰ William LeoGrande, interview by author. May 11, 2018.

⁹⁸¹ Santiago, Fabiola. "Outraged Exiles Decry 'Act of War'." *The Miami Herald*, February 25, 1996: A13.

⁹⁸² Martin Merzer and Christopher Marquis. "Making Castro Pay Clinton: New Sanctions, No Blockade Some Exiles Cry Out for Harsher Action." *The Miami Herald*, February 27, 1996: A1.; Brecher, Elinor J. "Maggie Schuss, 'mother' of Brothers to the Rescue, dies." *The Miami Herald*, September 13, 2011.

fulfilled its warning, evidence showed that it occurred over international waters. Cuba had shot down civilian, American citizen pilots conducting humanitarian missions in international air space. The Coast Guard found no remains of the victims, Armando Alejandro Jr., Carlos Costa, Pablo Morales, and Mario de la Pena.⁹⁸³

The illicit act outraged Washington, Cuban-Americans, and the international community.⁹⁸⁴ The small attempts that Clinton had made to liberalize U.S.-Cuba information exchange, and Clinton's reticence about the Helms-Burton Act, gave way to a harsher approach. Clinton retaliated with sanctions and other political measures to tighten travel restrictions on Cuban diplomats in the United States, suspended all charter air travel between the countries, and expanded TV Marti's signal.⁹⁸⁵ He compensated the victims' families using Cuba's frozen assets in the United States, sought the United Nations' condemnation, and agreed to the Helms-Burton bill.⁹⁸⁶ The European Union "strongly condemn[ed] the shooting down of two civilian aircraft" and urged "moderation and restraint" in responding actions.⁹⁸⁷ Congress returned to the Helms-

⁹⁸³ Merzer and Marquis. "Making Castro Pay Clinton: New Sanctions, No Blockade Some Exiles Cry Out for Harsher Action."

⁹⁸⁴ Santiago. "Outraged Exiles Decry 'Act of War.'"; Merzer And Marquis. "Making Castro Pay Clinton: New Sanctions, No Blockade Some Exiles Cry Out for Harsher Action."

⁹⁸⁵ Merzer And Marquis. "Making Castro Pay Clinton: New Sanctions, No Blockade Some Exiles Cry Out for Harsher Action."

⁹⁸⁶ Merzer And Marquis. "Making Castro Pay Clinton: New Sanctions, No Blockade Some Exiles Cry Out for Harsher Action."

⁹⁸⁷ Merzer And Marquis. "Making Castro Pay Clinton: New Sanctions, No Blockade Some Exiles Cry Out for Harsher Action."

Burton bill with a renewed mandate to punish Cuba and less resistance from the President.⁹⁸⁸ Titles III and IV were back on the table.⁹⁸⁹

Some Cuban exile leaders called Cuba's actions "an act of war" and called for a cessation of cash transfers, a blockade, and aerial strikes.⁹⁹⁰ Others recommended canceling Treasury licenses, educational exchanges, and direct phone service.⁹⁹¹ Miamians protested Cuba and memorialized the victims.⁹⁹² Calls for military action resurfaced in South Florida.⁹⁹³ Although the hardliners had greater power to move Cuba policy further to the right, the Brothers to the Rescue's nonviolent *modus operandi* caused some of the more militant-inclined exiles to rethink their strategies.⁹⁹⁴

The outrage escalated when exiles learned that a Cuban double agent had double-crossed them.⁹⁹⁵ Cuban military pilot Juan Pablo Roque had defected to Miami in

⁹⁸⁸ Andres Oppenheimer. "Hard-Liners in U.S., Havana Gain." *The Miami Herald*, February 29, 1996: A16.

⁹⁸⁹ Oppenheimer. "Hard-Liners in U.S., Havana Gain."

⁹⁹⁰ Santiago. "Outraged Exiles Decry 'Act of War.'"; Merzer And Marquis. "Making Castro Pay Clinton: New Sanctions, No Blockade Some Exiles Cry Out for Harsher Action."

⁹⁹¹ Merzer And Marquis. "Making Castro Pay Clinton: New Sanctions, No Blockade Some Exiles Cry Out for Harsher Action."

⁹⁹² Merzer And Marquis. "Making Castro Pay Clinton: New Sanctions, No Blockade Some Exiles Cry Out for Harsher Action."; Viglucci, Andres. "Saluting 4 Fallen Brothers Orange Bowl Service, Gathering Off Cuba Set." *The Miami Herald*, February 28, 1996: A1.

⁹⁹³ David Hancock. "Everyone Has An Opinion On U.S. Response." *The Miami Herald*, February 27, 1996: A10.; Jack Rejtman And David Hancock. "Clinton Response Praised, Assailed." *The Miami Herald*, February 27, 1996: A13.

⁹⁹⁴ Oppenheimer. "Hard-Liners in U.S., Havana Gain."

⁹⁹⁵ Ojito, Mirta. "Hints of Betrayal as Defector Vanishes Could He Have Tipped Off Havana?" *The Miami Herald*, February 27, 1996: A1.; Merzer, Martin. "T." *The Miami Herald*, March 3, 1996: A1.

February 1992.⁹⁹⁶ He infiltrated exile circles and joined the Brothers to the Rescue.⁹⁹⁷ On Friday morning, February 23, 1996, Roque disappeared, leaving his wife and his belongings behind except for his clothes.⁹⁹⁸ He was on Cuban government-owned radio and television on Monday morning to claim that the Brothers to the Rescue were secretly a paramilitary group.⁹⁹⁹ The FBI had even had him on their payroll as an informant on Brothers to the Rescue.¹⁰⁰⁰ The incident further added to the suspicions about secret FBI and Cuban agents infiltrating exile groups.¹⁰⁰¹

A *Miami Herald*/NBC6 poll gauged the public reaction to the situation.¹⁰⁰²

Around 60% of Cuban-Americans and a third of non-Cubans wanted the United States to invade Cuba and oust Castro.¹⁰⁰³ The majority of Cuban-Americans and half of non-

⁹⁹⁶ Ojito. "Hints of Betrayal as Defector Vanishes Could He Have Tipped Off Havana?"; Eaton, Tracey. "Retired spy in Brothers to the Rescue case lives in obscurity in Havana." *The Miami Herald*, October 2, 2012.

⁹⁹⁷ Ojito. "Hints of Betrayal as Defector Vanishes Could He Have Tipped Off Havana?"

⁹⁹⁸ Ojito. "Hints of Betrayal as Defector Vanishes Could He Have Tipped Off Havana?"; Tamayo, Juan O. "Cuban Spy Indictment Charges Filed in Downing of Exile Fliers Top Spy Planned Brothers Ambush." *The Miami Herald*, May 8, 1999: A1.

⁹⁹⁹ Ojito. "Hints of Betrayal as Defector Vanishes Could He Have Tipped Off Havana?"; Ojito, Mirta. "Cuba Puts Mystery Man on Display Exiles Deny His Tale of Plot to Kill Fidel." *The Miami Herald*, February 27, 1996: A1.; Christopher Marquis. "Spy Bashes Exiles, Talks of Uncertain Future in Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, March 11, 1996: A9.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Liz Balmaseda. "Lying Roque's Words Hollow as His Soul." *The Miami Herald*, March 2, 1996: B1.; Merzer, Martin. "T." *The Miami Herald*, March 3, 1996: A1.

¹⁰⁰¹ Fabiola Santiago. "Betrayed, Exile Groups Ask: Whom Can We Trust?" *The Miami Herald*, March 10, 1996: A1.; Tamayo. "Cuban Spy Indictment Charges Filed in Downing of Exile Fliers Top Spy Planned Brothers Ambush."; Rosenberg, Carol. "Cuban Spying Trial Starts Five Are Charged as Castro Agents." *The Miami Herald*, November 27, 2000: B1.

¹⁰⁰² Fabiola Santiago and Martin Merzer. "Taking to The Sea, In Sorrow and Prayer Common Ground: Support for Nonmilitary Action." *The Miami Herald*, March 2, 1996: A1.

¹⁰⁰³ Santiago and Merzer. "Taking to The Sea, In Sorrow and Prayer Common Ground: Support for Nonmilitary Action."

Cubans supported a naval blockade, while half of Cuban-Americans and “far fewer” than half of non-Cubans supported targeted airstrikes.¹⁰⁰⁴ About 60% of Cuban-Americans and about 40% of non-Cubans thought an attack could end the Castro regime.¹⁰⁰⁵ The polls indicated that most people favored a strong response, but a significant amount wanted to avoid incitement.¹⁰⁰⁶ Nearly everyone agreed that Cuba had no right to shoot down civilian planes.¹⁰⁰⁷ Still, half of non-Cubans felt that the Brothers shared some blame for provoking the Cubans.¹⁰⁰⁸ About half of all respondents in both categories agreed with Clinton’s measures.¹⁰⁰⁹ Bay of Pigs veteran Jose Miro, echoing a decades-old feeling of Cuban-American abandonment, stated, “I don’t believe there’s any support from the American community for the Cuban exile cause. We haven’t had it for 37 years, and we’re not going to get it overnight.”¹⁰¹⁰

¹⁰⁰⁴ Santiago And Merzer. "Taking to The Sea, In Sorrow and Prayer Common Ground: Support for Nonmilitary Action."

¹⁰⁰⁵ Santiago And Merzer. "Taking to The Sea, In Sorrow and Prayer Common Ground: Support for Nonmilitary Action."

¹⁰⁰⁶ Santiago And Merzer. "Taking to The Sea, In Sorrow and Prayer Common Ground: Support for Nonmilitary Action."

¹⁰⁰⁷ Santiago And Merzer. "Taking to The Sea, In Sorrow and Prayer Common Ground: Support for Nonmilitary Action."

¹⁰⁰⁸ Santiago And Merzer. "Taking to The Sea, In Sorrow and Prayer Common Ground: Support for Nonmilitary Action."

¹⁰⁰⁹ Santiago And Merzer. "Taking to The Sea, In Sorrow and Prayer Common Ground: Support for Nonmilitary Action."

¹⁰¹⁰ Santiago And Merzer. "Taking to The Sea, In Sorrow and Prayer Common Ground: Support for Nonmilitary Action."

President Bill Clinton signed the Cuban Liberty and Solidarity (Libertad) Act of 1996 on March 12, Super Tuesday.¹⁰¹¹ Clinton's words at the signing ceremony left no doubt that the Brothers to the Rescue incident had been the determining factor for passing the legislation.¹⁰¹² Clinton began, "This Act is a justified response to the Cuban government's unjustified, unlawful attack on two unarmed U.S. civilian aircraft that left three U.S. citizens and one U.S. resident dead."¹⁰¹³ He continued, "By acting swiftly—just 17 days after the attack—we are sending a powerful message to the Cuban regime that we do not and will not tolerate such conduct. The Act also reaffirms our common goal of promoting a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba by tightening the existing embargo while reaching out to the Cuban people."¹⁰¹⁴ "Today, I sign it with the certainty that it will send a powerful, unified message from the United States to Havana that the yearning of the Cuban people for freedom must not be denied."¹⁰¹⁵ About half of the hundred people attending the signing ceremony were Cuban exiles from Florida and New Jersey.¹⁰¹⁶ Relatives of the downed Brothers to the Rescue pilots and Jorge Mas Canosa

¹⁰¹¹ Juan O. Tamayo And Carol Rosenberg. "A Powerful Message to Havana' Clinton Signs Trade Sanctions to Domestic Applause, Foreign Reservations." *The Miami Herald*, March 13, 1996: A10.

¹⁰¹² Tamayo and Rosenberg. "A Powerful Message to Havana' Clinton Signs Trade Sanctions to Domestic Applause, Foreign Reservations."

¹⁰¹³ Clinton, William J. "Statement on Signing the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996," March 12, 1996. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PPP-1996-book1/pdf/PPP-1996-book1-doc-pg433.pdf>.

¹⁰¹⁴ Clinton, William J. "Statement on Signing the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996," March 12, 1996. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PPP-1996-book1/pdf/PPP-1996-book1-doc-pg433.pdf>.

¹⁰¹⁵ Tamayo And Rosenberg. "A Powerful Message to Havana' Clinton Signs Trade Sanctions to Domestic Applause, Foreign Reservations."

¹⁰¹⁶ Tamayo And Rosenberg. "A Powerful Message to Havana' Clinton Signs Trade Sanctions to Domestic Applause, Foreign Reservations."

were among those to receive commemorative pens.¹⁰¹⁷ The law targeted foreign investment in Cuba, among other things, which Cuba valued at \$2.1 billion, but independent analysts estimated \$500 million.¹⁰¹⁸ Cuban-Americans adored Madeleine Albright for sticking up for the Brothers to the Rescue at the United Nations, the Orange Bowl, and the Libertad Act signing ceremony and for her hatred of communism resulting from family experiences.¹⁰¹⁹ Richard Nuccio resigned in protest.¹⁰²⁰

U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright released a transcript at the United Nations of Cuban communications in which the Cuban fighter pilots gleefully discuss shooting down the unarmed planes.¹⁰²¹ She also released charts showing that they shot down the Brothers' aircraft outside Cuban airspace.¹⁰²² She famously reacted, "Frankly, this is not cojones. This is cowardice."¹⁰²³ The U.N. Security Council released a statement that they

¹⁰¹⁷ Tamayo And Rosenberg. "A Powerful Message to Havana' Clinton Signs Trade Sanctions to Domestic Applause, Foreign Reservations."

¹⁰¹⁸ Tamayo And Rosenberg. "A Powerful Message to Havana' Clinton Signs Trade Sanctions to Domestic Applause, Foreign Reservations."

¹⁰¹⁹ Carol Rosenberg. "'Everybody Loves' Tough Albright She's Embraced for Stand After Cuba Downed Planes." *The Miami Herald*, March 22, 1996: A1.

¹⁰²⁰ Christopher Marquis. "Clinton: No Cuba Lawsuits for Now Firms Are Given Time to Divest." *The Miami Herald*, July 17, 1996: A1. ; Marquis. "Unlikely Voice Tilts U.S. Policy on Cuba."

¹⁰²¹ Viglucci, Andres. "Saluting 4 Fallen Brothers Orange Bowl Service, Gathering Off Cuba Set." *The Miami Herald*, February 28, 1996: A1.

¹⁰²² Viglucci. "Saluting 4 Fallen Brothers Orange Bowl Service, Gathering Off Cuba Set."

¹⁰²³ Viglucci. "Saluting 4 Fallen Brothers Orange Bowl Service, Gathering Off Cuba Set."

“strongly deplore[d]” the attack.¹⁰²⁴ Albright planned to introduce a measure for sanctions against Cuba at the United Nations.¹⁰²⁵

Menendez helped bring about the agreement on the Helms-Burton Act, represented the United States at the UNCHR, and helped create a plan in case of another mass Cuban refugee exodus.¹⁰²⁶ His view was that Castro only reacts to pressure.¹⁰²⁷ Separately, the House held a subcommittee hearing on the Brothers to the Rescue incident to determine if U.S. government negligence had contributed.¹⁰²⁸

Clinton enacted Title III’s right to sue, but he waived Title III lawsuits for six months (after the election) to give foreign firms time to divest and to revisit foreign countries’ cooperation at that time.¹⁰²⁹ Supporters of the Helms-Burton Act were upset about the fence-sitting.¹⁰³⁰ Third countries were upset that the possibility of enforcement remained in the future and prepared retaliatory legislation.¹⁰³¹ Clinton’s two-pronged, carrot-and-stick approach to Cuba was an attempt to please both sides.¹⁰³² The Clinton

¹⁰²⁴ Merzer And Marquis. "Making Castro Pay Clinton: New Sanctions, No Blockade Some Exiles Cry Out for Harsher Action."; Viglucci. "Saluting 4 Fallen Brothers Orange Bowl Service, Gathering Off Cuba Set."

¹⁰²⁵ Viglucci. "Saluting 4 Fallen Brothers Orange Bowl Service, Gathering Off Cuba Set."

¹⁰²⁶ Marquis. "Unlikely Voice Tilts U.S. Policy on Cuba."

¹⁰²⁷ Marquis. "Unlikely Voice Tilts U.S. Policy on Cuba."

¹⁰²⁸ Morales, Maria A. "Kirkpatrick Campaigns for Dole." *The Miami Herald*, September 15, 1996: B2.; Andres Oppenheimer. "2 Women Who Could Head State." *The Miami Herald*, September 16, 1996: A6.

¹⁰²⁹ Marquis. "Clinton: No Cuba Lawsuits for Now Firms Are Given Time to Divest."; Jim Hampton. "Helms-Burton: Bad Turns Worse." *The Miami Herald*, July 21, 1996: L2.

¹⁰³⁰ Marquis. "Clinton: No Cuba Lawsuits for Now Firms Are Given Time to Divest."; Hampton. "Helms-Burton: Bad Turns Worse."

¹⁰³¹ Marquis. "Clinton: No Cuba Lawsuits for Now Firms Are Given Time to Divest."

¹⁰³² Josh Goldstein and Christopher Marquis. "Anti-Embargo Firms Gave to Democrats." *The Miami Herald*, April 17, 1997: 20A.

administration released a report entitled "Support for a Democratic Transition in Cuba," in which the government \$8 billion to aid in a post-Castro democratic transition.¹⁰³³ The preconditions were those outlined in the Helms-Burton Act.¹⁰³⁴

Clinton reportedly discussed with Castro the repatriation of Cubans who arrive in the United States at the resumption of migration talks in December 1996.¹⁰³⁵ Clinton extended the first waiver on lawsuits for another six months when they expired.¹⁰³⁶ He wanted to avoid complaints at the WTO.¹⁰³⁷ Special envoy Eizenstat had been traversing the globe, and the Clinton administration said that other countries had been stepping up their efforts to promote democracy in Cuba.¹⁰³⁸

Stuart Eizenstat, as the new undersecretary of Commerce for international trade Helms-Burton envoy, met with 40 exile organizations before traveling to other countries to defend the Helms-Burton Act and encourage them to pressure Cuba to democratize.¹⁰³⁹ Undersecretary of Commerce Stuart Eizenstat and European Union trade commissioner Sir Leon Brittan negotiated an agreement that addressed the E.U.'s concerns over the

¹⁰³³ "Two Approaches to Cuba I: A Promise of Help." *The Miami Herald*, January 29, 1997: A14.

¹⁰³⁴ "Two Approaches to Cuba I: A Promise of Help."

¹⁰³⁵ Fabiola Santiago And Christopher Marquis. "At Risk: A Symbol of Freedom for Cubans." *The Miami Herald*, December 7, 1996: A1.

¹⁰³⁶ Bohning, Don. "No Lawsuits Over Cuban Property Key Provision of Helms Law Delayed Again." *The Miami Herald*, January 4, 1997: A1.

¹⁰³⁷ Bohning. "No Lawsuits Over Cuban Property Key Provision of Helms Law Delayed Again."

¹⁰³⁸ Bohning. "No Lawsuits Over Cuban Property Key Provision of Helms Law Delayed Again."

¹⁰³⁹ Cynthia Corzo. "Envoy on Cuba Issues Meets Skeptics." *The Miami Herald*, August 21, 1996: B1.; Bohning, Don. "No Lawsuits Over Cuban Property Key Provision of Helms Law Delayed Again." *The Miami Herald*, January 4, 1997: A1.; Carol Rosenberg. "Keeping His Cool on Hot Seat of U.S.-Cuba Policy All Corners Sing Praises of Eizenstat." *The Miami Herald*, July 10, 1997: A14.

Helms-Burton Act.¹⁰⁴⁰ The negotiations and resulting 1997 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) ensured that the European Union would drop its trade suit at the World Trade Organization (WTO) over Helms-Burton and more actively promote democracy in Cuba if Clinton would continue to waive Title III lawsuits.¹⁰⁴¹ Some Helms-Burton supporters like Representative Diaz-Balart balked at the arrangement.¹⁰⁴² Senator Jesse Helms and CANF's Jose Cardenas tentatively supported the MOU because of what the United States got out of it.¹⁰⁴³ Helms and other Congress members said they would consider adding an amendment to enable presidents to continue to waive the lawsuit provision.¹⁰⁴⁴ The President never waived Title IV, and the government had already banned Mexico's Grupo Domos and Canada's Sherritt executives and their families from the United States.¹⁰⁴⁵ Clinton waived the lawsuit provision again for another six months in July 1997, and the criticisms continued.¹⁰⁴⁶

With the added pressure of an election year, the Brothers to the Rescue crisis ultimately secured the comprehensive codification of the Cuban embargo in a manner that ensured the executive branch could not unilaterally end the embargo. Ending the

¹⁰⁴⁰ Christopher Marquis. "Europe, U.S. Make Cuba Deal Congress Will Be Asked to Modify Helms-Burton." *The Miami Herald*, April 12, 1997: A1.

¹⁰⁴¹ Marquis. "Europe, U.S. Make Cuba Deal Congress Will Be Asked to Modify Helms-Burton."

¹⁰⁴² Marquis. "Europe, U.S. Make Cuba Deal Congress Will Be Asked to Modify Helms-Burton."; Carol Rosenberg. "Keeping His Cool on Hot Seat of U.S.-Cuba Policy All Corners Sing Praises of Eizenstat." *The Miami Herald*, July 10, 1997: 14A

¹⁰⁴³ Marquis. "Europe, U.S. Make Cuba Deal Congress Will Be Asked to Modify Helms-Burton."; Rosenberg. "Keeping His Cool on Hot Seat of U.S.-Cuba Policy All Corners Sing Praises of Eizenstat."

¹⁰⁴⁴ Marquis. "Europe, U.S. Make Cuba Deal Congress Will Be Asked to Modify Helms-Burton."

¹⁰⁴⁵ Marquis. "Europe, U.S. Make Cuba Deal Congress Will Be Asked to Modify Helms-Burton."

¹⁰⁴⁶ Barry Schweid. "Clinton Blocks Cuba Property Lawsuits." *The Miami Herald*, July 17, 1997: A20.

embargo would require Congressional approval. Thus, the Cuban-American legislators, CANF, and their allies guaranteed that they would have the final say on the embargo for the foreseeable future. It also guaranteed that the embargo would remain a point of contention between the United States and third countries.

1996 Election

Florida's swing state votes and donation sources led presidential candidates to target the state early in their campaigns. As usual, candidates used Cuba as their primary talking point for courting Cuban-American donations and votes. Clinton, Dole, and their surrogates repeatedly traveled to Miami before the 1996 presidential election.¹⁰⁴⁷ Jeane Kirkpatrick, one of Dole's foreign policy advisors, criticized Clinton's Cuba policy while campaigning for Dole in Miami.¹⁰⁴⁸ Clinton visited the Versailles restaurant with Democrats Paul Cejas, Jorge Perez, Simon Ferro, Hermino San Roman, Mayor Raul Martinez, Luis Lauredo, state Representative Annie Betancourt, Maria Elena Torano, Maria Victoria Arias, and Luis Aguilar Leon.¹⁰⁴⁹ There, he spoke with CANF leaders Jorge Mas Canosa and Pepe Hernandez.¹⁰⁵⁰ He made appearances at Miami-Dade Community College, the golf course, and multiple fundraisers.¹⁰⁵¹ Dole focused on his

¹⁰⁴⁷ Fiedler, Tom. "Dole Preaches to The Choir." *The Miami Herald*, October 24, 1996: A27.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Morales, Maria A. "Kirkpatrick Campaigns for Dole." *The Miami Herald*, September 15, 1996: B2.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Fiedler. "Dole Preaches to The Choir."; Tom Fiedler. "Clinton Reaches Out to Exile Leaders at Medianoche, The Action Was at Cuban Landmark." *The Miami Herald*, October 24, 1996: B1.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Fiedler. "Dole Preaches to The Choir."; Fiedler. "Clinton Reaches Out to Exile Leaders at Medianoche, The Action Was at Cuban Landmark."

¹⁰⁵¹ Fielder. "Clinton Reaches Out to Exile Leaders at Medianoche, The Action Was at Cuban Landmark."

base in Florida while Clinton made inroads in traditionally Republican communities.¹⁰⁵² Clinton won reelection in November 1996. Clinton won 42 percent of the Hispanic vote in Florida in 1996.¹⁰⁵³ He was the first Democratic presidential nominee to win Florida since Jimmy Carter in 1976.¹⁰⁵⁴ It was only the third time a Democrat had won Florida's electoral votes since 1952.

CANF and its associated lobby and PAC effectively maneuvered the elections. A Center for Public Integrity study determined that CANF was one of the most cost-effective lobbies in Washington.¹⁰⁵⁵ Representatives Ros-Lehtinen and Diaz-Balart accused the authors of the report of having a political agenda to undermine the Cuban community.¹⁰⁵⁶ Burton catered his chairmanship over the House International Relations Western Hemisphere Subcommittee to advance Cuban and Puerto Rican causes and thus attracted Cuban and Puerto Rican donors.¹⁰⁵⁷ Pro-embargo candidates received \$800,000 in donations for the 1996 campaigns from Cuban-Americans.¹⁰⁵⁸

¹⁰⁵² Fiedler. "Dole Preaches to The Choir."

¹⁰⁵³ Silva, Mark. "VP Pick Makes Foundation's Choice Less Clear." *The Miami Herald*, August 9, 2000: A2.; Silva, Mark. "Cuban Exiles' View of Gore Hits Low Level." *The Miami Herald*, August 14, 2000: A1.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Smith, Adam. C. "Hillary Clinton's connections to Florida are complicated." *The Miami Herald*, October 19, 2016.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Josh Goldstein and Christopher Marquis. "Study: Cuban Exile Lobby Is the Most Cost-Effective." *The Miami Herald*, January 24, 1997: A1.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Goldstein and Marquis. "Study: Cuban Exile Lobby Is the Most Cost-Effective."; Christopher Marquis. "Foundation's Aid Promoted Cuba Dialogue." *The Miami Herald*, January 24, 1997: A15.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Christopher Marquis. "Lawmaker Hitches His Fund Raising to Cuban Exile Cause." *The Miami Herald*, April 7, 1997: A1.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Josh Goldstein and Christopher Marquis. "Anti-Embargo Firms Gave to Democrats." *The Miami Herald*, April 17, 1997: A20.

However, anti-embargo Cuban-Americans, with a new zeal resulting from the Helms-Burton Act, donated \$156,000 to candidates.¹⁰⁵⁹ Charter flight operators, travel agents, and courier services were some of the biggest anti-embargo donors, despite having a financial incentive to maintain the embargo.¹⁰⁶⁰ John Cabanas, Vivian Mannerud, and Nilda Serret gave thousands of dollars and met with Clinton and Gore.¹⁰⁶¹ Such communication may have affected Clinton's decision to ease travel restrictions for exiles in 1995.¹⁰⁶²

Radio/TV Marti Investigation

Radio and TV Marti were some of the few outside sources of information in Cuba's self-contained media sphere. CANF had spearheaded their creation, fought for their maintenance, and ensured that their people filled essential leadership positions at the station. They provided Cuban islanders with a different perspective, information on human rights issues, international news, and entertainment programs. Radio Marti was popular, but TV Marti rarely penetrated signal blockers. Lawmakers argued over the station management and cost-effectiveness, but attempts to cut funding entirely never succeeded despite several internal investigations.

The Clinton administration inherited the Radio and TV Marti controversies from previous administrations and dealt with them throughout his two terms. The U.S.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Goldstein and Marquis. "Anti-Embargo Firms Gave to Democrats."

¹⁰⁶⁰ Goldstein And Marquis. "Anti-Embargo Firms Gave to Democrats."

¹⁰⁶¹ Goldstein And Marquis. "Anti-Embargo Firms Gave to Democrats."

¹⁰⁶² Goldstein And Marquis. "Anti-Embargo Firms Gave to Democrats."

Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy recommended ending Radio and TV Marti, Radio Free Europe, and Radio Liberty.¹⁰⁶³ The U.S. Government spent \$15.9 million on Radio Marti and \$12.7 million on TV Marti in 1992.¹⁰⁶⁴ They said that nobody watched TV Marti, so it did not merit \$25 million a year, and the latter two had run their course with the end of the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁶⁵ A government report showed that TV Marti's had limited outreach, and the connection was unreliable.¹⁰⁶⁶ (On the contrary, Radio Marti researchers found that 70% of Cubans on the island listened to the station.¹⁰⁶⁷) They also recommended consolidating international broadcasting under the U.S. Information Agency.¹⁰⁶⁸ The administration merged U.S. Information Agency operations to save costs, but Radio and TV Marti remained relatively independent.¹⁰⁶⁹ Radio and TV Marti retained its board, including chair Jorge Mas Canosa, despite numerous complaints about CANF interference and bias.¹⁰⁷⁰ Internal ideological fighting at Radio and TV Marti escalated in the aftermath.¹⁰⁷¹ Some claimed that Castro agents had infiltrated the

¹⁰⁶³ Lydia Martin. "Panel Recommends Halting TV Marti Commission Chairman Says No One Is Watching." *The Miami Herald*, March 19, 1993: A6.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Christopher Marquis. "Left, Right Fight for The Soul of Radio Marti." *The Miami Herald*, June 22, 1993: A1.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Martin. "Panel Recommends Halting TV Marti Commission Chairman Says No One Is Watching."

¹⁰⁶⁶ Christopher Marquis. "TV/Radio Marti Funded." *The Miami Herald*, October 14, 1993: A18.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Marquis. "Left, Right Fight for The Soul of Radio Marti."

¹⁰⁶⁸ Martin. "Panel Recommends Halting TV Marti Commission Chairman Says No One Is Watching."

¹⁰⁶⁹ Christopher Marquis. "Merger Won't Affect U.S. Broadcasts to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, June 16, 1993: A24.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Marquis. "Merger Won't Affect U.S. Broadcasts to Cuba."

¹⁰⁷¹ Marquis. "Left, Right Fight for The Soul of Radio Marti."

stations, and others argued that CANF exerted undue pressure on station leadership.¹⁰⁷² Clinton delayed naming a new director for the Office of Cuban Broadcasting.¹⁰⁷³

Cuban radio stations abounded in Miami.¹⁰⁷⁴ They served both South Florida and Cuban national audiences. Radio Marti joined a new wave of shortwave radio stations directed toward Cuba.¹⁰⁷⁵ Alpha 66, CANF, and Independent and Democratic Cuba started the stations The Voice of Alpha 66, The Voice of the Foundation, and The Voice of CID.¹⁰⁷⁶ Alpha 66's radio station urged militant attacks.¹⁰⁷⁷ Cubans on the island looked to these stations for information not filtered through the Cuban government on dissidents, defection, news, entertainment, and more.¹⁰⁷⁸ Radio Marti was the most popular.¹⁰⁷⁹

Congress approved \$21 million for Radio and TV Marti for 1994, but they conditioned a third of the funds on an independent advisory review panel assessing objectivity and viability or "purposes, policies, and practices of broadcasting to Cuba"

¹⁰⁷² Christopher Marquis. "Activists Turn D.C. Into A Soapbox as Fight Over Cuba Policy Intensifies." *The Miami Herald*, May 24, 1993: A1.; Marquis. "Left, Right Fight for The Soul of Radio Marti."

¹⁰⁷³ Marquis. "Left, Right Fight for The Soul of Radio Marti."

¹⁰⁷⁴ Ruiz, Manuel M. "WQBA Reflects on Years As 'Most Cuban' Station." *The Miami Herald*, May 19, 1992: E1.; Alfonso Chardy. "Exile Radio Stations Take Aim at Castro." *The Miami Herald*, October 12, 1993: B1.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Chardy. "Exile Radio Stations Take Aim at Castro."

¹⁰⁷⁶ Chardy. "Exile Radio Stations Take Aim at Castro."

¹⁰⁷⁷ Chardy. "Exile Radio Stations Take Aim at Castro."

¹⁰⁷⁸ Chardy. "Exile Radio Stations Take Aim at Castro."

¹⁰⁷⁹ Chardy. "Exile Radio Stations Take Aim at Castro."

after Representative Lincoln Diaz-Balart came to a compromise with a TV Marti opponent.¹⁰⁸⁰

The Office of Cuba Broadcasting went months without a new director.¹⁰⁸¹ Since 1985, all but one of Radio Marti's Presidential Advisory Board had had ties to CANF.¹⁰⁸² The U.S. Information Agency created a new independent special advisory investigative panel on Radio and T.V. Marti.¹⁰⁸³

The Office of Cuba Broadcasting created Radio Esperanza at Guantanamo and distributed radios to the refugees to rebroadcast programs from Radio Marti.¹⁰⁸⁴ The Director of Radio/TV Marti, Richard Lobo, left at the end of May 1995 after fifteen months in the position and federal scrutiny of the stations.¹⁰⁸⁵ USIA approved Lobo's unrealized plan to eliminate the analytical unit to cut costs, but analysts accused that the decision was politically motivated because they had complained about Mas Canosa's overreach.¹⁰⁸⁶ Rumors of the division between "masistas" and "contra-masistas" factions at Radio Marti percolated for years.¹⁰⁸⁷

¹⁰⁸⁰ Marquis. "TV/Radio Marti Funded."; "Time to Reduce the Static." *The Miami Herald*, December 5, 1993: M2.

¹⁰⁸¹ "Time to Reduce the Static."

¹⁰⁸² "Time to Reduce the Static."

¹⁰⁸³ Christopher Marquis. "Panel Named to Give Advice on Radio, TV Marti's Future." *The Miami Herald*, December 22, 1993: A15.

¹⁰⁸⁴ "Refugees Caymans Weighs Fate of Cubans Refugees." *The Miami Herald*, September 14, 1994: A10.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Don Bohning and Christopher Marquis. "Chief of Radio/TV Marti Steps Down." *The Miami Herald*, May 27, 1995: A16.; Mirta Ojito. "Ex-Radio, TV Marti Chief Quit in Frustration." *The Miami Herald*, July 7, 1995: B2.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Ojito. "Ex-Radio, TV Marti Chief Quit in Frustration."

¹⁰⁸⁷ "A Question of Conflict." *The Miami Herald*, July 26, 1995: A10.

A purported draft of the USIA investigation report accused Mas Canosa of taking advantage of Radio Marti for his interests at the expense of U.S. policy.¹⁰⁸⁸ USIA head Joseph Duffey recommended that the USIA Inspector General (IG) resign and made a public statement that he would file an ethics complaint to the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency over how the USIA IG had investigated Radio Marti.¹⁰⁸⁹ It turned out that the leaked draft was just the prosecutorial section of the incomplete report.¹⁰⁹⁰ The Clinton administration considered replacing the Radio Marti advisory board, whose appointments were well past expiration.¹⁰⁹¹ The White House mull over replacing the advisory board members for Radio and TV Marti for at least eighteen months.¹⁰⁹² Mas Canosa had chaired the board since 1984, even though it was a three-year position.¹⁰⁹³ Except for the ones who had died or resigned, the other members had also overstayed their terms.¹⁰⁹⁴

In 1995, Republican New Jersey Representative Christopher Smith proposed an amendment to eliminate the research analytics department at Radio Marti to save

¹⁰⁸⁸ "A Question of Conflict."

¹⁰⁸⁹ Cynthia Corzo. "Radio Marti Overseer Questions Fairness of Investigation." *The Miami Herald*, July 26, 1995: A4.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Cynthia Corzo. "Critique of Radio Marti Is Faulted Official: Only One Side Given." *The Miami Herald*, July 28, 1995: A1.; "Unfair to Mas." *The Miami Herald*, July 29, 1995: A26.

¹⁰⁹¹ Christopher Marquis. "Radio Marti Shake-Up Considered Board Members May Be Replaced." *The Miami Herald*, August 9, 1995: A10.

¹⁰⁹² Christopher Marquis. "White House Ponders Shake-Up in Cuba Broadcasting." *The Miami Herald*, June 4, 1997: 13A.; Hampton, Jim. "Name A New Radio Marti Board." *The Miami Herald*, June 8, 1997: L2.

¹⁰⁹³ Alfonso Chardy and Jay Ducassi. "Miamian To Head Radio Panel." *The Miami Herald*, June 1, 1984: A4.; Marquis. "White House Ponders Shake-Up in Cuba Broadcasting."

¹⁰⁹⁴ Marquis. "White House Ponders Shake-Up in Cuba Broadcasting."

\$500,000, helped defeat a proposal to get rid of the \$12 million per year TV Marti, and presented another amendment to increase the NED budget by \$2 million.¹⁰⁹⁵ Unnamed sources told the *Herald* that Mas Canosa was behind the amendment to eliminate the Radio Marti research department after two employees criticized Mas Canosa's control.¹⁰⁹⁶

Radio and Television Marti had been the subject of three recent federal investigations: the USIA inspector general, the General Accounting Office, and the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency; all probes were still open in late 1995.¹⁰⁹⁷ The debate proceeded regarding whether to move the broadcasting stations to Miami.¹⁰⁹⁸ Like Mas Canosa and Senator Phil Gramm (R-TX), proponents argued that it would save money, draw on local expertise, and be closer to the intended audience.¹⁰⁹⁹ Like the chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, opponents were worried that the stations would have less federal oversight and become more politicized.¹¹⁰⁰

The USIA inspector general blocked releasing the full Radio Marti investigation report at first because of the political liability.¹¹⁰¹ Despite the controversy surrounding Radio/TV Marti and concerns about moving it to Miami, Congress and the President

¹⁰⁹⁵ "Killing the Whistle-Blowers." *The Miami Herald*, September 8, 1995: A22.

¹⁰⁹⁶ "Killing the Whistle-Blowers."

¹⁰⁹⁷ Christopher Marquis. "Radio Marti Move to Miami Isn't Dead." *The Miami Herald*, December 20, 1995: 15A.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Marquis. "Radio Marti Move to Miami Isn't Dead."

¹⁰⁹⁹ Marquis. "Radio Marti Move to Miami Isn't Dead."

¹¹⁰⁰ Marquis. "Radio Marti Move to Miami Isn't Dead."

¹¹⁰¹ Christopher Marquis. "D.C. Insider Gets Top Post at Southcom." *The Miami Herald*, April 11, 1996: A10.

approved a budget bill in April 1996 that included an amendment to move Radio and TV Marti broadcasting from Washington to Miami.¹¹⁰² It was a victory for Mas Canosa.¹¹⁰³ Provisions may have also hindered further investigations by eliminating USIA inspector general position and giving the State Department oversight.¹¹⁰⁴ It also reorganized staff, potentially risking the jobs of the researchers who had criticized exile influence.¹¹⁰⁵ Proponents believed it would save money and give greater access to expertise. Opponents said that the ostensibly impartial radio station would lose credibility, the move itself would cost money, and that Castro could frame it as an illegitimate extension of the exile community.¹¹⁰⁶ Many people did not even realize that the amendment had been a part of the budget that passed.¹¹⁰⁷ Director Rolando Bonachea went ahead with the move before they even had funds for relocation or office space; supporters suspected Bonachea wanted to have it done before the election while they still had more leverage.¹¹⁰⁸ The State Department inspector general exonerated the Office of Cuban Broadcasting management against political retaliation claims, but it began reviewing policies to ensure objectivity in

¹¹⁰² Christopher Marquis. "Radio and TV Marti Cuba Broadcasts to Move Headquarters to Miami." *The Miami Herald*, April 27, 1996: A1.

¹¹⁰³ Marquis. "Radio and TV Marti Cuba Broadcasts to Move Headquarters to Miami."

¹¹⁰⁴ Marquis. "Radio and TV Marti Cuba Broadcasts to Move Headquarters to Miami."

¹¹⁰⁵ Marquis. "Radio and TV Marti Cuba Broadcasts to Move Headquarters to Miami."

¹¹⁰⁶ Marquis. "Radio and TV Marti Cuba Broadcasts to Move Headquarters to Miami."

¹¹⁰⁷ Christopher Marquis. "Radio Marti's Move Isn't in Budget." *The Miami Herald*, August 6, 1996: B1.

¹¹⁰⁸ Marquis. "Radio Marti's Move Isn't in Budget."; "Around Dade Alarcon-Mas Debate Tonight." *The Miami Herald*, September 5, 1996: B2.

reporting.¹¹⁰⁹ Information about the USIA report on Radio and TV Marti became public.¹¹¹⁰ Signed employee affidavits described Mas Canosa's overt influence on the station, its programming, and its personnel.¹¹¹¹ False claims broadcasted about U.S. diplomatic mission staff caused problems for the Interests Section in Havana.¹¹¹² The House Appropriations Committee approved an amendment to transfer TV Marti's funding to the Border Patrol.¹¹¹³

Despite constant controversy and widespread federal budget cuts, Radio and TV Marti maintained its funding. CANF almost single-handedly and repeatedly saved it. Cuban-Americans viewed it as an essential service to aid their efforts and break through Cuban government censorship. The station gave Cuban-Americans another steady point of access to the U.S. Government's Cuba policy-making apparatus and helped to steer the conversations between Washington, Miami, and Havana based on the reports they provided in their programs.

Conclusion

The Clinton era was notable in three aspects related to Cuba policy: changes in the international system, domestic party and electoral politics, and the height of CANF

¹¹⁰⁹ Christopher Marquis. "State Department Exonerates Radio, TV Marti Management." *The Miami Herald*, February 4, 1997: A9.

¹¹¹⁰ Christopher Marquis. "Employees' Testimony Cites Troubles at Radio Marti." *The Miami Herald*, May 25, 1996: A19.

¹¹¹¹ Marquis. "Employees' Testimony Cites Troubles at Radio Marti."

¹¹¹² Marquis. "Employees' Testimony Cites Troubles at Radio Marti."

¹¹¹³ "House Committee Votes to Shift TV Marti Funding to Border Patrol." *The Miami Herald*, July 12, 1996: A13.

influence and its subsequent fall. The end of the Cold War and the bipolar international system brought new challenges and made Cuba less of a national security threat. The Soviet Union collapsed, and Cuba's subsidies ended. Cuba could no longer rely on the Soviet threat as a bargaining chip with the United States, nor could its economy weather the impact of broken trade relations with the former Soviet bloc. Tens of thousands of desperate Cuban refugees escaped the island on boats and makeshift rafts. Cuba entered a Special Period of poverty, and many viewed the regime as vulnerable. People expected Cuba to democratize as most other countries had done and that it was the inevitable "end of history." As the new hegemon in the international system, the United States promoted a distinctly Neoliberal foreign policy agenda that prioritized democracy promotion, individual rights, and free-market capitalism. As such, promoting democracy and capitalism in Cuba aligned with the goals of Cuban-Americans even if the hardline strategies did not align with Neoliberal preferences for diplomacy, multilateralism, and free trade. Numerous organizations prepared for Fidel's downfall and sought to hasten it.

In Clinton's first term, with the prospect of reelection on the horizon, he pandered to the Cuban-American community more than in his second term, even though he still made some unpopular decisions regarding limiting migration and hesitated on hardline legislation. When Republicans took over Congress in 1994, they increased the pressure on Clinton to perform for the Cuban-American community. Clinton disappointed hardline Cuban-Americans several times, such as with the migration accords, the wet foot-dry foot policy, the Helms-Burton Title III waiver, and some limited openings to Cuba.

The Clinton administration arguably highlighted the zenith of CANF's political influence because it showed its ability to pass legislation even during a Democratic

presidency despite having a closer relationship with Republicans. The fact that Cuba was no longer the high-level national security threat to the United States that it had been during the Cold War resulted in the executive branch delegating more decision-making. Cuban-Americans had many political victories during the 1990s, and CANF contributed greatly. They support three Cuban-American Congress members' elections, nudged Clinton to support the Cuban Democracy Act during the 1992 election, advocated for Cuban refugees, and passed the Helms-Burton Act. Cuban-American politicians earned more prestige nationally and began to dominate local Miami politics. Thus, the Cuban lobby's political savvy and a confluence of amenable local, national, and international factors enabled them to exert considerable influence despite the era's new challenges.

CHAPTER 5: BILL CLINTON'S SECOND TERM

Introduction

President Bill Clinton's second term heralded the beginning of a significant shift in Cuban-American politics. Having won a second term in office, reelection no longer influenced his decision-making as much. Jorge Mas Canosa's untimely death, momentum in the anti-embargo movement, and the international controversy over the child refugee Elian Gonzalez weakened CANF's influence in Washington and Miami and brought it closer to a reckoning. Neoliberalism still dominated the international system, but Cuba had weathered the height of the post-Soviet wave of democratization. Meanwhile, Cuba stabilized, and its economy began to recover as the Cuban government courted U.S. businesses and global foreign direct investment and found an ally after Venezuela's new president, Hugo Chavez, took office in 1999.

Violent Pushback

Cuban exile militants' vigilante violence had largely died out in favor of domestic U.S. political lobbying to achieve goals, but violent attacks saw a resurgence in the late 1990s after the Brothers to the Rescue shutdown. The investigations into the paramilitary activity alleged that some prominent Cuban-Americans, including CANF leadership, may have provided financial and other support to the culprits. In other words, they may not have given up on other strategies when they chose to invest more of their time and energy into domestic politics, even as the prospect of insurgency lost popularity. It also revealed the lingering sympathy for anti-Castro violence in the community.

Bombs exploded in two Havana hotels on July 12, 1997.¹¹¹⁴ The Capri and Nacional hotels were the targets.¹¹¹⁵ The Melia Cohiba, Chateau-Miramar, and Triton Hotels, and the Bodeguita del Medio restaurant were also bombed or targeted that summer.¹¹¹⁶ Analysts suspected that the culprits aimed to harm Cuba's tourism sector.¹¹¹⁷ CANF unconditionally endorsed "any denunciation, confrontation or act of internal rebellion aimed at toppling Fidel;" they preferred peaceful means but did not consider the violent actions to be terrorism.¹¹¹⁸ Cuban authorities accused Salvadoran and Guatemalan mercenaries, who they said had ties to CANF, of discharging six of the dozen bombings or attempted bombings in Havana over the previous five months that killed an Italian tourist and injured eleven others.¹¹¹⁹ They alleged that the Miami exiles engaged in

¹¹¹⁴ Morales, Maria A. "In Miami, Disbelief Gives Way to Concern." *The Miami Herald*, July 13, 1997: A17.

¹¹¹⁵ Morales. "In Miami, Disbelief Gives Way to Concern."

¹¹¹⁶ Tamayo, Juan O. "Cuban Hotels Were Bombed by Miami-Paid Salvadorans." *The Miami Herald*, November 16, 1997: A1.; Tamayo, Juan O. "U.S. Probe Is Based on Cuban Data Havana Report Accuses Exile Group of Blasts." *The Miami Herald*, October 30, 1998: A1.; Epstein Nieves, Gail. "Investigator from Cuba Takes Stand in Spy Trial He Tells of Bomb Blasts at Tourist Sites." *The Miami Herald*, March 30, 2001: A1.

¹¹¹⁷ Morales. "In Miami, Disbelief Gives Way to Concern."

¹¹¹⁸ Tamayo, Juan O. "Cuban-American Group Endorses 'Internal Rebellion' Against Castro." *The Miami Herald*, August 14, 1997: A17.

¹¹¹⁹ Tamayo, Juan O. "Salvadoran Held in Cuba Blasts." *The Miami Herald*, September 11, 1997: A1.; Tamayo, Juan O. "Cuba Gives Its Version of Bomb Suspect's Acts." *The Miami Herald*, September 16, 1997: A4.; Tamayo. "Cuban Hotels Were Bombed by Miami-Paid Salvadorans.;" Tamayo, Juan O. "Cuba Bombing Suspect Not Political, Salvadorans Say." *The Miami Herald*, October 27, 1998: A5.; "Cuba Sets Trial for Salvadoran In Bomb Attacks." *The Miami Herald*, March 4, 1999: A18.; "Salvadoran Admits to Bombings in Cuba, Man Pleads for His Life." *The Miami Herald*, March 9, 1999: A1.; Tamayo, Juan O. "Salvadoran Admits Guilt In '97 Cuba Bombings." *The Miami Herald*, March 9, 1999: A1.; Tamayo, Juan O. "Cuba Trial Portrays 2 Sides to Salvadoran: Terrorist Vs. Adventurer." *The Miami Herald*, March 10, 1999: A7.; Tamayo, Juan O. "Cuban Officials Again Accuse CANF Of Aiding Salvadoran In Bombings." *The Miami Herald*, March 11, 1999: A19.; Tamayo, Juan O. "Witness: I Was a Castro Spy in Foundation." *The Miami Herald*, March 12, 1999: A1.; Associated Press. "Salvadoran Apologizes at Havana Bomb Trial Cuba Says It Can Prove Miami Link." *The Miami Herald*, March 16, 1999: A12.

terrorism and drug trafficking.¹¹²⁰ Violent attacks had mostly subsided since the 1980s, but perpetrators resurfaced in the 1990s with renewed hope that the attacks could be enough to trigger regime change given Cuba's circumstances.¹¹²¹

The Miami Herald investigated the bombings.¹¹²² They uncovered that the Salvadorans tasked with assassinating Castro had links to Luis Posada Carriles, known for his alleged roles in bombing a Cuban airplane in 1976 and the Iran-Contra scandal.¹¹²³ Sources told *The Miami Herald* that Posada Carriles had raised \$15,000 from mostly wealthy Miami exiles to fund the operation as individual donors.¹¹²⁴

The Miami Herald investigated Luis Posada Carriles and uncovered an ongoing trail of alleged paramilitary operations against the Castro regime.¹¹²⁵ Most infamously, Carriles was accused of bombing a Cuban jetliner in 1976 and part of the Iran-Contra scandal.¹¹²⁶ He was purportedly the mastermind behind the numerous bombings in Havana in 1997 and had attempted to smuggle explosives through travelers from

¹¹²⁰ Tamayo. "Salvadoran Held in Cuba Blasts."

¹¹²¹ Tamayo, Juan O. "First U.S. Trial on Plot to Kill Castro To Begin." *The Miami Herald*, November 11, 1999: A16.

¹¹²² Tamayo. "Cuban Hotels Were Bombed by Miami-Paid Salvadorans."

¹¹²³ Tamayo. "Cuban Hotels Were Bombed by Miami-Paid Salvadorans.;" Frances Robles. "Terror-plots mystery man points at Miami exiles." *The Miami Herald*, October 18, 2010: A1.

¹¹²⁴ Tamayo. "Cuban Hotels Were Bombed by Miami-Paid Salvadorans."

¹¹²⁵ Gerardo Reyes And Juan O. Tamayo. "An Exile's Relentless Aim: Oust Castro." *The Miami Herald*, June 7, 1998: A1.; "Posada's Versions of Events Vary." *The Miami Herald*, July 12, 1998: A29.; Tamayo. "Witness: I Was a Castro Spy in Foundation."

¹¹²⁶ Reyes And Tamayo. "An Exile's Relentless Aim: Oust Castro."

Guatemala to Cuba.¹¹²⁷ Rumors claimed that his connections to conservative Central American military, Cuban exiles (many of whom viewed him as a freedom fighter and provided funding), and the CIA helped him evade consequences and remain in hiding.¹¹²⁸ Law enforcement had long kept an eye on the exile community to prevent violent attacks but rarely prosecuted them because the officials wanted to maintain informants.¹¹²⁹ One challenge to prosecutions in South Florida of Cuban exiles was sympathetic juries, but the judgments regarding how to proceed are often made at higher levels.¹¹³⁰

CANF denied *The New York Times*' assertions that Posada Carriles had obtained money from its members.¹¹³¹ CANF held a press conference at which it played videos of Posada Carriles denying the allegations.¹¹³² In an interview with reporter Maria Elvira Salazar, Posada said he had lied to *The New York Times* reporters when he previously claimed CANF members had provided him funding for attacks.¹¹³³ Representative

¹¹²⁷ Reyes And Tamayo. "An Exile's Relentless Aim: Oust Castro."; Tamayo. "Cuba Bombing Suspect Not Political, Salvadorans Say."; San Martin, Nancy. "Activist Emerged from Shadows." *The Miami Herald*, March 31, 2005: A2.

¹¹²⁸ Reyes And Tamayo. "An Exile's Relentless Aim: Oust Castro."; 1998 Knight Ridder/Tribune Services, Saul Landau. "Investigate Posada's Statements." *The Miami Herald*, August 3, 1998: A13.; Glenn Garvin And Juan O. Tamayo. "U.S. Urges Clampdown on Cuban Exile's Terrorist Actions." *The Miami Herald*, September 30, 1998: A1.

¹¹²⁹ Tamayo, Juan O. "Anti-Castro Plots Seldom Lead to Jail in U.S." *The Miami Herald*, July 23, 1998: A11.

¹¹³⁰ Tamayo. "Anti-Castro Plots Seldom Lead to Jail in U.S."; Juan O. Tamayo And Carol Rosenberg. "Castro-Plot Charges Limit Role of Politics." *The Miami Herald*, August 27, 1998: A1.

¹¹³¹ "CANF Responds: Claims Are False." *The Miami Herald*, July 12, 1998: A28.; Christopher Marquis and Andres Viglucci. "Exile Denies CANF Leaders Financed Attacks in Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, July 14, 1998: A1.; Martin Merzer and Alfonso Chardy. "Paper Defends Reports on Terrorist, Foundation." *The Miami Herald*, July 16, 1998: A1.

¹¹³² Marquis and Viglucci. "Exile Denies CANF Leaders Financed Attacks in Cuba."

¹¹³³ Tamayo, Juan O. "Exile: I Lied About Attack Backers." *The Miami Herald*, August 3, 1998: A1.; Steinback, Robert. "Press Stumbles on Credibility." *The Miami Herald*, August 4, 1998: B1.; San Martin. "Activist Emerged from Shadows."; Corral, Oscar. "Posada's Presence Would Rally Exiles, Perplex

Charles Rangel demanded investigations of CANF, and the State Department looked into the allegations for possible violations of neutrality laws.¹¹³⁴ In mid-August 1998, the United States urged Central American governments to more actively squash Cuban exile paramilitary activities and investigate Posada.¹¹³⁵ In October 1998, Cuba released a report accusing CANF, Posada, and accomplices of being behind the bombings.¹¹³⁶

That fall, law enforcement officers seized a boat that had belonged to CANF director Juan Antonio Llama off the coast of Puerto Rico; Llama said he had sold it.¹¹³⁷ The FBI and courts investigated various individuals with connections to the incident and CANF.¹¹³⁸ The boat contained military weapons and equipment in the illegal possession of four Cuban exiles—Angel Manuel Alfonso, Angel Hernandez Rojo, Francisco Secundino Cordova, and Juan Bautista Marquez—to assassinate Fidel Castro at the

U.S." *The Miami Herald*, April 3, 2005: B1.; Chardy, Alfonso. "Posada Says Castro Is Persecuting Him." *The Miami Herald*, August 31, 2005: B4.

¹¹³⁴ Marquis and Viglucci. "Exile Denies CANF Leaders Financed Attacks in Cuba."

¹¹³⁵ Garvin and Tamayo. "U.S. Urges Clampdown on Cuban Exile's Terrorist Actions."

¹¹³⁶ Tamayo. "U.S. Probe Is Based on Cuban Data Havana Report Accuses Exile Group of Blasts."; Tamayo, Juan O. "Cuban Officials Again Accuse CANF Of Aiding Salvadoran In Bombings." *The Miami Herald*, March 11, 1999: A19.; Tamayo. "Witness: I Was a Castro Spy in Foundation."; Tamayo, Juan O. "It's Havana That's Foot-Dragging on Exile Evidence, U.S. Retorts." *The Miami Herald*, March 24, 1999: A17.

¹¹³⁷ Pablo Alfonso And Gerardo Reyes. "CANF Official Listed as Seized Boat's Owner." *The Miami Herald*, November 1, 1997: A1.; Gerardo Reyes. "Before Assassination Plot, Boat Was at Gables Dock." *The Miami Herald*, November 7, 1997: B1.; Gerardo Reyes. "CANF Leaders Subpoenaed in Castro Assassination Plot." *The Miami Herald*, December 3, 1997: B1.; Gerardo Reyes. "Top Exile's Gun Tied to Castro Plot." *The Miami Herald*, December 21, 1997: A1.; Cancio Isla, Wilfredo. "Exile: We Plotted Attacks on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, June 22, 2006: A1.

¹¹³⁸ Reyes. "Top Exile's Gun Tied to Castro Plot."; Gerardo Reyes. "Exile's Bank Account Probed in Alleged Anti-Castro Plot." *The Miami Herald*, March 12, 1998: A17.; Tamayo, Juan O. "Castro Plot Case Granted More Time Prosecutor Promises New Indictment." *The Miami Herald*, August 14, 1998: A21.; Chardy, Alfonso. "Exile Group's Officials Facing Indictment in Anti-Castro Plot." *The Miami Herald*, August 21, 1998: A1.; Hiaasen, Carl. "Indicted? Act Indignant." *The Miami Herald*, August 23, 1998: B1.

upcoming November 1997 Ibero-American Summit in Venezuela.¹¹³⁹ CANF executive committee officer Jose Antonio Llama owned the yacht on which the culprits stored weaponry and planned their raid.¹¹⁴⁰ CANF president Pepe Hernandez owned one of the rifles on the boat, according to sales records.¹¹⁴¹

The investigations into the Puerto Rican boat wreck and Castro assassination attempt lasted months. In August 1998, a federal grand jury indicted Jose Antonio Llama, the four onboard, Jose Rodriguez Sosa, and Alfredo Otero for conspiracy to murder Castro and related charges under the federal criminal code Section 1116.¹¹⁴² It did not broach the question of the Neutrality Act.¹¹⁴³ CANF maintained Llama's innocence and their commitment to nonviolence.¹¹⁴⁴ All seven pleaded not guilty.¹¹⁴⁵ Their lawyer, Ricardo Pesquera, said that the charges were "the greatest hypocrisy of the United States

¹¹³⁹ Alfonso and Reyes. "CANF Official Listed as Seized Boat's Owner."; Reyes. "Before Assassination Plot, Boat Was at Gables Dock."; Gerardo Reyes. "FBI To Pursue Alleged Castro Death Plot." *The Miami Herald*, November 11, 1997: A7.; Gerardo Reyes. "Alleged Exile Plotter Contests Firearms Charge." *The Miami Herald*, November 25, 1997: A12.; Tamayo, Juan O. "First U.S. Trial on Plot to Kill Castro To Begin." *The Miami Herald*, November 11, 1999: A16.

¹¹⁴⁰ Juan O. Tamayo And Gerardo Reyes. "7 Indicted in Plot to Kill Castro CANF Official Named in Grand Jury Probe." *The Miami Herald*, August 26, 1998: A1.

¹¹⁴¹ Tamayo and Reyes. "7 Indicted in Plot to Kill Castro CANF Official Named in Grand Jury Probe."

¹¹⁴² Tamayo And Reyes. "7 Indicted in Plot to Kill Castro CANF Official Named in Grand Jury Probe."; Fabiola Santiago And Gerardo Reyes. "Prosecutor Makes His Name as A Tough Straight Shooter." *The Miami Herald*, August 26, 1998: A4.; David Lyons. "Corruption Cases Keep." *The Miami Herald*, August 31, 1998: B1.

¹¹⁴³ Tamayo And Reyes. "7 Indicted in Plot to Kill Castro CANF Official Named in Grand Jury Probe."; Juan O. Tamayo And Carol Rosenberg. "Castro-Plot Charges Limit Role of Politics." *The Miami Herald*, August 27, 1998: A1.

¹¹⁴⁴ Tamayo and Reyes. "7 Indicted in Plot to Kill Castro CANF Official Named in Grand Jury Probe."; Cancio Isla. "Exile: We Plotted Attacks on Cuba."

¹¹⁴⁵ Chris Hawley. "4 Suspects Plead Innocent in Alleged Anti-Castro Plot." *The Miami Herald*, August 28, 1998: A28.; Liz Balmaseda. "Don't Make Fidel A Martyr." *The Miami Herald*, September 2, 1998: B1.; Tamayo, Juan O. "3 Miamians Deny Trying to Kill Castro." *The Miami Herald*, September 3, 1998: A22.

government.... One of the things that we're going to be arguing is that since 1959 the government of the United States itself has condoned, instigated, and financed numerous assassination attempts against Fidel Castro and other leaders."¹¹⁴⁶ Federal officials debated where the trial should occur—in Puerto Rico or Miami, but they ultimately determined not to have it in Miami.¹¹⁴⁷ Junta Patriotica Cubana raised money for a legal defense fund for the defendants.¹¹⁴⁸

The trials for Jose Antonio Llama, Angel Alfonso, Angel Hernandez, Juan Marquez, Francisco Cordova, Jose Rodriguez-Sosa, and Alfredo Otero—those accused of trying to assassinate Castro—began in November 1999.¹¹⁴⁹ Six claimed that they were only planning to protest Castro in Venezuela, not kill him.¹¹⁵⁰ The judge cleared Alfredo

¹¹⁴⁶ Hawley. "4 Suspects Plead Innocent in Alleged Anti-Castro Plot."

¹¹⁴⁷ Tamayo, Juan O. "Castro Death-Plot Trial Moved to Miami." *The Miami Herald*, January 13, 1999: A1.; "Harasser Agrees to Pay Victim." *The Miami Herald*, January 22, 1999: B2.; Tamayo, Juan O. "Cuban Exile Arrested in Drug Case Man Is Also A Suspect in Castro Death Plot." *The Miami Herald*, January 26, 1999: B1.; Tamayo, Juan O. "Cuban Exiles' Trial Will Not Move to Miami." *The Miami Herald*, February 23, 1999: B1.

¹¹⁴⁸ Acle, Ana. "Fund-Raiser Planned to Help Exiles Accused of Plotting to Kill Castro." *The Miami Herald*, August 12, 1999: B1.; Acle, Ana. "Legal Defense Fund Grows for Exiles Accused in Castro Plot." *The Miami Herald*, August 18, 1999: B6.; Tamayo, Juan O. "Five Acquitted of Exile Plot to Kill Castro." *The Miami Herald*, December 9, 1999: A1.

¹¹⁴⁹ Tamayo. "First U.S. Trial on Plot to Kill Castro To Begin."; Tamayo, Juan O. "U.S. Trial on Attempt to Kill Castro Begins." *The Miami Herald*, November 13, 1999: A5.; Tamayo, Juan O. "As Trial Opens, Exiles Deny Plot to Kill Castro." *The Miami Herald*, November 16, 1999: A3.; Tamayo, Juan O. "Basic Facts Not Disputed in Exiles' Trial but Men's Intent to Kill Castro Is Denied in U.S. Federal Case." *The Miami Herald*, November 25, 1999: A30.; "Judge Denies Bid to Drop Charges Against Anti-Castro Cubans." *The Miami Herald*, December 1, 1999: A17.

¹¹⁵⁰ Tamayo. "As Trial Opens, Exiles Deny Plot to Kill Castro."

Otero for lack of evidence.¹¹⁵¹ The federal jury acquitted five others and said it was a message of solidarity to the Cuban people.¹¹⁵²

Violent plots may have experienced a resurgence during the period, or they may have just become more public. Either way, it appeared that some of the older participants in paramilitary operations had not given up as long as they were still capable of action. It also showed community sympathy that affected these and other judicial rulings.

Jorge Mas Canosa's Death

Jorge Mas Canosa said of himself in 1992, "I am a misunderstood man. I have never assimilated. I never intended to. I am a Cuban first. I live here only as an extension of Cuba."¹¹⁵³ Even though his personality and methods could be controversial, Cuban-Americans appreciated how he dedicated his life to "la causa" and made a tangible difference in many refugees' lives. His charisma and political acuity were principally responsible for CANF's growth and success since he cofounded it in 1981. The Foundation had become almost synonymous with his name, so people wondered how it could fare without him.

Mas Canosa passed away on November 23, 1997, due to lung cancer, respiratory failure, and congestive heart failure.¹¹⁵⁴ The family had kept his condition a secret for

¹¹⁵¹ "Judge Dismisses Firm, Exile in Castro Conspiracy Trial." *The Miami Herald*, December 2, 1999: A3.

¹¹⁵² Tamayo. "Five Acquitted of Exile Plot to Kill Castro."

¹¹⁵³ Christopher Marquis. "Jorge Mas Canosa, 1939-1997 Mas Canosa Dead At 58 Self-Made Millionaire and Political Crusader Fought for His Dream -- The Downfall of Castro." *The Miami Herald*, November 24, 1997: A1.

¹¹⁵⁴ Ocana, Damarys. "He Championed Exile Aspirations." *The Miami Herald*, November 24, 1997: A1.; Christopher Marquis. "Jorge Mas Canosa, 1939-1997 Mas Canosa Dead At 58 Self-Made Millionaire and

months, not to give Castro the satisfaction of knowing.¹¹⁵⁵ His last words to Pepe Hernandez were, "I, like St. Paul, feel I have worked hard and have kept the faith. Now it is up to you, up to you to keep the faith."¹¹⁵⁶ Everyone who had worked with him on Cuba, both friends and adversaries, offered words of recognition and respect: his family, Xavier Suarez, Maurice Ferre, President Bill Clinton, Wayne Smith, Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo, Lawton Chiles, Alex Penelas, Lula Rodriguez, George Know, David Lawrence Jr., Senator Bob Graham, Representative Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Frank Calzon, Silvia Iriondo, Nicaraguan President Arnaldo Aleman, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, radio hosts Auxiliary Bishop Agustin Roman, *Herald* writers, Rep. Torricelli.¹¹⁵⁷ "I have no doubt in my mind that he's up there right now, lobbying God himself for the freedom of Cuba," quipped his younger brother Raul Mas Canosa in the eulogy he delivered.¹¹⁵⁸ Even though he was absent, CANF celebrated his life at their annual gala the night before his passing.¹¹⁵⁹ Thousands attended his funeral and shouted, "Viva Cuba Libre! Viva Mas

Political Crusader Fought for His Dream—The Downfall of Castro." *The Miami Herald*, November 24, 1997: A1.

¹¹⁵⁵ Fabiola Santiago. "Gravity of Mas Canosa's Illness Remained Closely Guarded Secret." *The Miami Herald*, November 25, 1997: A1.

¹¹⁵⁶ Ocana, Damarys. "He Championed Exile Aspirations." *The Miami Herald*, November 24, 1997: A1.

¹¹⁵⁷ Ocana. "He Championed Exile Aspirations."; Marquis. "Jorge Mas Canosa, 1939-1997 Mas Canosa Dead At 58 Self-Made Millionaire and Political Crusader Fought for His Dream—The Downfall of Castro."; "Castro's No. 1 Foe." *The Miami Herald*, November 24, 1997: 14A.; Fabiola Santiago. "Exile Leader Mourned Mas Canosa Lies in Rest as Throngs Lament Loss." *The Miami Herald*, November 25, 1997: A1.; Liz Balmaseda. "A White Rose Grows to Bridge A Divide." *The Miami Herald*, November 26, 1997: A1.; Fabiola Santiago. "A Farewell to Cuba's Son Praise, Anguish Fill Eulogies for Mas Canosa." *The Miami Herald*, November 26, 1997: A1.; "Eulogies For 'An Inspired Patriot'." *The Miami Herald*, November 26, 1997: A19.

¹¹⁵⁸ Santiago. "A Farewell to Cuba's Son Praise, Anguish Fill Eulogies for Mas Canosa."

¹¹⁵⁹ Ocana. "He Championed Exile Aspirations."

Canosa!" and Mas Canosa's catchphrase "Adelante! Adelante! Adelante!" during the funeral procession.¹¹⁶⁰ Celebrities and renowned politicians attended as well as community members.¹¹⁶¹ His family buried him alongside other Cuban exiles at Woodlawn Park Cemetery in Little Havana, but they planned to move his remains to Cuba when it democratized.¹¹⁶² Jorge Jr. promised his dad that he would finish his work.¹¹⁶³

Immediately after Mas Canosa's death, people began questioning what would become of CANF without Mas Canosa.¹¹⁶⁴ There was a question of how stable and powerful the Foundation was without Mas Canosa's popularity and charisma.¹¹⁶⁵ CANF had a reputation as a South Florida "shadow government."¹¹⁶⁶ CANF had helped to turn "la causa" into an international campaign.¹¹⁶⁷ Dr. Alberto Hernandez took over as

¹¹⁶⁰ De Valle, Elaine. "Hoping for The Cause to Live on Mourners Envision A Renewed Struggle." *The Miami Herald*, November 26, 1997: A19.; Santiago. "A Farewell to Cuba's Son Praise, Anguish Fill Eulogies for Mas Canosa."

¹¹⁶¹ Santiago. "A Farewell to Cuba's Son Praise, Anguish Fill Eulogies for Mas Canosa."

¹¹⁶² Santiago. "Gravity of Mas Canosa's Illness Remained Closely Guarded Secret."

¹¹⁶³ Santiago. "A Farewell to Cuba's Son Praise, Anguish Fill Eulogies for Mas Canosa."

¹¹⁶⁴ Alfonso Chardy. "Mas Canosa Built Solid Foundation." *The Miami Herald*, November 24, 1997: A11.; Christopher Marquis. "Foundation Rattles Base of Support \ Exile Group Alienates Some Longtime Allies." *The Miami Herald*, February 24, 1998: B1.; Fiedler, Tom. "A Tale of Two Exiled Leaders and Their Legacies." *The Miami Herald*, March 29, 1998: L1.; Tamayo, Juan O. "Farmers Fuel Drive to Repeal Sanctions Big Business Eyes Sales to Havana." *The Miami Herald*, June 25, 2000: A1.

¹¹⁶⁵ Chardy. "Mas Canosa Built Solid Foundation."; Marquis. "Foundation Rattles Base of Support \ Exile Group Alienates Some Longtime Allies."; Fiedler. "A Tale of Two Exiled Leaders and Their Legacies."; Tamayo. "Farmers Fuel Drive to Repeal Sanctions Big Business Eyes Sales to Havana."

¹¹⁶⁶ Chardy. "Mas Canosa Built Solid Foundation."

¹¹⁶⁷ Chardy. "Mas Canosa Built Solid Foundation."

chairman of CANF.¹¹⁶⁸ The board named Jorge Mas Santos the vice-chairman the following summer.¹¹⁶⁹ Jorge Mas Santos became the new chairman of CANF, and Clara Maria del Valle became the first female vice chairwoman of the organization in July 1999.¹¹⁷⁰ Pepe Hernandez remained president.¹¹⁷¹

Jorge Mas Canosa had also been the chairman of the Presidential Advisory Board on Cuban Broadcasting since the creation of Radio Marti, despite term limits. Radio Marti was the main outside news source for Cuban islanders, despite all the controversy and leadership turnover throughout the years. What would Mas Canosa's death mean for the future of the information service?

Herminio San Roman became the new director of Radio/TV Marti in March 1997.¹¹⁷² He reviewed the budget, attracted new talent, and created original programming about democratic transitions in Eastern Europe, the Cuban military, and press freedom.¹¹⁷³ San Roman early on developed an uncooperative relationship with the Presidential Advisory Board on Cuban Broadcasting.¹¹⁷⁴ He refused to grant requests for

¹¹⁶⁸ Alfonso Chardy. "Successor to Mas at Foundation Helm Mirrors His Views." *The Miami Herald*, November 27, 1997: C1.

¹¹⁶⁹ Olance Noguera. "Mas Canosa's Son Gets Post He's Foundation's Vice Chairman." *The Miami Herald*, July 27, 1998: A1.

¹¹⁷⁰ "Miami Beach Vote on Shuls Deferred." *The Miami Herald*, July 21, 1999: B3.

¹¹⁷¹ Noguera. "Mas Canosa's Son Gets Post He's Foundation's Vice Chairman."

¹¹⁷² Cynthia Corzo. "New Leader Expands TV, Radio Marti." *The Miami Herald*, May 4, 1997: B4.

¹¹⁷³ Corzo. "New Leader Expands TV, Radio Marti."; "Two Radio Reporters Join TV Marti." *The Miami Herald*, January 16, 1998: B2.

¹¹⁷⁴ Cynthia Corzo. "Tension Splits Cuba Broadcasting Overseers." *The Miami Herald*, April 18, 1998: B5.

information and challenged oversight, but the USIA supported him.¹¹⁷⁵ He hired the fathers of two members of Congress, Rafael Diaz-Balart and Enrique Ros.¹¹⁷⁶ Newer personnel clashed with older personnel.¹¹⁷⁷ Jose "Pepe" Collado took over Mas Canosa's job as the chairman of the Advisory Board for Cuban Broadcasting.¹¹⁷⁸ He was a Democrat, but he supported the embargo and had good relations throughout the Cuban community, including the legislators.¹¹⁷⁹ Thus far, it did not appear that the station would significantly change in the absence of one of its most prominent champions.

Ultimately, Jorge Mas Canosa was a strongman leader of the hardline, anti-Castro Cuban exile community. His wealth, ruthless ambition, and political connections, in addition to his contacts in the Miami Cuban community, enabled him to successfully advocate for a punitive foreign policy against the Castro-led Cuban government. He helped open doors for Cuban-American politicians, and entrenched politicians on both sides of the aisle opened doors for him.

Debating Strategies and Assistance

Disagreements about aid to Cuba caused the first notable division within the Cuban-American community and the CANF ranks after Mas Canosa's demise. Should

¹¹⁷⁵ Corzo. "Tension Splits Cuba Broadcasting Overseers."

¹¹⁷⁶ Corzo. "Tension Splits Cuba Broadcasting Overseers."

¹¹⁷⁷ Corzo. "Tension Splits Cuba Broadcasting Overseers."

¹¹⁷⁸ Rosenberg, Carol. "Labor Exec to Oversee Broadcasts to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, January 6, 1999: B1.

¹¹⁷⁹ Rosenberg. "Labor Exec to Oversee Broadcasts to Cuba."

there be any? Would it violate the embargo? Who deserved it? Could it provide substantial support to dissidents or fledgling free enterprise? How could they ensure aid would reach the recipients and not enrich the government? Various policymakers and interested parties provided different answers. Some defined it very narrowly, and some used a more expansive understanding of how best to provide aid to Cubans.

After the Pope denounced the U.S. embargo during his January 1997 visit to Cuba, U.S. proposals for Cuba prioritized humanitarian aid and dissident support. In response to the popular Torres-Dodd bill, CANF helped Senator Helms and his Latin America advisor, Roger Noriega, prepare a bill to provide federal food aid to Cuba through the Red Cross, provided they could ensure the Cuban government would not skim from it.¹¹⁸⁰ It came to be known as the "Food for Peace" program, PL-480, or the Cuban Assistant and Relief Act of 1998.¹¹⁸¹ The plan aimed to remove Castro's ability to blame the United States, help the Cuban people, allow them to set the terms, improve the image of the United States, build on the human rights movement's momentum after the Pope's visit, and help better endear CANF to the administration.¹¹⁸² It would also force

¹¹⁸⁰ Christopher Marquis. "Plan for Food Aid to Cuba in the Works to Help Poor." *The Miami Herald*, January 28, 1998: A1.; Olance Noguera and Christopher Marquis. "Details Released About Sen. Helms' Aid to Cuba Bill." *The Miami Herald*, January 30, 1998: B2.; "Toward Realistic Cuba Aid." *The Miami Herald*, February 1, 1998: L2.

¹¹⁸¹ Marquis. "Foundation Rattles Base of Support \ Exile Group Alienates Some Longtime Allies."

¹¹⁸² Marquis. "Plan for Food Aid to Cuba in the Works to Help Poor."; Christopher Marquis. "Food-For-Cuba Plan Criticized Lawmakers from Miami At Odds With CANF." *The Miami Herald*, January 29, 1998: A12.; Christopher Marquis. "Castro Blasts CANF-Helms Plan on Food, Medicine for Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, February 4, 1998: A3.; Marquis. "Foundation Rattles Base of Support \ Exile Group Alienates Some Longtime Allies."

Castro to reject it out of pride or accept it and bolster the civil society groups promoting humanitarian aid.¹¹⁸³

CANF struggled to find the leverage and broad support that it had had with Mas Canosa.¹¹⁸⁴ The issue created doubts about CANF's role in the exile community and policy-formation in Washington.¹¹⁸⁵ The humanitarian aid bill was the first notable policy that CANF promoted after the death of Mas Canosa, but it became the first major split between CANF and other leaders of the Cuban-American community, namely legislators and other exile organizations, after the death of Mas Canosa, and CANF struggled to broker a consensus in the fashion at which Mas Canosa was so adept.

On March 20, 1998, Clinton eased travel restrictions for Cuban-Americans to visit the island once a year 'on an emergency basis,' permitted maximum family remittances of \$300 every three months, reduced the red tape for medicine and medical equipment sales, allowed direct charter flights between the United States and Cuba to resume, and work in a bipartisan manner with Congress to provide food aid.¹¹⁸⁶ They sought to reduce tension with Cuba, help the people, strengthen the Church, support internal opposition and civil society in Cuba, provide independent information to the people, cooperate with and signal to European countries to continue to act to promote human rights in Cuba and

¹¹⁸³ Marquis. "Foundation Rattles Base of Support \ Exile Group Alienates Some Longtime Allies."

¹¹⁸⁴ Marquis. "Foundation Rattles Base of Support \ Exile Group Alienates Some Longtime Allies."

¹¹⁸⁵ Marquis. "Foundation Rattles Base of Support \ Exile Group Alienates Some Longtime Allies."

¹¹⁸⁶ Christopher Marquis. "U.S. To Ease Cuba Restrictions Policy Affects Travel, Cash Transfers." *The Miami Herald*, March 20, 1998: A1.; Christopher Marquis. "Albright Proposes New View of Cuba U.S. Should Think Beyond Castro Rule, Secretary Says." *The Miami Herald*, March 21, 1998: A1.

reduce Cubans' dependence on the state, all without strengthening Castro.¹¹⁸⁷ The first direct relief flight in June 1998 carried medical supplies from Catholic Charities, which provided millions of dollars' worth of aid that year; the Catholic organization Caritas would oversee distribution.¹¹⁸⁸

Seventy exile and dissident groups created and signed An Accord for Democracy in Cuba, a transition plan, at an FIU meeting; CANF and Cuban Unity were not present.¹¹⁸⁹ Separately, former University of Havana professor Dr. Enrique Patterson offered a plan—"The Patterson Formula," as people called it—that would allow U.S. companies to invest in Cuba if the government did not profit from the investments and if the government agreed to abide by International Labor Organization conventions.¹¹⁹⁰ These standards permit free expression and association and prohibit slave labor.¹¹⁹¹ Critics of the Castro regime argue that the government exploited labor by not permitting direct hiring of Cuban workers but instead renting out the workers and withholding most of their earnings.¹¹⁹² He hoped that it could be an initial step to break the stalemate between the two countries and promote human rights.¹¹⁹³

¹¹⁸⁷ Christopher Marquis. "U.S. To Ease Cuba Restrictions Policy Affects Travel, Cash Transfers.;" "Easing Cubans' Burden." *The Miami Herald*, March 21, 1998: A22.; Marquis. "Albright Proposes New View of Cuba U.S. Should Think Beyond Castro Rule, Secretary Says.;" Christopher Marquis. "Cuban Aid Legislation Introduced." *The Miami Herald*, May 15, 1998: A11.

¹¹⁸⁸ Lycia Naff. "Medical Aid Flies to Cuba -- Nonstop." *The Miami Herald*, June 12, 1998: BR1.

¹¹⁸⁹ "Exiles, Dissidents Draft Post-Castro Democracy Plan." *The Miami Herald*, February 21, 1998: B2.

¹¹⁹⁰ Oppenheimer, Andres. "A Plan to End U.S.-Cuba Stalemate." *The Miami Herald*, May 7, 1998: A28.

¹¹⁹¹ Oppenheimer. "A Plan to End U.S.-Cuba Stalemate."

¹¹⁹² Oppenheimer. "A Plan to End U.S.-Cuba Stalemate."

¹¹⁹³ Oppenheimer. "A Plan to End U.S.-Cuba Stalemate."

Representatives Diaz-Balart, Ros-Lehtinen, and Menendez advocated for a bill that would see the United States supply more support to dissidents in Cuba in response to recent setbacks and as authorized by the Helms-Burton Act.¹¹⁹⁴ Helms introduced his aid bill on May 13, 1998.¹¹⁹⁵ The bill would provide up to 25 million dollars of food and medical aid per year for four years to "victims of political repression in Cuba" through approved independent organizations like the Catholic Church's Caritas relief agency.¹¹⁹⁶ It also stipulated that the U.S. Attorney General would indict Castro over the Brothers to the Rescue shutdown, Radio and TV Marti would broadcast from the Guantanamo naval base, and the administration would provide reports twice a year on labor and crime in Cuba.¹¹⁹⁷ Both Florida senators co-sponsored the bill.¹¹⁹⁸

While many coalitions were working to reverse the embargo, exiles and others like Richard Nuccio maintained that Fidel Castro himself was the biggest hurdle in ending the embargo and not just because he refused to democratize.¹¹⁹⁹ Nuccio explained:

The principal obstacle to improved U.S. policies toward Cuba is not the Cuban-American lobby or its supporters in Congress, but Castro himself. If you think, like I do, that the Cuban government actually prefers that the embargo stay in place, at least under certain conditions, then it may be that the Cuban government will do something that will have the consequence of polarizing the issue in the United States. There is no offer we can make that they can't refuse.¹²⁰⁰

¹¹⁹⁴ Christopher Marquis. "Lawmakers: U.S. Must Aid Cuban Dissidents." *The Miami Herald*, April 24, 1998: A30.

¹¹⁹⁵ Christopher Marquis. "Helms-CANF Bill Would Send Federal Aid to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, May 13, 1998: A10.; Marquis. "Cuban Aid Legislation Introduced."

¹¹⁹⁶ Marquis. "Helms-CANF Bill Would Send Federal Aid to Cuba."

¹¹⁹⁷ Marquis. "Helms-CANF Bill Would Send Federal Aid to Cuba."

¹¹⁹⁸ Marquis. "Cuban Aid Legislation Introduced."

¹¹⁹⁹ Tamayo. "U.S. Sanctions on Cuba Under Growing Attack."

¹²⁰⁰ Tamayo. "U.S. Sanctions on Cuba Under Growing Attack."

Otto Reich insisted the embargo was working and cited Cuba's lobbying for its removal after the end of Soviet subsidies as evidence.¹²⁰¹ Some signs of resistance to the embargo in the United States included: Kissinger and others recommending a bipartisan review commission, the Council on Foreign Relations creating a task force assessment report on the embargo, the Torres-Dodd bill, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce organized Americans for Humanitarian Trade With Cuba to organize like-minded business leaders, anti-embargo editorials in major newspapers, 650 corporations creating USA Engage to lobby against economic sanctions, the Pope's public criticism in his visit to Cuba, and countries in the Americas and Europe calling for engagement and ending the embargo.¹²⁰² An FIU poll in 1997 said that 72% of Miami Cubans still supported the sanctions, but a CNN poll showed that only 48% of all Americans supported the embargo, and 45% opposed it.¹²⁰³ Supporters argued that the sanctions provided leverage in negotiations and that other nations' engagement has failed to produce democratic results.¹²⁰⁴

Clinton announced further easing in January 1999, which allowed more people in the United States the opportunity to send remittances, some food and agricultural sales to businesses and organizations not associated with the regime, exhibition baseball games between the Baltimore Orioles and the Cuban national team in Baltimore and Havana, increased charter flights, direct mail service, and expanding the reach Radio Marti's

¹²⁰¹ Tamayo. "U.S. Sanctions on Cuba Under Growing Attack."

¹²⁰² Tamayo. "U.S. Sanctions on Cuba Under Growing Attack."

¹²⁰³ Tamayo. "U.S. Sanctions on Cuba Under Growing Attack."

¹²⁰⁴ Tamayo. "U.S. Sanctions on Cuba Under Growing Attack."

broadcasts.¹²⁰⁵ He declined the bipartisan commission's idea, because there was little that it could do within the bounds of the law, and it could hurt Al Gore's 2000 presidential run.¹²⁰⁶ Government officials determined that the sales would not violate the Helms-Burton Act.¹²⁰⁷ The decision resulted from government factions in favor of a bipartisan commission, with Dodd at the lead, and against it, led by Menendez and Graham.¹²⁰⁸ Nonetheless, the policies seemed popular with the community, especially those who came in 1994; the number of direct flight travelers to Cuba increased by nearly 50% that year, and 92% were visiting relatives.¹²⁰⁹ Additionally, the U.S. Treasury authorized Western Union to provide wire transfers for any remittances to Cuba, not just the emergency funds from exiles it had been handling since 1994.¹²¹⁰

The majority of the Cuban-American community now seemed to agree that it was appropriate to provide limited aid to the island rather than relying on U.S.-based exile organizations to help the Cuban cause. Demographic changes contributed to the changing attitudes, but the degree of connection to the island affected opinions on how expansive and generous the regulations for providing aid should be. More recent immigrants wanted

¹²⁰⁵ Frank Davies. "U.S. Easing Contacts with Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, January 5, 1999: A1.; Tamayo, Juan O. "Cuban Dismisses Shift in U.S. Policy." *The Miami Herald*, January 9, 1999: A17.; Tamayo, Juan O. "How Battle on Policy Toward Cuba Led to Easing." *The Miami Herald*, January 10, 1999: A1.

¹²⁰⁶ Tamayo. "U.S. Sanctions on Cuba Under Growing Attack."; Davies. "U.S. Easing Contacts with Cuba."

¹²⁰⁷ Tamayo. "U.S. Sanctions on Cuba Under Growing Attack."

¹²⁰⁸ Tamayo. "How Battle on Policy Toward Cuba Led to Easing."

¹²⁰⁹ "Cuba Travel Grows Fast Since Rules Were Eased Thousands Visit Their Families; Tamayo, Juan O. "Farmers Fuel Drive to Repeal Sanctions Big Business Eyes Sales to Havana." *The Miami Herald*, June 25, 2000: A1.

¹²¹⁰ Corzo, Cynthia. "Transfers of Funds to Cuba Will Be Easier Western Union Service Approved." *The Miami Herald*, June 22, 1999: A1.

to maintain their personal connections to loved ones in Cuba, while older exiles had few remaining connections. Still, others believed that greater exposure to democracy, human rights norms, and free markets would hasten change in Cuba.

Cuban Spies

Cuban espionage had threatened U.S. security since the Cold War and sown distrust within the Cuban exile community. Cuban intelligence services particularly targeted the exile community in order to learn about plots against the Cuban regime, create confusion and discord, and harm exiles' reputations. Despite a changing international environment, intelligence threats contributed to maintaining Cold War mentalities between the United States and Cuba. The U.S. Government had tracked Cuban spies for decades but had rarely arrested them. However, the role of spies in the Brothers to the Rescue episode led to a considerable crackdown.

The FBI arrested the first ten of several suspected Cuban spies in September 1998.¹²¹¹ U.S. law enforcement had long monitored potential spies and estimated 200 to 300 Cuban spies in South Florida.¹²¹² A congressional staffer described Cuba as the number two adversary intelligence network behind the Russians and said it shared intelligence with Russia, China, North Korea, and Middle Eastern countries.¹²¹³ The

¹²¹¹ Tamayo, Juan O. "Arrest of Spy Suspects May Be Switch in Tactics." *The Miami Herald*, September 15, 1998: A9.; Santiago, Fabiola. "Big News Saddens, Angers Exile Community." *The Miami Herald*, September 15, 1998: A9.; Carol Rosenberg and David Lyons. "U.S. Cracks Alleged Cuban Ring, Arrests 10." *The Miami Herald*, September 15, 1998: A1.

¹²¹² Tamayo. "Arrest of Spy Suspects May Be Switch in Tactics."; Rosenberg, Carol. "Cuban Spying Trial Starts Five Are Charged as Castro Agents." *The Miami Herald*, November 27, 2000: B1.

¹²¹³ Rosenberg and Lyons. "U.S. Cracks Alleged Cuban Ring, Arrests 10."

government seldom arrested any, likely to prevent Cuba from replacing the expelled or imprisoned spies with unknown entities.¹²¹⁴ Furthermore, U.S. and Cuban intelligence collaborated infrequently. The release of a Cuban report about the 1997 bombings divulged how U.S. intelligence worked with Cuban intelligence in a limited capacity on counterterrorism since about 1991.¹²¹⁵ The Cuban regime used spies to infiltrate exile groups to create contention among themselves and with Washington, manipulate media coverage, frame exiles by provoking and embarrassing them, discredit exile leaders, investigate opposition attacks, stop attacks, and distract from Castro's failures.¹²¹⁶ Castro accused the United States of tolerating sabotage and insurrection against Cuba as justification for the spy rings.¹²¹⁷ Cuban intelligence tasked the "Wasp Network" spies with infiltrating exile organizations and military installations in Florida; they applied to work at U.S. Southern Command, MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, and the U.S. Naval Air Station in Boca Chica.¹²¹⁸ Each spy targeted different groups: the FBI, Brothers to the

¹²¹⁴ Tamayo. "Arrest of Spy Suspects May Be Switch in Tactics."; Rosenberg. "Cuban Spying Trial Starts Five Are Charged as Castro Agents."

¹²¹⁵ Tamayo, Juan O. "U.S.-Cuba Spy Agency Contacts A Closely Held Secret." *The Miami Herald*, October 31, 1998: A1.; Tamayo, Juan O. "It's Havana That's Foot-Dragging on Exile Evidence, U.S. Retorts." *The Miami Herald*, March 24, 1999: A17.; Epstein Nieves, Gail. "Investigator from Cuba Takes Stand in Spy Trial He Tells of Bomb Blasts at Tourist Sites." *The Miami Herald*, March 30, 2001: A1.

¹²¹⁶ Tamayo. "Arrest of Spy Suspects May Be Switch in Tactics."; Tamayo, Juan O. "Spies Among Us Castro Agents Keep Eye on Exiles." *The Miami Herald*, April 11, 1999: L1.; Tamayo, Juan O. "Cuban Spy Indictment Charges Filed in Downing of Exile Fliers Top Spy Planned Brothers Ambush." *The Miami Herald*, May 8, 1999: A1.; Epstein Nieves, Gail. "Spy Trial Unmasks Cuba Secrets." *The Miami Herald*, December 20, 2000: A1.; Epstein Nieves, Gail. "Papers: Spies Planned Sabotage." *The Miami Herald*, December 21, 2000: B1.; Gail Epstein Nieves And Alfonso Chardy. "Cuban Spying Tactics Unveiled Secret Files Used Against Five on Trial." *The Miami Herald*, December 25, 2000: A1.

¹²¹⁷ Carol Rosenberg. "U.S. Dismisses Castro Accusation of Tolerating Sabotage Against Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, October 21, 1998: B1.

¹²¹⁸ Rosenberg and Lyons. "U.S. Cracks Alleged Cuban Ring, Arrests 10."; Tamayo. "Cuban Spy Indictment Charges Filed in Downing of Exile Fliers Top Spy Planned Brothers Ambush."; Epstein Nieves, Gail. "Bosch's Alleged Role in Havana Bombing Surfaces at Trial." *The Miami Herald*, April 13, 2001:

Rescue, the Democracy Movement, PUND, the National Cuban Commission, and the Cuban American Pilots Organization.¹²¹⁹ Officers arrested six more by April 1999.¹²²⁰

The core five were Gerardo Hernandez Nordelo (who went by the alias "Manuel Viramontes"), Ramon Labanino Salazar ("Luis Medina III"), Fernando Gonzalez Schweret, Fernando Gonzalez Llort ("Ruben Campa"), and Antonio Guerrero Rodriguez, Jr.¹²²¹ U.S. authorities also investigated Alejandro Alonso, Alberto Manuel Ruiz, Nilo Hernandez Mederos, Linda Hernandez, Joseph Santos, Amarylis Silverio Santos, Ricardo Villareal, Remijo Luna, and Juan Pablo Roque.¹²²² The Santoses and three others pled

B2.; Epstein Nieves, Gail. "Cuba Actively Assisting Lawyers in Spy Case." *The Miami Herald*, April 13, 2001: B1.

¹²¹⁹ Tamayo. "Arrest of Spy Suspects May Be Switch in Tactics."; Rosenberg and Lyons. "U.S. Cracks Alleged Cuban Ring, Arrests 10."; Garcia, Manny. "Alleged Spies' Damage Limited Cubans Didn't Steal Military Secrets, Pentagon Says." *The Miami Herald*, September 16, 1998: A1.; Tamayo. "Cuban Spy Indictment Charges Filed in Downing of Exile Fliers Top Spy Planned Brothers Ambush."; Lyons, David. "Cuban Spy Indictment Charges Filed in Downing of Exile Fliers Castro Agents in Miami Cited by U.S. Grand Jury." *The Miami Herald*, May 8, 1999: A1.; "Confessed Cuban Spy Receives Seven Years." *The Miami Herald*, January 29, 2000: B1.; Epstein Nieves. "Spy Trial Unmasks Cuba Secrets."; Epstein Nieves. "Papers: Spies Planned Sabotage."; Epstein Nieves and Chardy. "Cuban Spying Tactics Unveiled Secret Files Used Against Five on Trial."; Rosenberg, Carol. "Accused Cuban Spy Defended as A Patriot." *The Miami Herald*, May 31, 2001: B1.; "Couple Accused of Reporting to Two Cuban Spies." *The Miami Herald*, September 2, 2001: B3.; Epstein Nieves, Gail. "Cuban Spy Gets 15-Year Sentence." *The Miami Herald*, December 15, 2001: B1.; Johnson, Tim. "Cubans Envoys' Access to Public Not Matched in Havana." *The Miami Herald*, December 25, 2001: A34.

¹²²⁰ Tamayo. "Spies Among Us Castro Agents Keep Eye on Exiles."

¹²²¹ Tamayo. "Arrest of Spy Suspects May Be Switch in Tactics."; Rosenberg and Lyons. "U.S. Cracks Alleged Cuban Ring, Arrests 10."; Garcia. "Alleged Spies' Damage Limited Cubans Didn't Steal Military Secrets, Pentagon Says."; Tamayo. "Cuban Spy Indictment Charges Filed in Downing of Exile Fliers Top Spy Planned Brothers Ambush."; Lyons. "Cuban Spy Indictment Charges Filed in Downing of Exile Fliers Castro Agents in Miami Cited by U.S. Grand Jury."; "Confessed Cuban Spy Receives Seven Years."; Epstein Nieves. "Spy Trial Unmasks Cuba Secrets."; Epstein Nieves. "Papers: Spies Planned Sabotage."; Epstein Nieves And Chardy. "Cuban Spying Tactics Unveiled Secret Files Used Against Five on Trial."; Rosenberg. "Accused Cuban Spy Defended as A Patriot."; "Couple Accused of Reporting to Two Cuban Spies."; Epstein Nieves. "Cuban Spy Gets 15-Year Sentence."; Johnson. "Cubans Envoys' Access to Public Not Matched in Havana."

¹²²² Tamayo. "Arrest of Spy Suspects May Be Switch in Tactics."; Rosenberg and Lyons. "U.S. Cracks Alleged Cuban Ring, Arrests 10."; Garcia. "Alleged Spies' Damage Limited Cubans Didn't Steal Military Secrets, Pentagon Says."; Tamayo. "Cuban Spy Indictment Charges Filed in Downing of Exile Fliers Top Spy Planned Brothers Ambush."; Lyons. "Cuban Spy Indictment Charges Filed in Downing of Exile Fliers

guilty to not registering as foreign agents.¹²²³ A 1999 U.S. federal grand jury indictment named Cuba's chief of the Directorate of Intelligence as the mastermind behind the Brothers to the Rescue shutdown, a mission the Wasp Network of spies in South Florida called "Operation Scorpion."¹²²⁴ The indictment charged Gerardo Hernandez and thirteen others with conspiracy to commit murder but not their supervisors, the intelligence chief, or Castro.¹²²⁵ Jury selection for the Cuban Five spy case began in late November 2000.¹²²⁶ Five others in their spy network had already pleaded guilty to failing to register as foreign agents and were serving their prison terms.¹²²⁷ The remaining five were on trial for conspiracy to commit murder, among other charges.¹²²⁸ Declassified documents became available to the jury.¹²²⁹

Castro Agents in Miami Cited by U.S. Grand Jury."; "Confessed Cuban Spy Receives Seven Years."; Epstein Nieves. "Spy Trial Unmasks Cuba Secrets."; Epstein Nieves. "Papers: Spies Planned Sabotage."; Epstein Nieves And Chardy. "Cuban Spying Tactics Unveiled Secret Files Used Against Five on Trial."; Rosenberg. "Accused Cuban Spy Defended as A Patriot."; "Couple Accused of Reporting to Two Cuban Spies."; Epstein Nieves. "Cuban Spy Gets 15-Year Sentence."; Johnson. "Cubans Envoys' Access to Public Not Matched in Havana."

¹²²³ Rosenberg. "U.S. Dismisses Castro Accusation of Tolerating Sabotage Against Cuba."

¹²²⁴ Tamayo. "Cuban Spy Indictment Charges Filed in Downing of Exile Fliers Top Spy Planned Brothers Ambush."; Lyons. "Cuban Spy Indictment Charges Filed in Downing of Exile Fliers Castro Agents in Miami Cited by U.S. Grand Jury."

¹²²⁵ Tamayo. "Cuban Spy Indictment Charges Filed in Downing of Exile Fliers Top Spy Planned Brothers Ambush."; Lyons. "Cuban Spy Indictment Charges Filed in Downing of Exile Fliers Castro Agents in Miami Cited by U.S. Grand Jury."

¹²²⁶ Rosenberg, Carol. "Cuban Spying Trial Starts Five Are Charged as Castro Agents." *The Miami Herald*, November 27, 2000: B1.

¹²²⁷ Rosenberg. "Cuban Spying Trial Starts Five Are Charged as Castro Agents."

¹²²⁸ Rosenberg. "Cuban Spying Trial Starts Five Are Charged as Castro Agents."; Epstein Nieves. "Spy Trial Unmasks Cuba Secrets."; Epstein Nieves. "Papers: Spies Planned Sabotage."

¹²²⁹ Epstein Nieves. "Spy Trial Unmasks Cuba Secrets."; Epstein Nieves. "Papers: Spies Planned Sabotage."; Epstein Nieves And Chardy. "Cuban Spying Tactics Unveiled Secret Files Used Against Five on Trial."

U.S. governmental responses to the arrests varied. U.S. government officials denied any rumors saying that there was any political motive or that they were trying to make up for indicting Castro's attempted assassins; they had been working on the case since 1995.¹²³⁰ State Department spokesman James P. Rubin stated: "We condemn in the strongest possible terms the Cuban government's attempts to exploit the very openness of our society, while continuing to deny the Cuban people fundamental freedoms and human rights."¹²³¹ Since summer 1998, Representative Ros-Lehtinen had worked with intelligence agencies and the State Department to investigate Cuban officials' travel.¹²³² CANF requested that Senator Bob Graham hold investigations and hearings in the intelligence committee on espionage.¹²³³ The House Judiciary Committee held a hearing about the Brothers to the Rescue shutdown in July 1999, and many Cuban-Americans testified.¹²³⁴ Radar operator Jeffrey Houlihan, former Castro bodyguard Lazaro Betancourt Morin, Jorge Mas, Jose Basulto, Arnaldo Iglesias, and Sylvia Iriondo participated; defector Adel Regalado submitted a written statement.¹²³⁵

¹²³⁰ Tamayo. "Arrest of Spy Suspects May Be Switch in Tactics."; Rosenberg and Lyons. "U.S. Cracks Alleged Cuban Ring, Arrests 10."; Garcia. "Alleged Spies' Damage Limited Cubans Didn't Steal Military Secrets, Pentagon Says."; David Lyons. "Bond Denied for Naval Base Spying Suspect." *The Miami Herald*, September 23, 1998: B1.

¹²³¹ Garcia. "Alleged Spies' Damage Limited Cubans Didn't Steal Military Secrets, Pentagon Says."

¹²³² Rosenberg and Lyons. "U.S. Cracks Alleged Cuban Ring, Arrests 10."

¹²³³ Santiago, Fabiola. "Rush of Spy-Watching Follows FBI Arrests in South Florida." *The Miami Herald*, September 16, 1998: A11.

¹²³⁴ Davies, Frank. "Radar Operator Describes Hour of Brothers Shootdown." *The Miami Herald*, July 16, 1999: B1.; http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/judiciary/hju63608.000/hju63608_0.HTM#8

¹²³⁵ Davies. "Radar Operator Describes Hour of Brothers Shootdown."

The arrests validated the Cold War framework on which many community leaders operated.¹²³⁶ The arrests led to more credible investigations, but they also increased suspicion and accusations in South Florida.¹²³⁷ The Cuban-American community searched for other ways to hold Castro accountable. After Pinochet was arrested for genocide in London, CANF sought to inspire international action to indict Castro, either by having the U.S. Government seek justice for the Brothers to the Rescue pilots or have a foreign government take up the cause (like the Pinochet case).¹²³⁸ The Foundation for Human Rights in Cuba filed a Spanish suit against Castro and three of his officials.¹²³⁹ They provided the names of 18,000 people who the regime had killed or disappeared since 1959.¹²⁴⁰ Representative Diaz-Balart requested that the Washington state Attorney General arrest Castro at the WTO conference in Seattle in December 1999 for his role in the Brothers to the Rescue shoot down.¹²⁴¹

The mutual intelligence threat persisted and contributed to the acrimonious relationship between the United States and Cuba. The two governments simply did not trust each other, and their complicated diplomatic ventures did little to alleviate that

¹²³⁶ Tamayo. "Arrest of Spy Suspects May Be Switch in Tactics."; Rosenberg and Lyons. "U.S. Cracks Alleged Cuban Ring, Arrests 10."

¹²³⁷ Santiago. "Rush of Spy-Watching Follows FBI Arrests in South Florida."

¹²³⁸ Kidwell, David. "Exile Group Seeking Castro's Arrest." *The Miami Herald*, October 27, 1998: B2.

¹²³⁹ Ciaran Giles. "Cuban Exile Group Sues Castro In Spain." *The Miami Herald*, November 6, 1998: 6A.; "Arrest Castro, Too." *The Miami Herald*, November 10, 1998: A18.

¹²⁴⁰ Giles. "Cuban Exile Group Sues Castro In Spain."

¹²⁴¹ De Valle. "Miamians: Seize Castro In Seattle."

suspicion. Espionage lengthened the shadow of the Cold War and damaged the relationships between Miami, Washington, and Havana.

Elían González

Clinton's wet foot, dry foot policy exacerbated acrimony between the President and Cuban-Americans. Although Cubans had the comparative immigrant privilege of rarely being deported after they reached the United States due to the laws and regulations in place, the fact that the U.S. Coast Guard repatriated Cubans interdicted at sea and just offshore seemed unjust after the refugees had sacrificed so much to escape. Many exiles could not tolerate the idea of returning their compatriots after the traumatic experiences they had endured. A lone child survivor found offshore after his mother and fellow travelers had died at sea became the poster child for the tension between Cuban-Americans, the U.S. Government, and American public opinion.

Hundreds of outraged South Florida exiles, along with many prominent politicians, protested as images emerged of the U.S. Coast Guard blocking refugees from reaching shore with firehoses and pepper spray, then allegedly mistreated the refugees while in custody.¹²⁴² Exiles contacted all their Washington contacts.¹²⁴³ Washington

¹²⁴² Aclé, Ana. "Miami's Exiles React with Anger to Treatment of Cuban Refugees." *The Miami Herald*, June 30, 1999: A15.; Tamayo, Juan O. "U.S. Cools Exiles' Wrath but Denies Policy Shift." *The Miami Herald*, July 1, 1999: A13.; Viglucci, Andres. "6 Cuban Refugees Freed Crowds Cheer as Rafters Gain Freedom." *The Miami Herald*, July 1, 1999: A1.; Colon, Yves. "Reported Mistreatment Angers Cuban Activists." *The Miami Herald*, July 2, 1999: A13.; Ana Aclé and Manny Garcia. "Ins Shifts Officer in Rafter Case Action Follows Refugees' Complaints of Abuse." *The Miami Herald*, July 3, 1999: A1.; Elaine De Valle And Andres Viglucci. "Inquiry Clears Crew in Clash with Rafters but Coast Guard to Change Tactics." *The Miami Herald*, August 11, 1999: A1.

¹²⁴³ Tamayo. "U.S. Cools Exiles' Wrath but Denies Policy Shift."

officials let the six refugees from the incident into the United States or released them from detention due to an investigation into the excessive use of force and the possible human smuggler involvement.¹²⁴⁴ A U.S. Border Patrol agent said that they estimated 60-80% of Cuban rafters that the Coast Guard interdicted received help from human smugglers.¹²⁴⁵ The ACLU, the Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center (FIAC), CANF, and Congressional friends fought for a review of the 1994 immigration accord that resulted in the "wet foot, dry foot" policy at the heart of the matter.¹²⁴⁶ Two weeks later, a female rafter drowned when a Coast Guard boat ran into a vessel filled with twelve rafters.¹²⁴⁷

The House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight began an investigation into the Coast Guard refugee incident separate from the FBI and Coast Guard inquiries on the same matter.¹²⁴⁸ The Coast Guard determined that the crew involved had acted inappropriately but had obeyed guidelines and that media took the circulated images out of context.¹²⁴⁹ The Coast Guard did not discipline the officers but

¹²⁴⁴ Tamayo. "U.S. Cools Exiles' Wrath but Denies Policy Shift."; Viglucci. "6 Cuban Refugees Freed Crowds Cheer as Rafters Gain Freedom."

¹²⁴⁵ Veiga, Alex. "Coast Guard Weathers Storm After Migrant Controversy." *The Miami Herald*, August 1, 1999: B2.

¹²⁴⁶ Viglucci. "6 Cuban Refugees Freed Crowds Cheer as Rafters Gain Freedom."; Lycia Naff and Elaine De Valle. "Reaction Calm to Death of Cuban Rafter at Sea." *The Miami Herald*, July 12, 1999: A1.

¹²⁴⁷ Naff and De Valle. "Reaction Calm to Death of Cuban Rafter at Sea."; Lycia Naff and Elaine De Valle. "22 Cubans Arrive in Hollywood, But Seas, Protesters Quiet Sunday." *The Miami Herald*, July 12, 1999: B1.; De Valle, Elaine. "Dad Blames Coast Guard for Drowning." *The Miami Herald*, August 12, 1999: B2.

¹²⁴⁸ Almanzar, Fernando. "House Panel Begins Inquiry into Coast Guard Incident." *The Miami Herald*, July 23, 1999: B3.; Viglucci, Andres. "Coast Guard Delays Report on Hosing." *The Miami Herald*, July 30, 1999: B1.; Veiga. "Coast Guard Weathers Storm After Migrant Controversy."

¹²⁴⁹ De Valle and Viglucci. "Inquiry Clears Crew in Clash with Rafters but Coast Guard to Change Tactics."

did update their procedures for handling refugees.¹²⁵⁰ It was a prelude for another refugee controversy that would soon monopolize the airwaves.

On the morning of Thursday, November 25, 1999, fishermen found 5-year-old refugee Elian Gonzalez alone and clinging to an inner tube offshore near Fort Lauderdale.¹²⁵¹ He and his mother, Elizabet Gonzalez, departed Cardenas, Cuba, in a small boat days earlier, but she and most of their group drowned during the journey.¹²⁵² Elizabet's ex-husband, Juan Miguel Gonzalez, still lived in Cuba and wanted his son to return.¹²⁵³ Elian's relatives in Miami insisted that he deserved to remain in the United States.¹²⁵⁴ After all, his mother had sacrificed her life so that he could be free.¹²⁵⁵ A diplomatic, legal, and cultural battle ensued for months.¹²⁵⁶ Politicians, consultants, radio hosts, exiles organizations, and other community leaders rallied support for Elian and his

¹²⁵⁰ De Valle and Viglucci. "Inquiry Clears Crew in Clash with Rafters but Coast Guard to Change Tactics."

¹²⁵¹ Garcia, Vanessa. "The Story of Elián González 20 Years Later | Miami New Times." Miami New Times, April 21, 2020. <https://www.miaminewtimes.com/news/the-story-of-elian-gonzalez-20-years-later-11625579>.; Arthur, Lisa. "5-Year-Old Survivor Clung to Inner Tube Two More Rafters Rescued, but 11 Other Cubans May Have Died at Sea." *The Miami Herald*, November 26, 1999: A1.; Eunice Ponce And Jay Weaver. "Lifesaving Moment at Sea Pulls Coast Guard into Refugee Controversy." *The Miami Herald*, December 7, 1999: A12.

¹²⁵² Ponce, Eunice. "Raft Survivor at Center of Spat." *The Miami Herald*, November 29, 1999: A1.

¹²⁵³ Ponce. "Raft Survivor at Center of Spat."; Chardy, Alfonso. "Elian's Return May Fuel Protests." *The Miami Herald*, December 17, 1999: B3.

¹²⁵⁴ Ponce. "Raft Survivor at Center of Spat."; Chardy. "Elian's Return May Fuel Protests."

¹²⁵⁵ Ponce. "Raft Survivor at Center of Spat."; Chardy. "Elian's Return May Fuel Protests."

¹²⁵⁶ Grimm, Fred. "Rafters' Tale Becomes Surreal." *The Miami Herald*, December 7, 1999: B1.; Garcia, Manny. "'I Want to Stay,' Elian Says Amid Family, Media." *The Miami Herald*, December 8, 1999: A8.; "Cuban Moms Tell How Their Kids Grow Up." *The Miami Herald*, December 15, 1999: A3.

Miami relatives.¹²⁵⁷ Cubans on the island demonstrated for the boy's return and called the exiles the "Miami Mafia."¹²⁵⁸ Elian became symbolic of the fight between U.S. exiles and Castro.¹²⁵⁹ The controversy jeopardized migration talks; Castro alleged that the United States was not abiding by the accords and that the incident amounted to "kidnapping."¹²⁶⁰ Moreover, the incident created tensions between the Miami Cuban community and Miami's non-Cuban communities, which sympathized with the father.¹²⁶¹ Indeed, most Americans believed that Elian should return to his father.¹²⁶² Attorney General Janet Reno, a native of Miami, hoped to resolve the case as quickly as possible.¹²⁶³

¹²⁵⁷ Garcia. "'I Want to Stay,' Elian Says Amid Family, Media."; Chardy. "Elian's Return May Fuel Protests."; Chardy, Alfonso. "INS: Send Elian Back Cuban Exiles Vow Widespread Protests." *The Miami Herald*, January 6, 2000: A1.

¹²⁵⁸ <https://abcnews.go.com/International/photos/elian-gonzalez-life-now-31120714/image-31122846>; Tamayo, Juan O. "Castro Ultimatum Return Boy In 72 Hours or Migration Talks at Risk." *The Miami Herald*, December 6, 1999: A1.; "Cries for Elian's Return Ring in Havana's Streets, Cafes." *The Miami Herald*, December 10, 1999: A34.; De Valle, Elaine. "Protest Plans Scaled Back Family Supporters Hope Legal Moves Stall Boy's Return." *The Miami Herald*, January 9, 2000: A1.; Aclé, Ana. "Judge: Elian To Stay for Now Great-Uncle Given Temporary Custody." *The Miami Herald*, January 11, 2000: A1.; "Exiles' Elian Protests Backfired in Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, July 3, 2000: B1.

¹²⁵⁹ Hiaasen, Carl. "Pity Young Elian, The Trophy Child." *The Miami Herald*, January 9, 2000: 5L.

¹²⁶⁰ Tamayo. "Castro Ultimatum Return Boy In 72 Hours or Migration Talks at Risk."; Ponce and Weaver. "Lifesaving Moment at Sea Pulls Coast Guard into Refugee Controversy."

¹²⁶¹ Mitchel, Claire. "Peaceful Protests Would Be Supported." *The Miami Herald*, January 9, 2000: BR10.; Hiaasen. "Pity Young Elian, The Trophy Child."

¹²⁶² Aclé. "Judge: Elian To Stay for Now Great-Uncle Given Temporary Custody."

¹²⁶³ Chardy. "Elian's Return May Fuel Protests."

INS determined that parental rights legally take precedence.¹²⁶⁴ Exiles responded with protests and viewed it as the administration succumbing to Castro's pressure.¹²⁶⁵ They did not want Elian to become propaganda for the regime.¹²⁶⁶ Mayor Alex Penelas, a recently-emerged local leader among Cuban Democrats, warned Al Gore that Elian could affect his presidential campaign, and Representative Menendez personally lobbied for Gore's support.¹²⁶⁷ The battle ensued in courts and Congress for months.

Elian's father traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet up with his son.¹²⁶⁸ Members of Congress, Miami mayors, CANF, relatives, and administration members tried to set up meetings between the family members.¹²⁶⁹ The planned meeting fell apart when the

¹²⁶⁴ Chardy, Alfonso. "INS: Send Elian Back Cuban Exiles Vow Widespread Protests." *The Miami Herald*, January 6, 2000: A1.; Chardy, Alfonso. "Tense Day Ends in Disappointment for Miami Family." *The Miami Herald*, January 6, 2000: A15.; Acle, Ana. "Protests May Slow After Legal Maneuver." *The Miami Herald*, January 8, 2000: A1.

¹²⁶⁵ Chardy. "INS: Send Elian Back Cuban Exiles Vow Widespread Protests."; Chardy. "Tense Day Ends in Disappointment for Miami Family." *The Miami Herald*, January 6, 2000: 15A.; Acle. "Protests May Slow After Legal Maneuver."

¹²⁶⁶ Chardy. "INS: Send Elian Back Cuban Exiles Vow Widespread Protests."

¹²⁶⁷ Fiedler, Tom. "A Tale of Two Exiled Leaders and Their Legacies." *The Miami Herald*, March 29, 1998: L1.; Scott Hiaasen and Debbie Cenziper. "Developer Accused of Hitting Artist." *The Miami Herald*, December 14, 2006: B1.; Chardy. "INS: Send Elian Back Cuban Exiles Vow Widespread Protests."; Davies, Frank. "Democrats Pressing to Delay Boy's Return to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, January 11, 2000: A6.; Chardy, Alfonso. "CANF Leapt into Struggle Over Elian." *The Miami Herald*, May 1, 2000: B1.

¹²⁶⁸ Chardy. "Exile Groups Want Father to Come to Miami."; Robles, Frances. "Custody Fight Stirs Trouble in Another Family Cousins Split After Meeting Elian's Father." *The Miami Herald*, April 10, 2000: A13.; Ana Acle, Marika Lynch, and Andres Viglucci. "D.C. Reunion In Doubt Relatives Say Elian Refuses to Leave Miami Meeting with Father Today Still A Possibility." *The Miami Herald*, April 12, 2000: A1.; Davies, Frank. "Miami And Dade Mayors Meet with Reno In D.C. Visitors Urge a Gonzalez Family Meeting." *The Miami Herald*, April 12, 2000: A7.

¹²⁶⁹ Ana Acle, Marika Lynch, and Andres Viglucci. "D.C. Reunion In Doubt Relatives Say Elian Refuses to Leave Miami Meeting with Father Today Still A Possibility."; Davies. "Miami And Dade Mayors Meet with Reno In D.C. Visitors Urge a Gonzalez Family Meeting."; Davies, Frank. "Family Refusal to Give Up Boy Ended D.C. Deal." *The Miami Herald*, April 13, 2000: A28.; Viglucci, Andres. "Reno Wants Elian Today Great-Uncle Challenges U.S. To Take Boy `By Force.'" *The Miami Herald*, April 13, 2000: A1.; "Attorney: Dad Was Ready to Go to Miami." *The Miami Herald*, April 27, 2000: A15.; Chardy. "CANF Leapt into Struggle Over Elian."

extended family would not agree to hand over Elian.¹²⁷⁰ Reno flew to Miami to meet with the uncompromising extended family, then gave them a federal order with instructions to return the boy, which they refused to do.¹²⁷¹ Reno had few options left. Feeling pressured to resolve the issue, Reno decided to enforce the mandate to return Elian, even though she said she would not have federal marshals collect the boy.¹²⁷²

On April 22, 2000, just after five in the morning, while lawyers were at the house on the phone trying to mediate between the family and government, a SWAT team of about 30 federal INS agents and U.S. marshals burst into the place where Elian was staying, pointing submachine guns at everyone present, and took the boy by force.¹²⁷³

¹²⁷⁰ Ana Acle, Marika Lynch, and Andres Viglucci. "D.C. Reunion In Doubt Relatives Say Elian Refuses to Leave Miami Meeting with Father Today Still A Possibility."; Davies. "Miami And Dade Mayors Meet with Reno In D.C. Visitors Urge a Gonzalez Family Meeting."; Davies. "Family Refusal to Give Up Boy Ended D.C. Deal."; Viglucci. "Reno Wants Elian Today Great-Uncle Challenges U.S. To Take Boy `By Force."; "Attorney: Dad Was Ready to Go to Miami."; Chardy. "CANF Leapt into Struggle Over Elian."

¹²⁷¹ Viglucci. "Reno Wants Elian Today Great-Uncle Challenges U.S. To Take Boy `By Force."; Chardy, Alfonso. "Exiles Wary of Federal Raid." *The Miami Herald*, April 14, 2000: A23.; Acle, Ana. "Family Defies Order in A Show of Solidarity, VIPs Flock to Visit Boy." *The Miami Herald*, April 14, 2000: A1.; Garcia, Manny. "Lazaro Vs. U.S. Defiant, Elian's Great-Uncle Isn't Yielding and Bluntly Declares: `The Child Stays Here.'" *The Miami Herald*, April 16, 2000: A1.

¹²⁷² Viglucci. "Reno Wants Elian Today Great-Uncle Challenges U.S. To Take Boy `By Force."; Viglucci, Andres. "Elian Must Stay in U.S. Boy, Father Can Be Reunited While Asylum Case Is Heard."; Balmaseda, Liz. "Feds Declined to Exhaust All Options." *The Miami Herald*, April 23, 2000: B1.; "Seized Raid Returns Elian To Father How It Happened Lightning Move Took Agents Just 154 Seconds." *The Miami Herald*, April 23, 2000: A1.; "Missed Signals Helped Doom Deal." *The Miami Herald*, April 30, 2000: A1.

¹²⁷³ Balmaseda. "Feds Declined to Exhaust All Options."; "Seized Raid Returns Elian To Father How It Happened Lightning Move Took Agents Just 154 Seconds."; Kidwell, David. "U.S.: At Least One Gun Had Been Seen at House." *The Miami Herald*, April 24, 2000: A1.; Kidwell, David. "Security Denies Gun Was at Gonzalezes'." *The Miami Herald*, April 25, 2000: 3B.; "Attorney: Dad Was Ready to Go to Miami."; Viglucci, Andres. "Agents Assumed `Orchestrated Resistance'." *The Miami Herald*, April 28, 2000: A12.; "Missed Signals Helped Doom Deal."; Chardy. "CANF Leapt into Struggle Over Elian."; Viglucci, Andres. "Makeshift Force Disputes INS' Cause for Concern." *The Miami Herald*, May 22, 2000: B1.

Protests continued throughout the day.¹²⁷⁴ Federal officials immediately flew Elian to Washington, D.C., to reunite with his father.¹²⁷⁵ Cuban islanders welcomed them back.

The debacle hurt the reputation of Cuban-Americans and heightened tension in the city.¹²⁷⁶ Sociologist Ruben Rumbaut called it "a defining moment in the Cuban exile experience."¹²⁷⁷ Lisandro Perez said it had united the Miami Cuban community but also had united opposition from Washington, Havana, and public opinion.¹²⁷⁸ Cuban-Americans felt that the news media had been inaccurate and unfair to them in their coverage.¹²⁷⁹ The Miami Cuban enclave usually insulated the community from the same

¹²⁷⁴ "Seized Raid Returns Elian To Father How It Happened Lightning Move Took Agents Just 154 Seconds."; Whitefield, Mimi. "Elián González speaks out: I would visit U.S. one day; relatives should apologize." *The Miami Herald*, May 18, 2015.

¹²⁷⁵ "Seized Raid Returns Elian To Father How It Happened Lightning Move Took Agents Just 154 Seconds."; Robles, Frances. "Elián, Father Move to More Secluded Site." *The Miami Herald*, April 26, 2000: A1.; Robles, Frances. "Elián Outing in Washington Brings Criticism in Miami." *The Miami Herald*, May 9, 2000: B1.

¹²⁷⁶ Eunice Ponce and Jasmine Kripalani. "Protests March to Different Beats." *The Miami Herald*, January 30, 2000: B1.; Hiaasen, Carl. "Planet Elian." *The Miami Herald*, January 30, 2000: 5L.; "No Gasoline Needed."; Garcia, Manny. "Lazaro Vs. U.S. Defiant, Elian's Great-Uncle Isn't Yielding and Bluntly Declares: 'The Child Stays Here!'" *The Miami Herald*, April 16, 2000: A1.; John Dorschner and Fabiola Santiago. "For Cubans, Outside Reaction Angers, Bewilders Many." *The Miami Herald*, April 23, 2000: A1.; Chardy, Alfonso. "Businesses Set for Shutdown." *The Miami Herald*, April 25, 2000: A1.; Colon, Yves. "As Nation Polarized, Eduardo And I Got Together." *The Miami Herald*, April 28, 2000: B10.; Morgan, Curtis. "Cut Flag's Removal Ignites Controversy." *The Miami Herald*, May 9, 2000: B3.; Vigiucci, Andres. "Lively Debate Fills Street Outside Atlanta Court." *The Miami Herald*, May 12, 2000: A28.; Jackson, Terry. "Coverage of Cuba Brings Praise and Condemnation." *The Miami Herald*, May 28, 2000: L1.; Tamayo, Juan O. "Ex-U.S. Official to Lead Pro-Embargo Drive." *The Miami Herald*, June 30, 2000: A1.; "Exiles' Elian Protests Backfired in Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, July 3, 2000: B1.; Vigiucci, Andres. "Elián's Story Waits for Ending A Year Later, Exiles Remember." *The Miami Herald*, November 23, 2000: A3.; Steinback, Robert L. "Ethnic Groups Talk in Post-Elián Year." *The Miami Herald*, March 11, 2001: B1.; Brinkley-Rogers, Paul. "A Year Later, Cuban Exiles Mourn Memories of Elián." *The Miami Herald*, April 20, 2001: A1.; Steinback, Robert L. "CANF Rift May Open New Doors." *The Miami Herald*, July 29, 2001: B1.; Whitefield. "Elián González speaks out: I would visit U.S. one day; relatives should apologize."

¹²⁷⁷ John Dorschner and Fabiola Santiago. "For Cubans, Outside Reaction Angers, Bewilders Many." *The Miami Herald*, April 23, 2000: A1.

¹²⁷⁸ Dorschner and Santiago. "For Cubans, Outside Reaction Angers, Bewilders Many."

¹²⁷⁹ Jackson. "Coverage of Cuba Brings Praise and Condemnation."; Tamayo. "Ex-U.S. Official to Lead Pro-Embargo Drive."

degree of discrimination that other U.S. Latinos faced.¹²⁸⁰ Some younger generations became more active in Cuban issues in the aftermath; Mauricio Claver-Carone was among them.¹²⁸¹ Businessman Carlos Saladrigas viewed the Elian saga as a lesson: "When all is said and done, Elian will have done more good than bad for the community," said Carlos Saladrigas, a prominent Cuban-American executive. "A major lesson is that the leadership of the community cannot wait until things get out of hand until we begin to act. We don't need to love each other; we just need to learn to live together and to work together."¹²⁸²

Joe Garcia, a second-generation Cuban-American who had had a close relationship with Jorge Mas Canosa and his son Juan Carlos, resigned from his Florida Public Service Commission chairmanship and became the new executive director of CANF in May 2000.¹²⁸³ He considered the Elian case a triumph of sorts, because it put the Cuban cause back into the spotlight and got people talking.¹²⁸⁴ He tried to shake up the leadership after the Elian Gonzalez debacle and pro-actively and aggressively pursue

¹²⁸⁰ Dorschner and Santiago. "For Cubans, Outside Reaction Angers, Bewilders Many."

¹²⁸¹ Robles, Frances. "Elian Saga Awakens Activists to The Cause." *The Miami Herald*, May 22, 2000: B1.

¹²⁸² Viglucci. "Elian's Story Waits for Ending A Year Later, Exiles Remember."

¹²⁸³ De Valle, Elaine. "CANF Adds to Its Leadership Ranks." *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 2000: B1.; Tamayo, Juan O. "Farmers Fuel Drive to Repeal Sanctions Big Business Eyes Sales to Havana." *The Miami Herald*, June 25, 2000: A1.; Rosenberg, Carol. "A New Voice for Cuban Cause After Mas Canosa's Death and Elian, Leader Wants to Strengthen Foundation." *The Miami Herald*, July 19, 2000: A1.; Babson, Jennifer. "Club Anticipates Cuba Races." *The Miami Herald*, August 19, 2000: B3.; Veiga, Alex. "Exile Group's Director Finds Cause of His Life." *The Miami Herald*, October 29, 2000: B7.; Rosenberg, Carol. "Radio and TV Martí Director Resigns Post." *The Miami Herald*, June 12, 2001: B1.

¹²⁸⁴ Rosenberg. "A New Voice for Cuban Cause After Mas Canosa's Death and Elian, Leader Wants to Strengthen Foundation."

Cuban-American causes.¹²⁸⁵ He wanted to protect Cuban-Americans and return to the AIPAC model of special interest promotion.¹²⁸⁶ New shake-ups included a plan to move the Miami headquarters to the Freedom Tower, hiring more staff in Washington, encouraging greater membership and membership activities, and greater media outreach.¹²⁸⁷ In 1999, CANF had changed its tax status from 501c3 to 501c4 to focus on lobbying more overtly.¹²⁸⁸ CANF hired former State Department Coordinator for Cuban Affairs Ambassador Dennis Hays to help with their pro-embargo campaigning and improve exiles' reputations.¹²⁸⁹ They had 50,000 members at the time and hoped to attract ten-to-twenty thousand more.¹²⁹⁰ So, they launched a commercial campaign in major cities with significant Cuban populations to attract more CANF membership and encourage Cuban-Americans to vote in 2000.¹²⁹¹ They purchased a bigger office space

¹²⁸⁵ De Valle. "CANF Adds to Its Leadership Ranks."; Tamayo. "Farmers Fuel Drive to Repeal Sanctions Big Business Eyes Sales to Havana."; Rosenberg. "A New Voice for Cuban Cause After Mas Canosa's Death and Elian, Leader Wants to Strengthen Foundation."; Babson. "Club Anticipates Cuba Races."; Veiga. "Exile Group's Director Finds Cause of His Life."; Rosenberg. "Radio and TV Martí Director Resigns Post."

¹²⁸⁶ Rosenberg. "A New Voice for Cuban Cause After Mas Canosa's Death and Elian, Leader Wants to Strengthen Foundation."

¹²⁸⁷ Rosenberg. "A New Voice for Cuban Cause After Mas Canosa's Death and Elian, Leader Wants to Strengthen Foundation."; Santiago, Fabiola. "A Family Affair." *The Miami Herald*, September 18, 2000: E1.; Santiago, Fabiola. "Beacon of Hope Freedom Tower to Get New Life, Mark Exiles' History." *The Miami Herald*, May 13, 2001: A1.

¹²⁸⁸ Rosenberg, Carol. "Foundation Dodges Presidential Endorsement Group Puts Focus on Lobbying." *The Miami Herald*, October 3, 2000: A8.; Chardy, Alfonso. "IRS Audit Led to CANF Shifts." *The Miami Herald*, August 26, 2001: B1.

¹²⁸⁹ Tamayo, Juan O. "Ex-U.S. Official to Lead Pro-Embargo Drive." *The Miami Herald*, June 30, 2000: A1.

¹²⁹⁰ Lynch, Marika. "30-Minute Commercial Attempts to Boost Foundation's Numbers." *The Miami Herald*, July 25, 2000: B3.

¹²⁹¹ Lynch. "30-Minute Commercial Attempts to Boost Foundation's Numbers."

near Dupont Circle for their Washington, D.C., headquarters, which they lovingly referred to as their "Free Cuba Embassy," and planned to double the budget from half a million to a million dollars.¹²⁹²

Embargo Challengers

Embargo resistance pushed back after Clinton ratified the Helms-Burton Act and gained momentum in his second term. The question of giving aid was one aspect of it. Another was preserving Cuban-American family relationships. However, U.S. businesses and leaders also saw Cuba as an opportunity to expand markets and open Cuban society through markets. Various coalitions formed based on these interests with the common goal of loosening or ending the embargo.

Embargo opponents outspent embargo proponents in 2000, and agriculture was a major sector in the effort to lift restrictions on food sales.¹²⁹³ Public opinion had shifted significantly with increased travel and a weakened CANF.¹²⁹⁴ Republicans were listening; Senator John Ashcroft and Representative George Nethercutt promoted a bill

¹²⁹² Rosenberg, Carol. "Foundation's D.C. Building A 'Free Cuba Embassy'." *The Miami Herald*, September 19, 2000: A7.; Rosenberg, Carol. "Exile Group Opens New D.C. 'Embassy' Foundation Seeks to Strengthen Bush Team's Anti-Castro Stance." *The Miami Herald*, February 7, 2001: A3.

¹²⁹³ Tamayo. "Farmers Fuel Drive to Repeal Sanctions Big Business Eyes Sales to Havana."; Tamayo, Juan O. "Relaxing Sanctions Could Yield Little in Short Run Havana Lacks Financing to Purchase U.S. Goods." *The Miami Herald*, June 26, 2000: A1.; Rosenberg, Carol. "South Florida Is Watching for Nominee's Cuba Outlook." *The Miami Herald*, January 31, 2001: A1.

¹²⁹⁴ Tamayo. "Farmers Fuel Drive to Repeal Sanctions Big Business Eyes Sales to Havana."

for lifting food sales restrictions that even Senator Helms supported.¹²⁹⁵ Congress passed the "Ashcroft Amendment."¹²⁹⁶ Senator Baucus proposed a bill lifting all restrictions.¹²⁹⁷

Big business and agriculture were trying to lift sanctions on Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, and Sudan, along with about 20 others.¹²⁹⁸ Agribusiness donated over \$280,000 to Ashcroft's 2000 election campaign.¹²⁹⁹ They supported the normalization advocacy of USA*Engage, Americans for Humanitarian Trade with Cuba, and the U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council.¹³⁰⁰ Chairman Bill Lane of USA*Engage argued that the embargo had hurt the Cuban people and hindered change.¹³⁰¹ *Miami Herald* writer Liz Balmaseda suggested that removing the sanctions would hold Castro accountable for failed policy rather than allowing him to scapegoat the United States and rely on the work of people in Hialeah to provide for their relatives on the island where Castro did not.¹³⁰² Proponents believed that business with Cuba only strengthened and

¹²⁹⁵ Tamayo. "Farmers Fuel Drive to Repeal Sanctions Big Business Eyes Sales to Havana."; Tamayo. "Relaxing Sanctions Could Yield Little in Short Run Havana Lacks Financing to Purchase U.S. Goods."

¹²⁹⁶ Balmaseda, Liz. "End U.S. Sanctions and Expose Castro." *The Miami Herald*, July 3, 2000: B1.; Rosenberg. "South Florida Is Watching for Nominee's Cuba Outlook."

¹²⁹⁷ Tamayo. "Farmers Fuel Drive to Repeal Sanctions Big Business Eyes Sales to Havana."

¹²⁹⁸ Tamayo. "Farmers Fuel Drive to Repeal Sanctions Big Business Eyes Sales to Havana."; Tamayo. "Relaxing Sanctions Could Yield Little in Short Run Havana Lacks Financing to Purchase U.S. Goods."

¹²⁹⁹ Rosenberg. "South Florida Is Watching for Nominee's Cuba Outlook."

¹³⁰⁰ Tamayo. "Farmers Fuel Drive to Repeal Sanctions Big Business Eyes Sales to Havana."

¹³⁰¹ Tamayo. "Farmers Fuel Drive to Repeal Sanctions Big Business Eyes Sales to Havana."

¹³⁰² Balmaseda. "End U.S. Sanctions and Expose Castro."

funded the regime and that the sanctions were working, especially since the Soviet subsidies ended, as Castro's evolving policies seeking foreign investment evidenced.¹³⁰³

The anti-embargo lobbying efforts had some success. The 106th Congress introduced about twenty bills between 1999 and 2000 that would affect Cuba sanctions, most of which sought to loosen or end the embargo, but few were considered.¹³⁰⁴ In July 2000, the House and Senate passed the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, which contained an earlier version of the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act (TSRA).¹³⁰⁵ The final version of the bill passed Congress three months later, and the President ratified it on October 28, 2000.¹³⁰⁶ The act exempted food and medicine sales from sanctions, specifically referencing “state sponsors of international terrorism” sanctions.¹³⁰⁷ It still prohibited U.S. foreign assistance, export assistance, and export guarantees and credits to Cuba; only advance cash sales and third country institutions could finance the permitted

¹³⁰³ Tamayo. "Farmers Fuel Drive to Repeal Sanctions Big Business Eyes Sales to Havana."; Tamayo. "Relaxing Sanctions Could Yield Little in Short Run Havana Lacks Financing to Purchase U.S. Goods."

¹³⁰⁴ Congressional Research Service. "Economic Sanctions: Legislation in the 106th Congress."

¹³⁰⁵ "H.R.4461 - 106th Congress (1999-2000): Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 | Congress.Gov | Library of Congress." Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/106th-congress/house-bill/4461/>.; Congressional Research Service. "Economic Sanctions: Legislation in the 106th Congress."

¹³⁰⁶ "H.R.4461 - 106th Congress (1999-2000): Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 | Congress.Gov | Library of Congress." Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/106th-congress/house-bill/4461/>.

¹³⁰⁷ Congressional Research Service. "Economic Sanctions: Legislation in the 106th Congress."; "H.R.4461 - 106th Congress (1999-2000): Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 | Congress.Gov | Library of Congress." Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/106th-congress/house-bill/4461/>.

exports.¹³⁰⁸ It also tightened OFAC travel license restrictions.¹³⁰⁹ Although the law expanded exports to Cuba for humanitarian and business interests, embargo proponents still framed the limits of the expansion.

Concurrently, Cuba threatened to increase the tax on telephone calls between the United States and Cuba in response to other U.S. legislation, the pending Justice for the Victims of Terrorism Act, to help compensate the families of the downed Brothers to the Rescue pilots with frozen Cuban assets.¹³¹⁰ Castro's phone tax went into effect at the end of October.¹³¹¹ When phone companies refused to pay the tax because it violated laws that govern them, Castro demanded that Cuba's telecommunications department cut phone connections to the United States by December 16.¹³¹²

Between the anti-embargo movement, the commotion over Elian, and the leadership vacuum that Jorge Mas Canosa's death created, the hardline strategy against Cuba receded. The Miami Cuban community used the 2000 election to retaliate.

¹³⁰⁸ Congressional Research Service. "Economic Sanctions: Legislation in the 106th Congress.;" "H.R.4461 - 106th Congress (1999-2000): Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 | Congress.Gov | Library of Congress." Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/106th-congress/house-bill/4461/>.

¹³⁰⁹ Congressional Research Service. "Economic Sanctions: Legislation in the 106th Congress.;" "H.R.4461 - 106th Congress (1999-2000): Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 | Congress.Gov | Library of Congress." Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/106th-congress/house-bill/4461/>.

¹³¹⁰ Colon, Yves. "Cuba: Tax on U.S. Calls to Rise Decree Retaliates for Funds Awarded to Pilots' Families." *The Miami Herald*, October 24, 2000: A1.

¹³¹¹ Colon, Yves. "Holiday Hang-Up: Cuba To Cut Phone Connection with U.S." *The Miami Herald*, December 9, 2000: 2A.

¹³¹² Colon. "Holiday Hang-Up: Cuba To Cut Phone Connection with U.S."

Election of 2000

With no presidential incumbent in the race, the 2000 election was highly competitive. George W. Bush, the Governor of Texas and son of former President George H.W. Bush, and Al Gore, Clinton's Vice President, ultimately won the Republican and Democratic party nominations in the 2000 presidential primaries. Bush chose Dick Cheney as his running mate, and Al Gore chose Joe Lieberman. Florida was critical and highly competitive in the close national race, so any mistake could be a deciding factor. Unfortunately for Al Gore, the recent Elian Gonzalez events left an indelible impression on South Florida voters.

Strategists for Al Gore expected his running mate pick, Joseph Lieberman, to energize retirees from the Northeast, Jewish, and Cuban-American voters in Florida due to his orthodox faith and closeness with CANF.¹³¹³ Lieberman had fostered a relationship with CANF since at least 1988 and consistently supported the embargo.¹³¹⁴ Several members directors and influential affiliates were friends or donated to his campaigns over the years: Jorge Mas Canosa, Pedro Adrian, Luis Cruz, Delfin Parnas, Felipe Valls, Domingo Moreira, Pepe Hernandez, Juan Carlos Mas Canosa, Fernando Conto, Ramon

¹³¹³ Merzer, Martin. "Religion Not an Obstacle on The Job, Many Say." *The Miami Herald*, August 8, 2000: A1.; Silva, Mark. "Candidate Could Tap into Jewish, Cuban Vote in South Florida Choice Rejuvenates Critical Base, Say Gore Campaign Organizers." *The Miami Herald*, August 8, 2000: A19.; "A Man of Moral Principle in Joseph Lieberman, Mr. Gore Makes History." *The Miami Herald*, August 8, 2000: B6.; Davies, Frank. "Senator Blends Piety with Energetic Statesmanship." *The Miami Herald*, August 13, 2000: A1.

¹³¹⁴ Silva. "Candidate Could Tap into Jewish, Cuban Vote in South Florida Choice Rejuvenates Critical Base, Say Gore Campaign Organizers."; Silva, Mark. "VP Pick Makes Foundation's Choice Less Clear." *The Miami Herald*, August 9, 2000: A2.

Mas, Erelío Peña, and more.¹³¹⁵ CANF's relationship with the Bushes and Lieberman complicated their endorsement decision, but it positioned them well to influence either administration.¹³¹⁶

Bush, Gore, and Lieberman supported Cuba sanctions, but Cheney was critical.¹³¹⁷ Robert Pastor, who had worked for Jimmy Carter, was one of Gore's leading foreign policy advisors for the Americas; he focused on wanting to create a "Hemispheric Community of Democracies" to work on multilateral issues, including putting pressure on Cuba to democratize with potential for lifting parts of the sanctions.¹³¹⁸ The official Democratic Party platform focused on defending democracy in the Americas and funding projects like the National Endowment for Democracy and Radio Martí.¹³¹⁹

The Republican Party platform expanded on the Cuba issue and essentially declared a hardline platform on Cuba, promoting human rights and democracy by supporting refugees and dissidents, unfiltered information/news, and maintaining the embargo until the situation changes.¹³²⁰ Representative Lincoln Díaz-Balart was Bush's co-chair in Florida.¹³²¹ Bush wrote a letter to Díaz-Balart and held talks with Florida

¹³¹⁵ Silva. "Candidate Could Tap into Jewish, Cuban Vote in South Florida Choice Rejuvenates Critical Base, Say Gore Campaign Organizers."; Silva. "VP Pick Makes Foundation's Choice Less Clear."

¹³¹⁶ Silva. "VP Pick Makes Foundation's Choice Less Clear."

¹³¹⁷ Silva. "Cuban Exiles' View of Gore Hits Low Level."; Oppenheimer, Andres. "Candidates' Plans for Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 21, 2000: A12.

¹³¹⁸ Oppenheimer. "Candidates' Plans for Cuba."

¹³¹⁹ Oppenheimer. "Candidates' Plans for Cuba."

¹³²⁰ Silva. "Cuban Exiles' View of Gore Hits Low Level."

¹³²¹ Silva. "Cuban Exiles' View of Gore Hits Low Level."; Rosenberg, Carol. "Hardening of Cuba Policy Is Expected from Bush More Influence by Miami Exiles Predicted." *The Miami Herald*, December 19, 2000: A3.

Republican Chairman Al Cardenas telling them that he would review and reconsider Clinton's Cuban immigration policies, but he would not commit to ending "wet foot, dry foot."¹³²² Bush and the Republicans' platform maintained the embargo against Cuba as is, necessitating that Cuba meets the Helms-Burton Act's stipulations before lifting sanctions.¹³²³

The Gore campaign floundered in the Cuban community of South Florida. Bush reached out to CANF and its members and supporters when he visited Miami.¹³²⁴ CANF welcomed Bush with a big "Bienvenido Bush" sign, even though the foundation did not formally endorse him.¹³²⁵ Jorge Mas Santos endorsed Bush, but CANF continued to resist endorsement.¹³²⁶ The Cuban-American community was still upset with Clinton's handling of Cuba issues, which resulted in colder attitudes toward Al Gore, the Vice President.¹³²⁷ Gore tried to hold a news conference in Hialeah a few weeks before the election with Democratic Hialeah Mayor Raul Martinez and Democratic Miami-Dade Mayor Alex Penelas, but Penelas went to Spain for a couple of weeks and would not be back until a week before the election.¹³²⁸ The Bush campaign far outspent Gore on Hispanic media

¹³²² Rosenberg, Carol. "Bush Signals Shift on Immigration." *The Miami Herald*, September 15, 2000: A16.

¹³²³ Oppenheimer. "Candidates' Plans for Cuba."

¹³²⁴ Rosenberg, Carol. "Foundation Dodges Presidential Endorsement Group Puts Focus on Lobbying." *The Miami Herald*, October 3, 2000: A8.

¹³²⁵ Rosenberg. "Foundation Dodges Presidential Endorsement Group Puts Focus on Lobbying."

¹³²⁶ Rosenberg. "Foundation Dodges Presidential Endorsement Group Puts Focus on Lobbying."

¹³²⁷ Rosenberg. "Foundation Dodges Presidential Endorsement Group Puts Focus on Lobbying."

¹³²⁸ Rosenberg. "Foundation Dodges Presidential Endorsement Group Puts Focus on Lobbying."

advertising, essentially flooding the Miami Spanish radio stations.¹³²⁹ Gore led Bush with Hispanics nationwide at 61 percent to 25 percent, but Bush was beating Gore 77 percent to 14 percent with Cuban-American voters, according to Bendixen's Hispanic Trends polling.¹³³⁰ Over 250 Florida Hispanic leaders released an endorsement of Bush.¹³³¹

In their final pushes in Florida, the Bush and Gore campaigns divided their teams throughout the state.¹³³² They trekked from town to town, increased spending on advertisements (especially ads for Hispanics and the elderly), expanded telephone and mail campaigns, and brought along elected officials from throughout the country.¹³³³

Lieberman paid his respects to the late Jorge Mas Canosa at Woodlawn Park Cemetery in Little Havana, then met privately with about fifty CANF leaders at the Freedom Tower in Miami to discuss Cuba.¹³³⁴ Jeb Bush, who was elected Florida's Governor in November 1998, brought several state governors to Little Havana to stump for his brother during their campaign stops.¹³³⁵ Governor Jeb Bush's Mexican-American wife and their son George P. Bush campaigned for George W. Bush among various Hispanic communities

¹³²⁹ Rosenberg. "Foundation Dodges Presidential Endorsement Group Puts Focus on Lobbying."

¹³³⁰ Rosenberg. "Foundation Dodges Presidential Endorsement Group Puts Focus on Lobbying."

¹³³¹ Rosenberg. "Foundation Dodges Presidential Endorsement Group Puts Focus on Lobbying."

¹³³² Silva, Mark. "Exiles to Hold Private Meeting Lieberman To Give His Views on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, October 23, 2000: B1.

¹³³³ Silva. "Exiles to Hold Private Meeting Lieberman To Give His Views on Cuba."

¹³³⁴ Silva. "Exiles to Hold Private Meeting Lieberman To Give His Views on Cuba."; Silva And Yanez. "Lieberman Salutes Founder of CANF Jeb Bush Stumps in South Florida."

¹³³⁵ Silva And Yanez. "Lieberman Salutes Founder of CANF Jeb Bush Stumps in South Florida."

in Florida.¹³³⁶ The Republican Party had eight offices in Miami-Dade to coordinate its grassroots campaign.¹³³⁷

Election Day 2000 infamously turned into a blunder of historical proportions, especially in Florida, the chief battleground state. Once the Eastern Time zone results came in, reporters announced that Gore was the winner. They forgot that Florida's panhandle was on Central Time, significantly affecting the Florida electoral results. The electoral voters were so close nationwide, and the popular vote was so close in Florida that Florida went through a lengthy recount process that ultimately ended in the U.S. Supreme Court.¹³³⁸ Bush ultimately emerged victorious in Florida by 537 votes out of the over six million cast.¹³³⁹ Eighty percent of Florida's 400,000 Cuban-Americans voted for Bush, in part to punish Gore (the "voto castigo"), which was enough to be a deciding factor in the election.¹³⁴⁰ Activist Ramon Saul Sanchez said, "If the boy Elian had not been sent back to Cuba, today Al Gore would be president."¹³⁴¹ As a result, many expected the Bush administration to get tougher on Cuba and provide more generous

¹³³⁶ Rosenberg. "Foundation Dodges Presidential Endorsement Group Puts Focus on Lobbying."

¹³³⁷ Silva and Yanez. "Lieberman Salutes Founder of CANF Jeb Bush Stumps in South Florida."

¹³³⁸ Clark, Lesley. "GOP Electors Ready to Cast Historic Votes." *The Miami Herald*, December 18, 2000: A12.

¹³³⁹ Lesley Clark and Peter Wallsten. "Rift with Bush Is Still Open." *The Miami Herald*, October 2, 2003: B1.

¹³⁴⁰ Clark And Wallsten. "Rift with Bush Is Still Open."

¹³⁴¹ Viglucci, Andres. "Elian's Story Waits for Ending A Year Later, Exiles Remember." *The Miami Herald*, November 23, 2000: 3A.

support for dissidents and for Representatives Ros-Lehtinen and Lincoln Diaz-Balart to guide it.¹³⁴²

Due to how the Clinton administration had handled the negotiations around Elian Gonzalez, the Cuban-American community retaliated at the ballot box. Al Gore had been the Vice President at the time and was now running for president against George W. Bush, who, thanks to his brother Jeb Bush, had significant ties to the Miami Cuban community. Florida became the critical battleground state for the 2000 presidential election, resulting in a ballot recount and court decisions determining Florida's electoral college votes' ultimate recipient and, therefore, the victor.

Conclusion

The anti-embargo faction in Congress spanned both sides of the aisle and grew as anti-embargo interest groups, and public opinion gained momentum in the 1990s. The United States had normalized trade and diplomatic relations with most communist countries, free trade was the dominant ideology, nongovernment organizations needed fewer restrictions to provide aid to a struggling Cuba, and U.S. business interests sought new markets. Hardline and neoliberal ideologies conflicted. Nongovernmental organizations controversially provided aid to Cuba.

Cuban-Americans had many political victories during the 1990s, and CANF contributed greatly. They advocated for Cuban refugees, passed the TSRA, and helped George W. Bush win the 2000 election by a razor-thin margin. CANF quickly declined

¹³⁴² Rosenberg. "Hardening of Cuba Policy Is Expected from Bush More Influence by Miami Exiles Predicted."

after Jorge Mas Canosa's death. The Elian Gonzalez affair proved to be an inflection point for the Cuban-American community and CANF, as they struggled with public opinion, rethinking their hardline strategies, and reconsidering their political alliances. The Helms-Burton Act marked the peak of CANF influence, but even as CANF faded, Cuban-Americans continued to influence policy by various means. Cuban-American politics would undergo a strategic shift during the George W. Bush administration.

CHAPTER 6: GEORGE W. BUSH'S FIRST TERM

Introduction

Cuban-Americans had been a crucial demographic in helping George W. Bush win Florida and thereby win the presidential election of 2000. In return, hardliners hoped that he would reverse many of Clinton's policies toward Cuba. They particularly disliked repatriating refugees interdicted at sea, waivers to the Helms-Burton Act's right to sue, and embargo guidelines that expanded allowances for travel, remittances, aid, and trade. Moreover, the Bushes had a long, positive relationship with the Cuban-American community, in large part thanks to George W. Bush's brother Jeb. Yet, the Cuban-American community underwent a sea change after the Elian Gonzalez incident, which caused many to reconsider their strategies, goals, and reputation. The Cuban American National Foundation had faced many external challenges throughout the years, but it faced its greatest challenges internally. Organizational weaknesses and changing Cuban-American public opinion stretched CANF's capacity to unite different sectors of the community and the U.S. Government under common policy goals. Cuban-American organizations proliferated in this context. CANF's near-monopoly over Cuban interest group politics waned as other organizations entered the fray. Hardline Cuban-American organizations and legislators attempted to suppress the anti-embargo movement as it gained steam in Miami and Washington. The post-Cold War Special Period in Cuba, U.S. domestic politics, and a new international order dictated how Cuban-Americans interacted with Cuba in the 1990s; the Cuban-American community's evolving domestic political opinions and agenda dominated the George W. Bush administration.

Appointments

Due to Jeb Bush's Floridian base, many Cuban-Americans in the Florida Republican Party were well-positioned to work in President George W. Bush's administration. He chose retired General Colin Powell as Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice as National Security Advisor, John Ashcroft as Attorney General, John Bolton as Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs, and Mel Martinez as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.¹³⁴³ Mel Martinez, a former CANF board member from Orlando, was the first Cuban-American member of any U.S. President's Cabinet.¹³⁴⁴ Rumor had it that the administration shortlisted Cuban-American Lino Gutierrez for the position of U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States, but it went to Roger Noriega instead, a conservative Mexican-American so supportive of the embargo and enthusiastic about the Cuban cause that people often mistook him as Cuban.¹³⁴⁵ Other notable Cuban-American appointees during his first included Cari Dominguez as Equal Employment Opportunity Commission chair, Otto Reich as Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs (whom the Senate refused to confirm for his role in allegedly aiding Orlando Bosch and the Iran-Contra Affair), Alberto Mora as General Counsel of the Navy, and Alexander Acosta as U.S. Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. President Bush nominated Pedro Roig to

¹³⁴³ Koszczuk, Jackie. "The Transition Closing in On Confirmation Powell Revises View on Force." *The Miami Herald*, January 18, 2001: A1.

¹³⁴⁴ Yardley. "Partygoers, Protesters Head for Bush Inaugural."; Davies, Frank. "'I'll Be Very Active,' Housing Nominee Says Confirmation of First Cuban American Named to President's Cabinet Appears Likely." *The Miami Herald*, January 18, 2001: A10.

¹³⁴⁵ Rosenberg. "Exile Group Opens New D.C. 'Embassy' Foundation Seeks to Strengthen Bush Team's Anti-Castro Stance."

replace Salvador Lew at Radio and TV Marti.¹³⁴⁶ Juan Zarate served in various security roles on the National Security Council and in the Departments of Treasury and Justice throughout Bush's presidency.

Bush's administration was known for its neoconservative, aggressive, unilateral approach to foreign policy. In 2002, John Bolton went so far as to accuse Cuba of developing and selling bioweapons in violation of the international Biological Weapons Treaty that both nations had signed and ratified in 1972.¹³⁴⁷ However, there were some high-level officials with more moderate stances toward Cuba. John Ashcroft had been a sponsor of the "Ashcroft Amendment" that removed sanctions on food and medicine sales to Cuba. During a House Appropriations subcommittee meeting, Secretary of State Colin Powell came under fire for saying he condemned Castro but that Castro had "done good things for his people" and "he's no longer the threat he once was."¹³⁴⁸

Jorge Mas Santos started meeting with National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and Bush senior advisor Karl Rove early on.¹³⁴⁹ Attorney General John Ashcroft met in Miami with Cuban-American leaders.¹³⁵⁰ They discussed topics like the "wet foot, dry foot" immigration policy, indicting Fidel Castro for the Brothers to the Rescue

¹³⁴⁶ Elaine De Valle and Jacqueline Charles. "Miami Lawyer Picked to Head Radio, TV Martí." *The Miami Herald*, April 2, 2003: A3.; Pedro Roig, interview by the author, July 23, 2018.

¹³⁴⁷ Johnson, Tim. "Cuba Put in Biowarfare Spotlight." *The Miami Herald*, May 7, 2002: A3.

¹³⁴⁸ Rosenberg, Carol. "Powell's Castro Comment Upsets Exiles." *The Miami Herald*, April 27, 2001: A1.

¹³⁴⁹ Rosenberg, Carol. "Exile Group Opens New D.C. 'Embassy' Foundation Seeks to Strengthen Bush Team's Anti-Castro Stance." *The Miami Herald*, February 7, 2001: A3.

¹³⁵⁰ Forelle, Charles. "Friendly Greeting Set for Ashcroft." *The Miami Herald*, June 25, 2001: B1.; Elaine De Valle and Gail Epstein Nieves. "Leaders of Cuban Foundation Urge Ashcroft To Indict Castro." *The Miami Herald*, June 27, 2001: B3.; Balmaseda, Liz. "Vigilance Crucial on Refugee Policy." *The Miami Herald*, June 28, 2001: B1.

shootdown, and vigorous enforcement of the Helms-Burton Act.¹³⁵¹ They did not like Ashcroft's past opposition of the embargo, but they hoped that he would be a better partner with the community than previous Attorney General Janet Reno.¹³⁵² From the 2000 presidential campaign to the White House, Cuban-Americans ensured they had a seat at the table, but as the community became more fractured politically, it became less clear who would occupy the seat.

Early Efforts

Jorge Mas Santos outlined his vision for Cuba policy under Bush at an Inter-American Dialogue event.¹³⁵³ He proposed providing material resources to pro-democracy forces on the island (ex. technology and communications), supporting the small private sector, exempting the private sector from U.S. sanctions, licensing universities and N.G.O.s to provide business training and create labor rights institutes in Cuba, funding measures to increase internet access for the Cuban people, and more U.S. news bureaus in Cuba.¹³⁵⁴ CANF also pursued efforts to bring criminal charges against Fidel Castro through multiple countries.¹³⁵⁵ Several domestic and international law issues

¹³⁵¹ Forelle. "Friendly Greeting Set for Ashcroft."; De Valle and Epstein Nieves. "Leaders of Cuban Foundation Urge Ashcroft To Indict Castro."; Balmaseda. "Vigilance Crucial on Refugee Policy."

¹³⁵² Forelle. "Friendly Greeting Set for Ashcroft."; De Valle and Epstein Nieves. "Leaders of Cuban Foundation Urge Ashcroft To Indict Castro."

¹³⁵³ "An `Activist' Cuba Policy." *The Miami Herald*, February 10, 2001: B6.; Rosenberg, Carol. "Lobbying for Latin Grammys Challenged." *The Miami Herald*, March 6, 2001: B1.

¹³⁵⁴ "An `Activist' Cuba Policy." *The Miami Herald*, February 10, 2001: 6B.

¹³⁵⁵ Rosenberg, Carol. "Foundation Pursues Goal: The Prosecution of Castro." *The Miami Herald*, July 10, 2001: A12.; Chardy, Alfonso. "Exiles Press U.S. To Indict Castro For Shoot-Down." *The Miami Herald*,

made it difficult, despite the Pinochet and Noriega cases that they cited as precedents.¹³⁵⁶ CANF was optimistic that the U.S. Justice Department would consider prosecution.¹³⁵⁷ It became clear that Jorge Mas Santos was charting his path for CANF, even if it did cause chagrin among old school hardliners.¹³⁵⁸ "The embargo is a tool, not the end," he explained to a reporter in a separate interview.¹³⁵⁹

Senators Jesse Helms and Joseph Lieberman, with the help of Jorge Mas Santos, introduced the Cuban Solidarity Act to Congress to provide \$100 million in direct U.S. aid to dissidents and activists in Cuba over four years, support expanding the reach of Radio and TV Marti, and have the attorney general investigate the Cuban government's role in the Brothers to the Rescue shutdown.¹³⁶⁰ Representative Lincoln Diaz-Balart introduced a similar bill in the House.¹³⁶¹

Pro-embargo Florida Senator Bill Nelson planned a trip to Cuba to meet with opposition members, which would make him the first Florida Senator to visit the island.¹³⁶² He managed to get support from prominent leaders of the Cuban exile

August 25, 2001: B3.; De Valle, Elaine. "Events Recall Day Four Exiles Lost Lives." *The Miami Herald*, February 24, 2002: B3.

¹³⁵⁶ Rosenberg, Carol. "Foundation Pursues Goal: The Prosecution of Castro." *The Miami Herald*, July 10, 2001: A12.

¹³⁵⁷ Chardy. "Exiles Press U.S. To Indict Castro For Shoot-Down."

¹³⁵⁸ Balmaseda, Liz. "Exile Dynasty Not Carbon Copy." *The Miami Herald*, March 1, 2001: B1.

¹³⁵⁹ Balmaseda, Liz. "Exile Dynasty Not Carbon Copy." *The Miami Herald*, March 1, 2001: B1.

¹³⁶⁰ Davies, Frank. "Senators Will Propose Aid to Dissidents in Cuba Solidarity Act Would Provide Food, Phones." *The Miami Herald*, May 16, 2001: A1.

¹³⁶¹ San Martin and Davies. "Aid for Cuba Dissidents Doomed to Fail, Critics Say."

¹³⁶² Davies, Frank. "Sen. Nelson Plans Trip to Cuba He Says He Wants to Learn About Independents, Island's Future." *The Miami Herald*, May 31, 2001: A3.

community (Pepe Hernandez, Joe Sanchez, Armando Gutierrez, and Carlos Saladrigas) for the trip as long as the focus remained on human rights and democracy even though he considered meeting with Castro or other government officials.¹³⁶³ One purpose of the trip was to promote the Cuban Solidarity Act bill and scout out the best way to achieve its goals.¹³⁶⁴ More nuanced and competing Cuban-American attitudes toward travel and aid enabled opportunities that would have been politically dangerous previously. While the Bush administration may have been open to considering early lobbying and legislation efforts regarding Cuba, the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington soon cast all security and foreign policy attention on the Middle East. Meanwhile, CANF's internal threatened the organization's efficacy.

CANF Rift

The Elian Gonzalez incident exposed generational divides and continued issues between the Cuban-American community that resulted in some exile community sectors rethinking their strategies.¹³⁶⁵ The Elian Gonzalez case had exposed several issues that harmed the Miami Cuban community's reputation and influence: bad press, intercultural tensions in Miami, the lack of support from other Americans for Elian, and weakening support for hardline Cuba policies. Second- and third-generation Cuban-Americans lacked interest in Cuba compared to their forebears. These trends and the death of Jorge

¹³⁶³ Nancy San Martin. "Nelson's Cuba Visit Endorsed by Exiles." *The Miami Herald*, June 5, 2001: A7.

¹³⁶⁴ San Martin. "Nelson's Cuba Visit Endorsed by Exiles."

¹³⁶⁵ Viglucci, Andres. "Grammy Flap Exposes Split Among Exiles." *The Miami Herald*, September 2, 2001: B1.

Mas Canosa gave CANF's chairman, Jorge Mas Santos, an impetus to change the organization's strategy to appeal to more audiences.¹³⁶⁶ As Joe Garcia said, "We have to stop preaching to the choir and get more people to church," like younger Cuban-Americans and Americans of other ethnicities.¹³⁶⁷

Not all CANF trustees and directors were on board with Mas Santos's vision. Many opposed controversial policies like supporting bringing the Latin Grammys to Miami despite Cuban artists' attendance, more outreach and aid to dissidents on the island, and working more with politicians on both sides of the aisle.¹³⁶⁸ One of their biggest complaints was Mas Santos's leadership style, which they viewed as dictatorial and exclusive, unlike their view of Mas Canosa's style as democratic.¹³⁶⁹ They felt that the newer generation did not understand Cuba the way that they did.¹³⁷⁰ They did not think that they needed the American public to support them or assumed that the virtue of their cause would be enough.¹³⁷¹ Jorge Mas Santos and his generation of younger,

¹³⁶⁶ Santiago, Fabiola. "Jorge Mas Santos - Two Worlds, Two Cultures." *The Miami Herald*, July 29, 2001: A1.; Steinback, Robert L. "CANF Rift May Open New Doors." *The Miami Herald*, July 29, 2001: B1.

¹³⁶⁷ Yanez, Luisa. "CANF Board Ponders Future Amid Public Rift." *The Miami Herald*, July 22, 2001: B3.; Carol Rosenberg and Elaine De Valle. "Ex-CANF Member Explains Resignation." *The Miami Herald*, July 24, 2001: B1.

¹³⁶⁸ Yanez. "CANF Board Ponders Future Amid Public Rift."; Santiago. "Jorge Mas Santos - Two Worlds, Two Cultures."; Chardy, Alfonso. "IRS Audit Led to CANF Shifts." *The Miami Herald*, August 26, 2001: B1.

¹³⁶⁹ Yanez. "CANF Board Ponders Future Amid Public Rift."; Carol Rosenberg And Elaine De Valle. "Radio Host Blasts Cuban Group." *The Miami Herald*, July 24, 2001: B3.; Nancy San Martin and Luisa Yanez. "20 CANF Board Members Resign." *The Miami Herald*, August 8, 2001: A1.

¹³⁷⁰ Rosenberg and De Valle. "Ex-CANF Member Explains Resignation."

¹³⁷¹ Viglucci, Andres. "Grammy Flap Exposes Split Among Exiles." *The Miami Herald*, September 2, 2001: B1.

pragmatic, bicultural leadership were at odds with the older crowd.¹³⁷² Each claimed that their side was the true inheritance to Mas Canosa's legacy.¹³⁷³

Rifts among the CANF leadership deepened.¹³⁷⁴ Previously, CANF members of CANF kept their feuds private, but now it bled out into the open.¹³⁷⁵ Mario Blas Miranda, Jorge Mas Canosa's former bodyguard, registered the Cuban American National Foundation name with the State of Florida after it lapsed under the leadership transition.¹³⁷⁶ Miranda was one of the old guard who had objected to Jorge Mas Santos's position on the Grammys.¹³⁷⁷ However, he soon asked CANF to stop using the name; he wanted Mas Santos to resign so that the old guard could carry on the organization.¹³⁷⁸ Ninoska Perez-Castellon, the CANF spokesperson for years, and her husband, prominent ex-prisoner Roberto Martin Perez, quit the Foundation.¹³⁷⁹ Other notable members—Mirta Iglesias, Jose Antonio "Tony" Llamas, and two others—left during the previous

¹³⁷² Rosenberg and De Valle. "Ex-CANF Member Explains Resignation."; Carol Rosenberg, Elaine De Valle. "CANF Ignites Cuban Media." *The Miami Herald*, July 25, 2001: A3.; Balmaseda, Liz. "Each Side in Rift Claims Legacy." *The Miami Herald*, July 26, 2001: B1.; Santiago. "Jorge Mas Santos - Two Worlds, Two Cultures."; Balmaseda, Liz. "Cuban Foundation Needs Bold Stand." *The Miami Herald*, August 9, 2001: B1.; Chardy, Alfonso. "Exile Ad Exhorts Anti-Castro Hard Line." *The Miami Herald*, August 23, 2001: B1.

¹³⁷³ Rosenberg and De Valle. "Ex-CANF Member Explains Resignation."; Rosenberg, De Valle. "CANF Ignites Cuban Media."; Balmaseda. "Each Side in Rift Claims Legacy."; Santiago. "Jorge Mas Santos - Two Worlds, Two Cultures."; Balmaseda. "Cuban Foundation Needs Bold Stand."; Chardy. "Exile Ad Exhorts Anti-Castro Hard Line."

¹³⁷⁴ Yanez. "CANF Board Ponders Future Amid Public Rift."

¹³⁷⁵ Rosenberg, Carol. "CANF Director: Changes Are Good." *The Miami Herald*, July 26, 2001: B1.

¹³⁷⁶ Rosenberg, Carol. "Former Bodyguard Registers 'New' CANF." *The Miami Herald*, July 20, 2001: B2.

¹³⁷⁷ Rosenberg. "Former Bodyguard Registers 'New' CANF."

¹³⁷⁸ Yanez. "CANF Board Ponders Future Amid Public Rift."

¹³⁷⁹ Carol Rosenberg and Elaine De Valle. "Radio Host Latest to Quit Cuban Foundation." *The Miami Herald*, July 20, 2001: A1.

summer after the Elian situation when new leadership came on board.¹³⁸⁰ Perez was the biggest loss so far.¹³⁸¹ CANF struggled financially and had to get rid of their radio station and downsize their staff in Washington, D.C., and Miami.¹³⁸² Much to Perez-Castellon's chagrin, CANF planned to end shortwave broadcasts of *La Voz de la Fundacion* that fall due to the high costs and questionable return considering Cuba blocked the transmission in much of Cuba.¹³⁸³ CANF preferred to use the money for legislation, lobbying, and publications.¹³⁸⁴

Over twenty more CANF board members quit.¹³⁸⁵ IRS tax audits had required CANF to make some changes in its name, organization, and finances, and some expressed concerns with the handling of funds.¹³⁸⁶ Former CANF officials regrouped to form the Cuban Liberty Council (CLC) in fall 2001.¹³⁸⁷ They incorporated the name in August and announced it publicly in October.¹³⁸⁸ The Bush family's relationship with CANF had faltered since 1992 when the CANF threw their support behind presidential

¹³⁸⁰ Rosenberg and De Valle. "Radio Host Latest to Quit Cuban Foundation."; Santiago. "Jorge Mas Santos - Two Worlds, Two Cultures."

¹³⁸¹ Rosenberg and De Valle. "Radio Host Latest to Quit Cuban Foundation."; Yanez. "CANF Board Ponders Future Amid Public Rift."

¹³⁸² Tamayo. "CANF Affirms Power Despite Struggles."

¹³⁸³ De Valle, Elaine. "CANF'S Voice to Cuba Muted." *The Miami Herald*, September 22, 2001: B1.

¹³⁸⁴ De Valle. "CANF'S Voice to Cuba Muted."

¹³⁸⁵ Nancy San Martin and Luisa Yanez. "20 CANF Board Members Resign." *The Miami Herald*, August 8, 2001: A1.; Chardy, Alfonso. "IRS Audit Led to CANF Shifts." *The Miami Herald*, August 26, 2001: B1.

¹³⁸⁶ San Martin and Yanez. "20 CANF Board Members Resign."; Chardy. "IRS Audit Led to CANF Shifts."

¹³⁸⁷ De Valle, Elaine. "Former Members of CANF Regroup." *The Miami Herald*, October 10, 2001: B1.

¹³⁸⁸ De Valle. "Former Members of CANF Regroup."

candidate Bill Clinton for endorsing the Cuban Democracy Act. Yet, Jeb Bush maintained strong connections to conservative Cuban-Americans in South Florida. Thus, the Cuban Liberty Council was able to subsume CANF's advisory role to the President.

New Exile Organizations

The internal CANF disagreements reflected the increasing diversity of opinion of the Cuban-American community at large. Prominent Cuban-Americans hoped to undo several of Clinton's policies, such as "wet foot, dry foot," the Helms-Burton Title III waivers, and small liberalization efforts for travel, remittances, and aid to Cuba. Travel, remittances, and aid were among the most contentious debates on the embargo. Nearly all parties agreed that Cuba should democratize and respect human rights, but they disagreed on the means. Hardliners were more prone to advocating for isolation and less aid, lest it help buoy the government, and they were warier when deciding which dissident activities deserved support. Others believed that limited openings should concentrate on supporting and maintaining family relations, the wellbeing of average Cubans, and dissident efforts. Still, others hoped that greater trade and diplomatic ties would have a ripple effect in opening up the economy and the political system.

The Cuba Study Group commissioned Bendixen and Associates to poll Cuban-Americans.¹³⁸⁹ According to the poll, fifty-five percent of Cuban-Americans still supported the embargo, but it appeared that exiles, in general, were open to a reasonable

¹³⁸⁹ Oppenheimer. "Most Exiles Say Confrontation with Cuba A Flop."

alternative.¹³⁹⁰ Seventy-eight percent perceived a leadership vacuum in the community.¹³⁹¹ Increasingly, the community viewed the embargo as having failed, but they recognized few alternatives.¹³⁹² Over half supported travel to the island and, according to Bendixen poll and the FIU 1997 Cuba Poll, about half favored some sort of dialogue or national reconciliation.¹³⁹³ Hardliners, who generally were older and arrived in the 1960s, made up less than a quarter of the population but had disproportionate financial and political power.¹³⁹⁴

Increasingly, exiles viewed the embargo as a bargaining chip for negotiations.¹³⁹⁵ Later arrivals often still had connections to friends and family in Cuba, unlike many earlier arrivals, and they often worked hard to support both themselves and their families in Cuba.¹³⁹⁶ Thus, they were often more pro-dialogue and moderate politically and less politically active and might not be eligible to vote yet.¹³⁹⁷ Although most groups had suffered and opposed the Castro regime, earlier waves of exiles had more political motivation for leaving, and later waves had more economic basis for emigrating.¹³⁹⁸ Year

¹³⁹⁰ Oppenheimer. "Most Exiles Say Confrontation with Cuba A Flop."

¹³⁹¹ Oppenheimer. "Most Exiles Say Confrontation with Cuba A Flop."

¹³⁹² Oppenheimer. "Most Exiles Say Confrontation with Cuba A Flop."

¹³⁹³ Oppenheimer. "Most Exiles Say Confrontation with Cuba A Flop."

¹³⁹⁴ Oppenheimer. "Most Exiles Say Confrontation with Cuba A Flop."

¹³⁹⁵ Oppenheimer, Andres. "Best Anti-Castro Tool Is Exile Moderation." *The Miami Herald*, February 16, 2003: A1.

¹³⁹⁶ De Valle and Elliott. "Cubans In Exile Split on Policy."; Oppenheimer. "Best Anti-Castro Tool Is Exile Moderation."

¹³⁹⁷ De Valle and Elliott. "Cubans In Exile Split on Policy."; Oppenheimer. "Best Anti-Castro Tool Is Exile Moderation."

¹³⁹⁸ De Valle and Elliott. "Cubans In Exile Split on Policy."

of arrival was a more significant factor for differing opinions than age or generation.¹³⁹⁹ As the CANF leadership split into two separate organizations, other Cuban-American organizations began to fill power and political voids and represent the various viewpoints.

In August 2001, when the internal fights at CANF reached their peak, the Cuban Patriotic Forum coalition placed a “Declaration of Principles” ad in *The Miami Herald*, encouraging Cuban-Americans to maintain a hard line against Castro and opposing the new direction that CANF and others took.¹⁴⁰⁰ Signatories included several exile organizations, individuals, and six former CANF officials.¹⁴⁰¹

The Cuba Study Group placed great value on using facts, figures, and analysis to persuade.¹⁴⁰² Carlos Saladrigas considered the Elian Gonzalez affair a turning point for the community that changed many exiles’ perceptions of their role and reputation.¹⁴⁰³ He said:

What is changing is our perceptions of how change needs to come about and what are the means available to bring about that change. Anything we can do here to lessen the fear of change in Cuba is positive and will contribute to accelerating the positive change, which at the end of the day is inevitable.¹⁴⁰⁴

¹³⁹⁹ De Valle and Elliott. "Cubans In Exile Split on Policy."

¹⁴⁰⁰ Chardy, Alfonso. "Exile Ad Exhorts Anti-Castro Hard Line." *The Miami Herald*, August 23, 2001: B1.

¹⁴⁰¹ Chardy. "Exile Ad Exhorts Anti-Castro Hard Line."

¹⁴⁰² Corral, Oscar. "2 Groups Differ on Cuba, Not on Use of Power." *The Miami Herald*, March 29, 2004: A1.

¹⁴⁰³ De Valle and Elliott. "Cuban Exiles Shifting Hard-Line Position."

¹⁴⁰⁴ De Valle and Elliott. "Cuban Exiles Shifting Hard-Line Position."

The Group's very wealthy members spent a great deal of money on the project, and they met with various current and former heads of state, activists, policymakers, and more.¹⁴⁰⁵ Members agreed on wanting a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba and had differing views on the embargo, which some considered ineffective or even prolonging the Castro regime while others considered it a bargaining chip. Cuba Study Group was influential but struggled to help set the agenda with their focus on public relations.

Another new organization had joined the fray of lobbies advocating for their preferred policies toward Cuba that year. Former diplomats, academics, and business leaders created the centrist Cuba Policy Foundation.¹⁴⁰⁶ The Cuba Policy Foundation, in conjunction with the U.S. tourism industry, increased efforts on Capitol Hill to end the embargo.¹⁴⁰⁷ Each year between 2000 and 2002, a bipartisan group of Congress members supported bills to ease travel and remittance restrictions to Cuba.¹⁴⁰⁸

Cuba Democracy Advocates, founded in 2004, was dedicated to the traditional hardline politics by influencing public policy.¹⁴⁰⁹ Businessmen Leopoldo Fernandez-Pujals and Gus Machado founded the organization in March 2004 and enlisted Mauricio Claver-Carone to lobby for them in Washington, D.C.¹⁴¹⁰ Representative Ileana Ros-

¹⁴⁰⁵ Corral. "2 Groups Differ on Cuba, Not on Use of Power."

¹⁴⁰⁶ Davies, Frank. "Group Focused on Cuba Policy Forms in D.C. New 'Centrist' Lobby Opposed U.S. Embargo." *The Miami Herald*, March 29, 2001: A3.

¹⁴⁰⁷ Oppenheimer, Andres. "U.S. May Tighten Cuba Travel." *The Miami Herald*, December 15, 2002: A1.

¹⁴⁰⁸ Oppenheimer, Andres. "U.S. May Tighten Cuba Travel." *The Miami Herald*, December 15, 2002: A1.

¹⁴⁰⁹ Corral, Oscar. "2 Groups Differ on Cuba, Not on Use Of Power." *The Miami Herald*, March 29, 2004: A1.

¹⁴¹⁰ Corral. "2 Groups Differ on Cuba, Not on Use Of Power."

Lehtinen said that they were both influential, but that Cuba Democracy Advocates had been more successful. “Influencing policymakers is far more important than public relations.”¹⁴¹¹ Claver-Carone was also the director of the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC, which was founded in 2003 and provided donations to hardline advocates. The PAC would become very influential.

None of these organizations ever rose to the height of influence that CANF had once had. More actors divided the time and attention of Cuba policymakers, and their competing interests impeded coordination. CANF’s influence began to fade, and the Cuban Liberty Council ensured that the Bush administration maintained hardline policies. Meanwhile, the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC gained prominence behind the scenes, and Cuban-American legislators defended their Cuba policies within the halls of Congress.

Spies

The Miami spy chronicles further impeded unity within the community. Court records show that that was part of their mission. They increased suspicion of neighbors and preserved Cold War mentalities by maintaining Cold War methods of interaction. They also increased distrust and tension between Havana and Washington, further harming the potential for a working diplomatic relationship. The security threat the intelligence operatives presented factored into their policy approaches.

¹⁴¹¹ Corral. "2 Groups Differ on Cuba, Not on Use Of Power."

The trials for the Cuban Five also continued into the Bush administration. The Cuban Five were convicted in June 2001.¹⁴¹² Cuban-Americans who had been dismissed as paranoid for saying Castro spied on them and targeted them were vindicated even though the defense team had attacked exiles' reputations.¹⁴¹³ In December 2001, U.S. District Court Judge Joan Lenard sentenced the Cuban Five.¹⁴¹⁴ Gerardo Hernandez and Ramon Labanino received life sentences for espionage conspiracy.¹⁴¹⁵ U.S.-born Rene Gonzalez received fifteen years for acting as an unregistered foreign agent.¹⁴¹⁶ Fernando Gonzalez received nineteen years for acting as an unregistered foreign agent.¹⁴¹⁷ The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals called for a retrial of the Cuban Five because they determined it would have been hard for the jurors, none of whom was Cuban, to remain impartial in Miami due to the media coverage, political climate, and "improper prosecutorial references."¹⁴¹⁸

In September 2001, U.S. authorities arrested George and Marisol Gari for not registering as foreign agents despite allegedly being part of Cuba's Wasp Network of

¹⁴¹² Alfonso Chardy and Gail Epstein Nieves. "Cuban Spies Convicted Sweeping Espionage Verdicts Include Murder of Fliers Exiles Call for Castro's Indictment in Air Deaths." *The Miami Herald*, June 9, 2001: A1.

¹⁴¹³ Rosenberg, Carol. "Verdicts Justify Suspicions of Many Area Exiles." *The Miami Herald*, June 9, 2001: A15.

¹⁴¹⁴ Epstein Nieves, Gail. "Cuban Spy Gets 15-Year Sentence." *The Miami Herald*, December 15, 2001: B1.

¹⁴¹⁵ Epstein Nieves. "Cuban Spy Gets 15-Year Sentence."

¹⁴¹⁶ Epstein Nieves. "Cuban Spy Gets 15-Year Sentence."

¹⁴¹⁷ Epstein Nieves, Gail. "Cuban Spy Sentence: 19 Years." *The Miami Herald*, December 19, 2001: B3.

¹⁴¹⁸ Hiaasen, Scott. "Court Overturns Spy Verdicts." *The Miami Herald*, August 10, 2005: A1.; Driscoll, Amy. "Spy Trial Ruling Brings the Past to Life." *The Miami Herald*, August 14, 2005: B1.

spies.¹⁴¹⁹ Their primary targets were Southcom, CANF, and Roberto Martin Perez.¹⁴²⁰

The couple pled guilty to conspiracy to act as an unregistered foreign agent for a reduced sentence (Marisol) and acting as an unregistered foreign agent (George).¹⁴²¹ A federal district court judge sentenced Marisol to three and a half years and George to seven years.¹⁴²² Further arrests followed.

One of the most famous cases became public on September 21, 2001. FBI agents detained Ana Belen Montes, a U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency senior analyst on Cuba, for spying on the United States on behalf of Cuba.¹⁴²³ Montes had worked for the Defense Department since 1985 and specialized in Cuba.¹⁴²⁴ Miami Cuban members of U.S. Congress speculated that the Feds tried to prevent her from leaking information on the war on terrorism to Cuba, which in turn sells its intelligence to other countries.¹⁴²⁵

Cuba remained a threat, but not a large enough threat to distract from the War on Terror that the Bush administration had undertaken. The administration's decision-

¹⁴¹⁹ Epstein Nieves, Gail. "Couple Belonged to Cuba Spy Ring, FBI Says." *The Miami Herald*, September 1, 2001: A1.; "Couple Accused of Reporting to Two Cuban Spies." *The Miami Herald*, September 2, 2001: B3.; Epstein Nieves, Gail. "Lawyer: Accused Spy to Plead Guilty." *The Miami Herald*, September 14, 2001: B3.

¹⁴²⁰ Epstein Nieves, Gail. "Couple Belonged to Cuba Spy Ring, FBI Says." *The Miami Herald*, September 1, 2001: A1.

¹⁴²¹ Epstein Nieves. "Lawyer: Accused Spy to Plead Guilty."; Epstein Nieves, Gail. "Couple Plead Guilty in Cuba Spy Case." *The Miami Herald*, September 21, 2001: B3.

¹⁴²² Epstein Nieves, Gail. "Cuban Pair Convicted of Spying Receive Federal Prison Sentences." *The Miami Herald*, January 5, 2002: B5.

¹⁴²³ Johnson, Tim. "U.S. Intelligence Analyst Charged with Spying for Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 22, 2001: A1.; Chardy, Alfonso. "Intelligence: Cuban spies' ranks on rise in state." *The Miami Herald*, July 5, 2008: B1.

¹⁴²⁴ Johnson. "U.S. Intelligence Analyst Charged with Spying for Cuba."

¹⁴²⁵ Johnson. "U.S. Intelligence Analyst Charged with Spying for Cuba."

makers calculated that the hardline approach would yield the greatest advantage. Bush's team favored realpolitik in their interactions with perceived enemies, which aligned well with electoral politics and their Cuban-American allies' goals.

Challenges to the Embargo

The anti-embargo movement, which had grown significantly during Clinton's second term, expanded during the Bush era. International allies consistently condemned the embargo, which affected U.S. relationships with other countries, especially in Latin America. Within the United States, political leaders, business lobbies, policy analysts, activists, and sectors of the Cuban-American community sought to dismantle the sanctions and restrictions. Some focused on aid while others promoted trade, and the degree of expansion they solicited depended on their interests. Many also hoped that better diplomatic relations would improve the domestic conditions in Cuba.

The Bush administration intensified efforts to enforce travel restrictions. They had seven of the 129 employees of the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control investigating Americans traveling to Cuba illegally.¹⁴²⁶ The number of fines OFAC imposed jumped from 188 in 2000 to 766 in 2001.¹⁴²⁷ The penalties were usually around \$7,500 of the maximum \$55,000.¹⁴²⁸ The U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council

¹⁴²⁶ Phinney, David. "Law on Travel to Cuba Criticized." *The Miami Herald*, February 12, 2002: A20.; Buckley, Cara. "U.S. Hard Line on Cuba Halts Some Aid Trips." *The Miami Herald*, September 21, 2003: B6.

¹⁴²⁷ Phinney. "Law on Travel to Cuba Criticized."

¹⁴²⁸ Johnson, Tim. "U.S. Cubans Hopeful Bush Gets Tougher on Castro." *The Miami Herald*, May 18, 2002: A22.

estimated that 24,000 of 176,000 Americans who traveled to Cuba in 2001 did not have Treasury licenses.¹⁴²⁹ In a Senate Appropriations subcommittee hearing, Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND) questioned the efficacy of investing so many government resources to enforce the travel laws and to what purpose.¹⁴³⁰ Director Richard Newcomb of OFAC explained that it was “to minimize the flow of hard currency” to the Cuban government.¹⁴³¹

By 2002, CANF’s priorities had changed from promoting and maintaining the embargo to going on the “offensive” against Castro.¹⁴³² They sought more aid for dissidents on the island and pursued an indictment of Fidel Castro over the 1996 Brothers to the Rescue shutdown, changing the “wet foot, dry foot” policy, and maintaining Cuba on the list of state sponsors of terrorism.¹⁴³³ CANF supported island dissidents by sending about \$1 million in money and supplies via Mexico and Puerto Rico.¹⁴³⁴ As a *Miami Herald* article noted when reporting on their annual leadership gathering, “Rather than looking north to Washington, CANF is refocusing its resources south - on activities on the island.”¹⁴³⁵ They hired younger, former political prisoner activists in Miami to help with their new strategy.¹⁴³⁶ Mas Santos worked with Adolfo Franco USAID to send more

¹⁴²⁹ Johnson. "U.S. Cubans Hopeful Bush Gets Tougher on Castro."

¹⁴³⁰ Phinney, David. "Law on Travel to Cuba Criticized." *The Miami Herald*, February 12, 2002: A20.

¹⁴³¹ Phinney. "Law on Travel to Cuba Criticized."

¹⁴³² Tamayo, Juan O. "CANF Affirms Power Despite Struggles." *The Miami Herald*, March 28, 2002: B1.

¹⁴³³ Tamayo. "CANF Affirms Power Despite Struggles."

¹⁴³⁴ Rosenberg, Carol. "CANF Aid Flowing to Cuba's Dissidents." *The Miami Herald*, July 22, 2002: A1.

¹⁴³⁵ Rosenberg. "CANF Aid Flowing to Cuba's Dissidents."

¹⁴³⁶ Rosenberg. "CANF Aid Flowing to Cuba's Dissidents."

financial support for democracy to the island.¹⁴³⁷ Senator Bill Nelson advocated allocating \$1.5 million for the USAID projects and \$1 million for Jaime Suchlicki's Transition to Democracy project at the University of Miami.¹⁴³⁸ CANF still pursued a strategy of working both sides of the aisle, but some other exiles sought closer ties to the Bush administration as it appointed several Cuban-Americans to the State Department and National Security Council.¹⁴³⁹

Many voices encouraged aid to dissidents and humanitarian relief. Even many hardliners supported limited, targeted aid. The U.S. Department of State offered assistance to Cuba after Category 4 Hurricane Michelle in fall 2001, saying that international relief organizations or nongovernmental organizations would have to distribute.¹⁴⁴⁰ Cuba ultimately declined the U.S. government aid offer and called for an end to the embargo.¹⁴⁴¹ Miami Cubans debated the best way to provide relief without letting the Cuban government interfere.¹⁴⁴² Cuban exile organizations—CANF, Agenda Cuba, and Municipios de Cuba en el Exilio—made plans to offer aid to Cuban dissidents and funneled through dissidents to get to the people.¹⁴⁴³ Some anti-embargo Cuban-American organizations formed the Cuba Hurricane Relief Committee and did not object

¹⁴³⁷ Rosenberg. "CANF Aid Flowing to Cuba's Dissidents."

¹⁴³⁸ Rosenberg. "CANF Aid Flowing to Cuba's Dissidents."; Rosenberg, Carol. "Cuba After Castro Envisioned." *The Miami Herald*, September 6, 2002: B3.

¹⁴³⁹ Tamayo. "CANF Affirms Power Despite Struggles."

¹⁴⁴⁰ San Martin. "U.S. Offers Storm Relief Aid to Cuba; Exiles Seeking Way to Help Victims."

¹⁴⁴¹ Martinez, Draeger. "Exile Organizations Are Planning Hurricane Relief Effort for Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, November 11, 2001: B7.

¹⁴⁴² De Valle, Elaine. "Cuban Relief Thorny Issue." *The Miami Herald*, November 12, 2001: B3.

¹⁴⁴³ Martinez. "Exile Organizations Are Planning Hurricane Relief Effort for Cuba."

to distributing money through the government.¹⁴⁴⁴ Cuba ended up allowing U.S. planes and ships to deliver goods and offered to pay cash for U.S. food and medicine.¹⁴⁴⁵ The first commercial U.S. food export since 1963 set sail for Cuba in December 2001.¹⁴⁴⁶ Allowing exceptions to the embargo for humanitarian aid to Cuba was less controversial than permission for trade and travel, especially if those exceptions expanded beyond Cuban-American travel and remittances to support their families.

Embargo proponents faced greater opposition from U.S. agriculture.¹⁴⁴⁷ Castro appeared to make a “charm offensive” through business and local government relations with the United States to undermine the Cuban exile community and the embargo.¹⁴⁴⁸ In 2002, Cuba spent more than \$165 million on U.S. food and agriculture.¹⁴⁴⁹ They promoted economic interests, discussed global issues, and brought medicine to the island.¹⁴⁵⁰ Since the passage of the U.S. Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act in 2000, Cuba went from buying a few million dollars in farm exports in 2001 to over \$230 million in 2003, all in cash.¹⁴⁵¹ A quarter of the amount of money

¹⁴⁴⁴ De Valle. "Cuban Relief Thorny Issue."

¹⁴⁴⁵ De Valle, Elaine. "U.S., Cuba Reach Deal on Storm Relief." *The Miami Herald*, November 15, 2001: A3.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Sayre, Alan. "U.S. Ships Food to Cuba For Hurricane Relief." *The Miami Herald*, December 15, 2001: A3.

¹⁴⁴⁷ Tamayo. "CANF Affirms Power Despite Struggles."; Johnson. "U.S. Cubans Hopeful Bush Gets Tougher on Castro."

¹⁴⁴⁸ Babson. "Economic Links Aim of Cuba Visits."

¹⁴⁴⁹ Babson. "Economic Links Aim of Cuba Visits."

¹⁴⁵⁰ Associated Press. "Tampa Mayor Met Castro During Trip."

¹⁴⁵¹ Bussey, Jane. "Is the U.S. Becoming Cuba's Bread Basket." *The Miami Herald*, January 19, 2004: G22.

Cuba spent on food imports went to the United States.¹⁴⁵² There was a disconnect between the increasingly hostile tone and policy of the executive branch versus a legislative branch more receptive to greater engagement and making laws accordingly.¹⁴⁵³ Although Castro could have purchased agricultural products from other countries that traded more freely with Cuba, he likely targeted agricultural businesses in congressional districts that would be more receptive to engagement with Cuba, thereby gaining more sympathy in the U.S. Congress.¹⁴⁵⁴ He realized that focusing on agricultural trade with smaller farms was more effective than medical purchases from massive pharmaceutical companies.¹⁴⁵⁵ The arguments continued about the morality of providing food if the sales would primarily go to tourists and earn money for the government, allowing Castro to dictate the terms of engagement, discrepancies between policy toward Cuba versus China and Vietnam, and so on.¹⁴⁵⁶

Repealing the embargo had bipartisan support in Congress.¹⁴⁵⁷ Representative Jeff Flake (R-AZ) was among most prominent of 34 lawmakers to form a task force to review the embargo and other aspects of Cuba policy.¹⁴⁵⁸ The White House remained staunchly

¹⁴⁵² Bussey. "Is the U.S. Becoming Cuba's Bread Basket."

¹⁴⁵³ Bussey. "Is the U.S. Becoming Cuba's Bread Basket."

¹⁴⁵⁴ Bussey. "Is the U.S. Becoming Cuba's Bread Basket."

¹⁴⁵⁵ Bussey. "Is the U.S. Becoming Cuba's Bread Basket."

¹⁴⁵⁶ Bussey. "Is the U.S. Becoming Cuba's Bread Basket."

¹⁴⁵⁷ Johnson, Tim. "Better Relations Will Benefit U.S. In Post-Castro Era, Senator Says." *The Miami Herald*, January 24, 2003: A5.

¹⁴⁵⁸ De Valle. "Radio Martí Boss Creates Lots of Static."; Johnson. "President to Reveal New Plan to Help Cubans."; Davies. "Cuba Embargo Under Fire."

pro-embargo, but Congress increasingly pushed measures to loosen the embargo.¹⁴⁵⁹ The ranks of the Congressional Cuba Working Group grew.¹⁴⁶⁰ Bills had failed due to opposition in the Congressional leadership, Congressional priorities and the calendar, and general death in the legislative process despite bipartisan support.¹⁴⁶¹ Embargo proponents hoped that Republican majorities in both houses of Congress and the presidency would work in their favor.¹⁴⁶² Castro had won over many politicians by doing business with at least 34 states in the previous year, particularly in the agriculture sector.¹⁴⁶³ Legislators' promotion of trade with Cuba likely directly correlated to the amount of money their constituents received, but there was a question of whether that enthusiasm would last if Cuba ran out of money.¹⁴⁶⁴

Prominent political and community leaders also advocated ending the embargo and better relations with Cuba. Former President Jimmy Carter became the first former president to visit the island since the 1959 revolution when he traveled to Cuba Sunday, May 12 through Friday, May 17, 2002.¹⁴⁶⁵ He addressed the Cuban people and leadership from the University of Havana in a historic speech broadcasted unfiltered throughout the

¹⁴⁵⁹ Johnson. "U.S. Support of Embargo on Cuba Is Holding - But for How Long?"

¹⁴⁶⁰ Oppenheimer. "U.S. May Tighten Cuba Travel."; Johnson, Tim. "U.S. Support Of Embargo On Cuba Is Holding - But For How Long?" *The Miami Herald*, December 22, 2002: A16.

¹⁴⁶¹ Johnson. "U.S. Support of Embargo on Cuba Is Holding - But for How Long?"

¹⁴⁶² Johnson. "U.S. Support of Embargo on Cuba Is Holding - But for How Long?"

¹⁴⁶³ Johnson. "U.S. Support of Embargo on Cuba Is Holding - But For How Long?"

¹⁴⁶⁴ Johnson. "U.S. Support of Embargo On Cuba Is Holding - But For How Long?"

¹⁴⁶⁵ Chardy, Alfonso. "Carter to Visit Cuba; He'll Be 1st Ex-President There Since '59." *The Miami Herald*, March 23, 2002: A1.

country.¹⁴⁶⁶ Although he commended Cuba on education and medicine, Carter urged the regime to free political prisoners, promote democracy, live up to its Universal Declaration of Human Rights commitments, create a blue-ribbon commission for confiscated property claims, and consider the Varela Project in good faith.¹⁴⁶⁷ He called on the United States to end the embargo and for the two nations to change their relationship with one another.¹⁴⁶⁸ The most adamant hardline exiles still opposed the trip and any interactions with the government that would appear to legitimate the 43-year-old regime, but many Cuban-Americans were impressed to see Carter publicly confront Castro on democracy and human rights and that *Granma* did not censor their transcript.¹⁴⁶⁹

The petitions for expansion of travel, aid, trade, and diplomatic relations chipped away at embargo support. They sought loopholes around legislation like the Helms-Burton Act and gathered momentum in Congress to repeal the embargo. As embargo opposition increased, hardliners sought support from the White House and other members of Congress.

¹⁴⁶⁶ San Martin, Nancy. "Carter: End Embargo, Allow Freedom in Cuba Former President Urges Reconciliation." *The Miami Herald*, May 15, 2002: A1.

¹⁴⁶⁷ Figueras, Tere. "S. Florida Exiles Warm to Message." *The Miami Herald*, May 15, 2002: A1.; San Martin. "Carter: End Embargo, Allow Freedom in Cuba Former President Urges Reconciliation."; Oppenheimer, Andres. "Carter's Speech in Cuba Will Bolster Democracy Activists." *The Miami Herald*, May 16, 2002: A15.

¹⁴⁶⁸ San Martin. "Carter: End Embargo, Allow Freedom in Cuba Former President Urges Reconciliation."

¹⁴⁶⁹ Figueras. "S. Florida Exiles Warm to Message."; San Martin. "Carter Says Dissidents Reject U.S. Financial Aid."

Executive and Legislative Embargo Supporters

Bush consistently bolstered conservative Cuban-Americans. On May 20, 2002, marked the centennial anniversary of Cuba's independence, and Cuban-Americans held celebrations throughout Miami. Just days after former President Jimmy Carter returned from his Cuba trip, President George W. Bush traveled to Miami to celebrate Cuban Independence Day.¹⁴⁷⁰ Secretary Mel Martinez, Assistant Secretary Otto Reich, Representative Lincoln Diaz-Balart, and Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen joined Bush at his White House address that morning before he flew to Miami, where he gave another speech.¹⁴⁷¹ Diaz-Balart, Ros-Lehtinen, and Martinez flew on Air Force One with the President between the Cuban celebrations in Washington and Miami that day.¹⁴⁷² The trip marked the culmination of a months-long review of U.S. Cuba policy, and many hoped for an announcement of increased action.¹⁴⁷³

President Bush announced new policies for Cuba and challenged Castro to democratize before a crowd of four thousand people at the James L. Knight Center in downtown Miami.¹⁴⁷⁴ Bush's new policy announcements included: educational scholarships for families of political prisoners, negotiations to resume direct mail,

¹⁴⁷⁰ Rosenberg, Carol. "Miami Expects Presidential Visit." *The Miami Herald*, April 26, 2002: B1.; Rosenberg, Carol. "Bush to Celebrate Cuba's 100th Year." *The Miami Herald*, May 11, 2002: B1.; Johnson, Tim. "U.S. Cubans Hopeful Bush Gets Tougher on Castro." *The Miami Herald*, May 18, 2002: A22.; Wallsten, Peter. "Bush Brothers, Exiles Renew Their Support." *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 2002: A10.

¹⁴⁷¹ Rosenberg. "Bush Visit Today A Sign of Exiles' Influence."

¹⁴⁷² Rosenberg, Carol. "President Stirs Raw Emotions with A Tough Miami Speech." *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 2002: A1.

¹⁴⁷³ Johnson. "U.S. Cubans Hopeful Bush Gets Tougher on Castro."

¹⁴⁷⁴ Rosenberg. "President Stirs Raw Emotions with A Tough Miami Speech."

assistance to Cubans through nongovernmental organizations, and enabling religious and nongovernmental organizations to provide humanitarian assistance.¹⁴⁷⁵ Bush challenged Castro to democratize, meaning “freedom to organize, no political prisoners, access to the media [for candidates] and international monitors for elections.”¹⁴⁷⁶ He reiterated that he would maintain the embargo until then.¹⁴⁷⁷ He also called upon Castro to open up politically and economically, allow independent trade unions, and stop discrimination against Cuban workers.¹⁴⁷⁸ Dr. Alberto Hernandez of the Cuban Liberty Council sat on stage with President Bush.¹⁴⁷⁹ Then, President Bush and Governor Bush attended a high-price fundraiser at the home of Armando Codina, Jeb’s former business partner.¹⁴⁸⁰

The Bush administration considered a proposal to restrict travel to Cuba to exclusively Cubans with U.S. citizenship.¹⁴⁸¹ They wanted to cut down on non-Cuban American citizen travel and Cubans who were not U.S. citizens claiming persecution but traveling to Cuba anyway.¹⁴⁸² One hundred thousand of the 160,000 people who traveled from the United States to Cuba in 2001 were ethnically Cuban, and only 25% were U.S.

¹⁴⁷⁵ Johnson, Tim. "President to Reveal New Plan to Help Cubans." *The Miami Herald*, May 20, 2002: A1.

¹⁴⁷⁶ Johnson. "President to Reveal New Plan to Help Cubans."; Rosenberg. "President Stirs Raw Emotions with A Tough Miami Speech."

¹⁴⁷⁷ Johnson. "President to Reveal New Plan to Help Cubans."; Rosenberg. "President Stirs Raw Emotions with A Tough Miami Speech."

¹⁴⁷⁸ Johnson. "President to Reveal New Plan to Help Cubans."; Rosenberg. "President Stirs Raw Emotions with A Tough Miami Speech."

¹⁴⁷⁹ Rosenberg. "President Stirs Raw Emotions with A Tough Miami Speech."

¹⁴⁸⁰ Rosenberg. "Bush Visit Today A Sign of Exiles' Influence."; Wallsten. "Bush Brothers, Exiles Renew Their Support."

¹⁴⁸¹ Oppenheimer, Andres. "U.S. May Tighten Cuba Travel." *The Miami Herald*, December 15, 2002: A1.

¹⁴⁸² Oppenheimer. "U.S. May Tighten Cuba Travel."

citizens.¹⁴⁸³ It was also to prevent noncitizen arrests in Cuba and terrorism, considering Cuba was on the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism.¹⁴⁸⁴ In contrast, moderates, like Carlos Saladrigas of the Cuban Study Group, supported more travel to break the government's monopoly on information.¹⁴⁸⁵

Redistricting in Florida gave Cuban-Americans another opportunity for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Democrat Annie Betancourt ran against Republican Mario Diaz-Balart for the District 25 U.S. House of Representatives seat (which Mario had helped draw with redistricting); both were Cuban-American.¹⁴⁸⁶ She differed substantially from her opponent on Cuba policy, favoring greater trade and travel and being the first Cuban-American congressional candidate from a major party to diverge from the hardline.¹⁴⁸⁷ Like countless other critics, her policy position stated, "The current outdated policy has only served to isolate the Cuban people, and has given the Castro regime an excuse for their failed economic policies."¹⁴⁸⁸ Mario Diaz-Balart said that it was terrible timing because Cuba was a state sponsor of terrorism; Ros-Lehtinen suggested agribusiness would reward her with donations.¹⁴⁸⁹ Mario Diaz-Balart had a

¹⁴⁸³ Oppenheimer. "U.S. May Tighten Cuba Travel."

¹⁴⁸⁴ Oppenheimer. "U.S. May Tighten Cuba Travel."

¹⁴⁸⁵ Oppenheimer. "U.S. May Tighten Cuba Travel."

¹⁴⁸⁶ Corral, Oscar. "Democrat Running for House Wants to Alter Cuba Policy." *The Miami Herald*, October 4, 2002: B1.; De Valle, Elaine. "Mario Diaz-Balart: Mario Diaz-Balart unfazed by challenge to seat." *The Miami Herald*, October 14, 2008: A1.

¹⁴⁸⁷ Corral. "Democrat Running for House Wants to Alter Cuba Policy."

¹⁴⁸⁸ Corral. "Democrat Running for House Wants to Alter Cuba Policy."

¹⁴⁸⁹ Corral. "Democrat Running for House Wants to Alter Cuba Policy."

much bigger campaign chest and spent a lot of time campaigning on Cuban radio.¹⁴⁹⁰

Ros-Lehtinen won 69% of the vote in District 18. Lincoln Diaz-Balart won his District 21 race unopposed. Mario Diaz-Balart beat Betancourt 65% to 35% in District 25.

Since 1993, three Cuban-Americans had served in the U.S. House of Representatives; starting in 2003, there would be four. Their representation and Bush's commitment to hardline Cuban-Americans provided defense against embargo opponents. It also allowed them to promote proactive Cuba policy.

Dissidents and the Black Spring

The tide noticeably turned in advocating for democracy on both sides of the Florida Straits. A Roman Catholic priest in Cuba, José Conrado Rodríguez Alegre, described:

We're seeing a political spring both in Cuba and in Miami, which will be hard to stop.... There is a growing understanding on both sides that the changes have to take place in a climate of tolerance, and that they will have to come from within Cuba. That wasn't the case in the past.¹⁴⁹¹

The dissidents in Cuba were becoming the center of the movement rather than the exiles. Broadly, the community had gone from planning an armed insurrection while in exile to mostly foregoing violence in favor of hardline political activism in the United States (which resulted in interest group representation, legislative representation, laws designed to put pressure on the regime and strengthen the embargo), to greater political representation and more pluralism in the approach toward Cuba. Older generations had

¹⁴⁹⁰ "Board Member Calls Graham Event 'A Rally.'" *The Miami Herald*, November 4, 2002: B3.

¹⁴⁹¹ Oppenheimer. "Carter's Speech in Cuba Will Bolster Democracy Activists."

been very skeptical of newer arrivals from Cuba, including the dissidents, particularly those that did not support hardline policies. Now, the Cuban-American community, which was more entrenched, multi-generational, diverse, and transcultural, more openly accepted and promoted those working to change Cuba from within its borders as the movement's leaders.¹⁴⁹²

Another issue that divided the community at that time was support for the Varela Project.¹⁴⁹³ Oswaldo Paya and other dissidents on the island collected over 10,000 signatures to convince the Cuban government to hold a plebiscite for Cuban citizens to decide what type of government they wanted.¹⁴⁹⁴ Some hardliners viewed even this vote of self-determination would be illegitimate if it happened under the Castro government's laws and purview.¹⁴⁹⁵ Other Miamians considered the dissidents on the island to be the opposition's true leaders rather than the Miami exiles' leadership.¹⁴⁹⁶ A Bendixen poll that the Cuban Study Group commissioned showed that the Varela Project's approval among Cuban-Americans had increased from 51 percent in April 2002 to 68 percent in November 2002.¹⁴⁹⁷ Opposition over the same period decreased from 29 percent to 9

¹⁴⁹² Rosenberg, Carol. "Bush Visit Today A Sign of Exiles' Influence." *The Miami Herald*, May 20, 2002: A8.

¹⁴⁹³ De Valle, Elaine. "Failed Boycott Spotlights Rift Among Exiles." *The Miami Herald*, March 18, 2002: B1.

¹⁴⁹⁴ De Valle. "Failed Boycott Spotlights Rift Among Exiles."

¹⁴⁹⁵ De Valle. "Failed Boycott Spotlights Rift Among Exiles."

¹⁴⁹⁶ Balmaseda, Liz. "Cuban Radio Spat Is Just A Sideshow." *The Miami Herald*, March 25, 2002: B1.

¹⁴⁹⁷ Elliott, Andrea. "Exile Support for Cuban Democracy Move Rises." *The Miami Herald*, December 5, 2002: B4.

percent.¹⁴⁹⁸ A Schroth and Associates poll for the Miami Herald and a Bendixen poll for the Cuba Study Group, both of which surveyed South Florida Cubans in January 2003, provided more evidence of the shift happening in the overall community's opinions.¹⁴⁹⁹ The Schroth poll showed that over half supported recent dialogue efforts, 54 percent approved of Mas Santos meeting with Cuban officials, and 56 percent support the Cuban government meeting with exiles.¹⁵⁰⁰ The Bendixen poll showed that nearly 70 percent felt that dissidents were more critical for democratizing Cuba than exiles.¹⁵⁰¹ They accepted that change would have to come from within Cuba.

Even though the winds had shifted in Miami to support dissidents within Cuba leading the charge, a more conservative minority of Cuban-Americans still disagreed with Paya.¹⁵⁰² Polls showed majority support of the Varela Project among Cuban-Americans, but Cuban-American members of the U.S. Congress, the Cuban Liberty Council, and at least ten other Cuban-American organizations disagreed with the plan.¹⁵⁰³ Detractors opposed working within the constraints of what they considered an illegitimate Constitution to change the laws, negotiating with the current regime, asking

¹⁴⁹⁸ Elliott. "Exile Support for Cuban Democracy Move Rises."

¹⁴⁹⁹ Elaine De Valle and Andrea Elliott. "Cuban Exiles Shifting Hard-Line Position." *The Miami Herald*, February 12, 2003: A1.

¹⁵⁰⁰ De Valle and Elliott. "Cuban Exiles Shifting Hard-Line Position."

¹⁵⁰¹ De Valle and Elliott. "Cuban Exiles Shifting Hard-Line Position."

¹⁵⁰² Johnson. "Castro Foe Says He Seeks U.S. Support and Solidarity."; Oppenheimer. "Meeting of Powell, Cuban Activist Signals Change."; San Martin, Nancy. "Wary Exiles A Challenge for Dissident's Cuba Project." *The Miami Herald*, January 10, 2003: A1.

¹⁵⁰³ Johnson. "Castro Foe Says He Seeks U.S. Support and Solidarity."; Oppenheimer. "Meeting of Powell, Cuban Activist Signals Change."; San Martin. "Wary Exiles A Challenge for Dissident's Cuba Project."; Andres Viglucci and Oscar Corral. "Dissident Makes Progress in Building Consensus." *The Miami Herald*, January 14, 2003: A1.

permission for human rights, amnesty, and giving opposition parties a seat in the National Assembly rather than overhauling the system.¹⁵⁰⁴ A much smaller minority still believed that an armed invasion was the only solution.¹⁵⁰⁵ CANF, the Christian Democratic Party, auxiliary Bishop Augustin Roman, Rafael Penalver, Dario Moreno, Jose Basulto, and others viewed the Varela Project as the first step in a larger movement.¹⁵⁰⁶

CANF's Joe Garcia spoke of how exiles now viewed themselves as supporting dissidents on the island rather than being the protagonists for change.¹⁵⁰⁷ Garcia acknowledged, "The easiest thing in the world is to lead from Miami and not risk your life. Meanwhile, the dissidents take tremendous chances. They are risking their lives, their families' wellbeing, their security to bring about change."¹⁵⁰⁸ Garcia also spoke of having to reform the international image of Miami Cubans after Elian to not fall into a "trap" that discredits them and their cause in the minds of others.¹⁵⁰⁹ Jorge Mas Santos agreed that exiles need to center the dissidents on the island in their quest for democracy in Cuba:

We can't live in a time capsule. The transition has to happen on the island, with the Cubans on the island, led by the opposition on the island, and by the members

¹⁵⁰⁴ Johnson. "Castro Foe Says He Seeks U.S. Support and Solidarity."; Oppenheimer. "Meeting of Powell, Cuban Activist Signals Change."; San Martin. "Wary Exiles A Challenge for Dissident's Cuba Project."; Viglucci and Corral. "Dissident Makes Progress in Building Consensus."; "Talking About Payá." *The Miami Herald*, January 14, 2003: A14.

¹⁵⁰⁵ "Talking About Payá."

¹⁵⁰⁶ San Martin, Nancy. "Wary Exiles A Challenge for Dissident's Cuba Project." *The Miami Herald*, January 10, 2003: A1.; Viglucci and Corral. "Dissident Makes Progress in Building Consensus."; "Talking About Payá."

¹⁵⁰⁷ De Valle and Elliott. "Cuban Exiles Shifting Hard-Line Position."

¹⁵⁰⁸ De Valle and Elliott. "Cuban Exiles Shifting Hard-Line Position."

¹⁵⁰⁹ Oppenheimer. "Best Anti-Castro Tool Is Exile Moderation."

of the current government who want things to change. They are the ones who will initiate change.¹⁵¹⁰

Indeed, exiles heavily invested in the fate of Cuban dissidents.

On March 18, 2003, Cuban authorities arrested 75 dissidents, activists, opposition party leaders, and journalists and accused them of collaborating with the U.S.

Government.¹⁵¹¹ Courts quickly sentenced them to up to 28 years in prison in closed, summary trials.¹⁵¹² CANF sent financial aid to families of thirty of them.¹⁵¹³ While others advocated more novel approaches to the situation, Ninaska Perez-Castellon and the CLC advocated for even harsher penalties on Cuba: suspending all remittances and travel, multilateral sanctions, and warning Castro that the United States would use a naval blockade to prevent a mass exodus.¹⁵¹⁴ Secretary of State Colin Powell released a statement condemning the Cuban government's actions.¹⁵¹⁵ Las Damas de Blanco, the Ladies in White, started weekly Sunday protests in which they attend mass before marching through Havana on behalf of their imprisoned loved ones.¹⁵¹⁶

¹⁵¹⁰ Oppenheimer. "Best Anti-Castro Tool Is Exile Moderation."

¹⁵¹¹ "'We Will Not Give Up.'" *The Miami Herald*, April 8, 2003: B6.; San Martin, Nancy. "New Purpose for Embargo Foes." *The Miami Herald*, April 10, 2003: A3.; San Martin. "Cuba: Dissidents Were Eroding Socialist System."

¹⁵¹² San Martin. "New Purpose for Embargo Foes."; San Martin. "Cuba: Dissidents Were Eroding Socialist System."

¹⁵¹³ San Martin. "Rules Changed on Cuba Trips." *The Miami Herald*, March 25, 2003: A3.

¹⁵¹⁴ San Martin. "New Purpose for Embargo Foes."

¹⁵¹⁵ Chardy. "Powell Bashes Cuban 'Roundup'."

¹⁵¹⁶ Arrington, Vanessa. "Children of Jailed Cuban Activists Receive Gifts." *The Miami Herald*, January 8, 2006: A19.; Corral, Oscar. "Living Away from The Battle Front, Cuban Dissidents Seek New Identity." *The Miami Herald*, January 23, 2006: A1.; Yanez, Luisa. "Cuba's Las Damas rights group still fighting." *The Miami Herald*, January 15, 2008.

The Bush administration unrolled new licensing policies regarding travel and remittances to Cuba on March 24, 2003.¹⁵¹⁷ The policies included: (1) allowing Cuban Americans to visit relatives on the island of up to three generations of direct relation rather than two (i.e., second cousins, etc.), (2) only allowing educational exchanges for academic coursework, households could carry up to \$3000 in remittances per quarter instead of only \$300, (3) licenses for nongovernmental organizations promoting democracy in Cuba, and (4) expansion of the types of humanitarian projects permitted.¹⁵¹⁸ The restrictions amounted to an overall expansion and enabled more generous support for dissidents and human rights activists, whom the Cuban government had been increasingly targeting.¹⁵¹⁹ Many Americans abused the people to people program, but many licensed programs also suffered under the new regulations.¹⁵²⁰

Around 40,000 protestors rallied in Little Havana on March 29, 2003, mainly supporting a hardline approach against Castro and other causes like the war in Iraq.¹⁵²¹ The Representatives Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Mario Diaz-Balart, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen participated in the demonstration.¹⁵²² Ninoska Perez-Castellon of the Cuban Liberty Council joined them on stage.¹⁵²³ Lincoln Diaz-Balart used it as evidence that the surveys

¹⁵¹⁷ San Martin, Nancy. "Rules Changed on Cuba Trips." *The Miami Herald*, March 25, 2003: A3.

¹⁵¹⁸ San Martin. "Rules Changed on Cuba Trips."; Hoag, Christina. "Bush Shuts Door Clinton Left Ajar to U.S. Visitors." *The Miami Herald*, April 18, 2003: C1.

¹⁵¹⁹ San Martin. "Rules Changed on Cuba Trips."

¹⁵²⁰ Hoag. "Bush Shuts Door Clinton Left Ajar to U.S. Visitors."

¹⁵²¹ San Martin, Nancy. "Thousands Rally Against Castro." *The Miami Herald*, March 30, 2003: B1.

¹⁵²² San Martin. "Thousands Rally Against Castro."

¹⁵²³ San Martin. "Thousands Rally Against Castro."

showing a shift in the community were flawed.¹⁵²⁴ Dario Moreno said that what it showed is the will of the more politically active voters in the community and that ultimately opinions on “big-ticket items” like the embargo have not changed even though views on travel, humanitarian aid, food sales, and support for dissidents have.¹⁵²⁵ Additionally, in April, in a closed, summary trial, Cuban courts sentenced three ferry hijackers to death by firing squad for “very grave acts of terrorism” even though the hijackers did not harm anyone.¹⁵²⁶ Five other hijackers received lengthy prison sentences.¹⁵²⁷ All exile community sectors condemned the executions, and Castro lost support for dialogue among many moderate voices in the community.¹⁵²⁸ These were the first terrorism charges since 1992.¹⁵²⁹

The repression caused reverberations in the international community. United National High Commissioner for Human Rights Sergio Vieira de Mello expressed concerns about due process.¹⁵³⁰ The U.N. Commission on Human Rights adopted a resolution to request for Cuba to allow a human rights monitor to report on the situation.¹⁵³¹ Numerous anti-embargo Cuba Policy Foundation leaders—including

¹⁵²⁴ San Martin. "Thousands Rally Against Castro."

¹⁵²⁵ San Martin. "Thousands Rally Against Castro."

¹⁵²⁶ Chardy. "Powell Bashes Cuban `Roundup.'"; Chardy. "Quick Trial, Firing Squad for Three Men Provoke Fury."

¹⁵²⁷ Chardy. "Powell Bashes Cuban `Roundup.'"

¹⁵²⁸ Chardy. "Powell Bashes Cuban `Roundup.'"; Chardy. "Quick Trial, Firing Squad for Three Men Provoke Fury."

¹⁵²⁹ Chardy. "Quick Trial, Firing Squad for Three Men Provoke Fury."

¹⁵³⁰ San Martin. "Cuba: Dissidents Were Eroding Socialist System."

¹⁵³¹ San Martin, Nancy. "Rights Panel Wants Cuba Monitored." *The Miami Herald*, April 18, 2003: A1.

scholars, business leaders, and former government officials—resigned after Cuba’s crackdown because they decided they could not treat Cuba as a good-faith actor.¹⁵³²

Political parties, governments, nongovernmental organizations, unions, and activists worldwide condemned Cuba’s actions.¹⁵³³ The OAS debated taking action on Cuba for the first time in over two decades.¹⁵³⁴ The European Union started to take action and stalled Cuba’s request to join the Cotonou Agreement for preferential trading.¹⁵³⁵ The E.U. issued a statement of concern for Cuba’s human rights violations, scaled back diplomatic outreach, reduced cultural exchange programs, reevaluated its “Common Position” on Cuba, and increased contact with dissidents.¹⁵³⁶ The condemnation from the European Union and the European Union’s outreach to dissidents caused Cuba to sever diplomatic relations with E.U. member nations.¹⁵³⁷ Costa Rica introduced the UNCHR resolution, which received support from several European, North American, and Latin American countries, including Cuba’s trading partners.¹⁵³⁸

The Bush administration debated various policy options for confronting Castro, but they were in a bind due to his previous promises and the various pro-embargo forces

¹⁵³² Lynch, Marika. "D.C. Foes of Cuba Embargo Quit Group." *The Miami Herald*, April 24, 2003: A1.

¹⁵³³ Lynch. "D.C. Foes of Cuba Embargo Quit Group."

¹⁵³⁴ Lynch. "D.C. Foes of Cuba Embargo Quit Group."

¹⁵³⁵ Johnson, Tim. "U.S. Action After Cuba Crackdown Debated." *The Miami Herald*, May 5, 2003: A1.

¹⁵³⁶ De Valle, Elaine. "Bastille Day Takes New Path." *The Miami Herald*, July 15, 2003: A3.; Martin, Nancy San. "Aznar's Views on Cuba Hailed." *The Miami Herald*, September 25, 2003: A17.

¹⁵³⁷ San Martin, Nancy. "Back Home Again." *The Miami Herald*, November 30, 2004: A1.; San Martin, Nancy. "Cubans Tell Rivero To Consider Leaving." *The Miami Herald*, December 1, 2004: A1.

¹⁵³⁸ San Martin, Nancy. "Rights Panel Wants Cuba Monitored." *The Miami Herald*, April 18, 2003: A1.

in Florida and anti-embargo forces in Congress and elsewhere.¹⁵³⁹ CANF's Pepe Hernandez and Dennis Hays met with Otto Reich and State Department leadership to promote providing more financial support for dissidents and boosting Radio and TV Marti's signals to foster Cuban civil society.¹⁵⁴⁰ Unlike CLC, CANF opposed further restrictions to travel or remittances.¹⁵⁴¹ Remittances provided \$400 to \$1 billion to up to thirty percent of the island's population.¹⁵⁴² Cutting charter flights would likely push more people to travel via third countries on Cuban airlines.¹⁵⁴³ The Bush administration decided to expel fourteen Cuban diplomats from the Washington, D.C., and United Nations missions for alleged espionage.¹⁵⁴⁴ Senator John Ensign (R-NV) introduced a bill to provide \$30 million for a democratic transition in Cuba and \$20 million to pro-democracy and human rights activists in Cuba via the OAS¹⁵⁴⁵

Cuba's crackdown on dissidents caused a backlash in the United States and abroad that reversed many of the diplomatic and trade gains Cuba had made since the end of the Cold War. It halted the progress of embargo opponents and gave greater

¹⁵³⁹ Johnson, Tim. "U.S. Action After Cuba Crackdown Debated." *The Miami Herald*, May 5, 2003: A1.; Figueras, Tere. "Candidate's Radio Message Resonates with Cubans." *The Miami Herald*, May 9, 2003: B1.; Nancy San Martin And Tim Johnson. "For Now, U.S. Off Hot Seat with Recent Expulsions." *The Miami Herald*, May 20, 2003: A7.; Wallsten, Peter. "Feuding Exiles Could Cause Political Pain for President." *The Miami Herald*, July 25, 2003: A1.

¹⁵⁴⁰ Lynch, Marika. "Exile Group Urges Boosting Cuba Broadcasts." *The Miami Herald*, May 2, 2003: A14.

¹⁵⁴¹ Lynch. "Exile Group Urges Boosting Cuba Broadcasts."

¹⁵⁴² Johnson. "U.S. Action After Cuba Crackdown Debated."

¹⁵⁴³ Johnson. "U.S. Action After Cuba Crackdown Debated."

¹⁵⁴⁴ Tim Johnson and Nancy San Martin. "U.S. Seeks to Create A Crisis, Cuba Says." *The Miami Herald*, May 15, 2003: A1.; San Martin and Johnson. "For Now, U.S. Off Hot Seat with Recent Expulsions."

¹⁵⁴⁵ "Nevada Lawmaker: Keep the Embargo."

ammunition to embargo proponents. It also impelled President Bush to institute policies against Cuba for which Cuban-Americans had advocated since he took office.

Disillusionment and Damage Control

Bush had done little to follow through on promises he had made to Cuban-Americans during the presidential race and, more importantly, in his 2002 speech in Miami. He had dedicated countless government resources to liberate Iraq and Afghanistan but not Cuba.¹⁵⁴⁶ Members of the exile community had repeatedly expressed frustration with the lack of action to back up politicians' pandering, and George W. Bush was not exempt from the criticism.¹⁵⁴⁷ The conservative Cuban-American lawmakers and Cuban Liberty Council backed Bush but pushed him to do more, while CANF publicly and controversially criticized Bush, exacerbating hostilities between CANF and the Bush team.

With all the pressure regarding how to react to developments in Cuba, President Bush chose to celebrate Cuban Independence Day by meeting privately with eleven Cuban dissidents and delivering a short, pro-democracy message to the Cuban people via Radio Marti.¹⁵⁴⁸ The Cuban-Americans in Congress did not attend the meeting. The South Florida Republican Cuban-Americans stated support, but Representative Bob

¹⁵⁴⁶ Wallsten. "Feuding Exiles Could Cause Political Pain for President."

¹⁵⁴⁷ Corral, Oscar. "CANF Outraged by Return Of Dozen Cubans." *The Miami Herald*, July 27, 2003: B1.

¹⁵⁴⁸ San Martin and Johnson. "For Now, U.S. Off Hot Seat with Recent Expulsions."; Johnson, Tim. "President Greets Freed Cubans." *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 2003: A3.

Menendez criticized Bush for mostly maintaining Clinton's policies.¹⁵⁴⁹ There had been little progress on the initiative Bush had announced the previous year, Congress pressured to end or relax the embargo, and he was sensitive to Florida's role in his upcoming reelection.¹⁵⁵⁰ Controversially, the Bush administration also increased prosecutions against Cubans entering the country illegally.¹⁵⁵¹

Existing tensions bubbled to the surface after July 21, 2003, when the Bush administration repatriated twelve Cubans who hijacked a boat and landed in Florida.¹⁵⁵² They stipulated that they would only return them if Cuba promised not to sentence them to capital punishment or more than ten years in prison.¹⁵⁵³ CANF, infuriated with the decision and ready to take action, feuded with the Bush administration and the Republican Cuban-American Congress members from South Florida, who continued to support Bush even though they released a statement denouncing the President's decision.¹⁵⁵⁴ CANF's Jorge Mas Santos, Joe Garcia, and Pepe Hernandez opined that

¹⁵⁴⁹ Johnson. "President Greets Freed Cubans."

¹⁵⁵⁰ San Martin and Johnson. "For Now, U.S. Off Hot Seat with Recent Expulsions."; Wallsten, Peter. "Feuding Exiles Could Cause Political Pain for President." *The Miami Herald*, July 25, 2003: A1.

¹⁵⁵¹ San Martin and Johnson. "For Now, U.S. Off Hot Seat with Recent Expulsions."; De Valle, Elaine. "Cubans Find Obstacles to Asylum In An Unusual Place - Buffalo." *The Miami Herald*, July 10, 2003: B1.; Wallsten. "Feuding Exiles Could Cause Political Pain for President."

¹⁵⁵² Wallsten. "Feuding Exiles Could Cause Political Pain for President."; Corral. "CANF Outraged by Return Of Dozen Cubans."; Oppenheimer, Andres. "Bush's Honeymoon with Hispanics Has Faded." *The Miami Herald*, July 31, 2003: A5.

¹⁵⁵³ Wallsten, Peter. "Feuding Exiles Could Cause Political Pain for President." *The Miami Herald*, July 25, 2003: A1.

¹⁵⁵⁴ Wallsten. "Feuding Exiles Could Cause Political Pain for President."; Corral. "CANF Outraged by Return Of Dozen Cubans."

Bush would not be able to count on the Cuban vote in the next election based on his lack of action thus far.¹⁵⁵⁵

Even Governor Jeb Bush opposed the decision as he tried to mitigate the damage and hinted that there would be upcoming changes to the Bush administration's approach to Cuba.¹⁵⁵⁶ CANF published an "open letter to the President" in *The Miami Herald* (and *El Nuevo Herald*) to demand Bush change his Cuba policies.¹⁵⁵⁷ CANF's policy priorities for Bush were altering the "wet foot, dry foot" policy, boosting Radio and TV Marti, supporting dissidents financially, and indicting Fidel Castro for crimes against humanity.¹⁵⁵⁸ CANF also disapproved of the continued waivers of Title III of Helms-Burton.¹⁵⁵⁹ Dennis Hays resigned from CANF after the organization criticized Bush but said that it was because his three-year term ended.¹⁵⁶⁰ Former Ros-Lehtinen aide and House International Relations Committee staffer Camila Ruiz replaced him.¹⁵⁶¹

¹⁵⁵⁵ Wallsten. "Feuding Exiles Could Cause Political Pain for President."; Corral. "CANF Outraged by Return Of Dozen Cubans."; Oppenheimer. "Bush's Honeymoon with Hispanics Has Faded."; Wallsten, Peter. "Cubans' Return `Just Not Right,' Gov. Bush Says." *The Miami Herald*, August 1, 2003: A1.

¹⁵⁵⁶ Wallsten. "Cubans' Return `Just Not Right,' Gov. Bush Says."

¹⁵⁵⁷ De Valle, Elaine. "Fate Of 14 Held by Coast Guard Raises Concerns." *The Miami Herald*, August 4, 2003: B3.; "Miami Bench Warrant on Greenpeace Is Lifted." *The Miami Herald*, August 6, 2003: B3.; Putney, Michael. "Changes Among Cuban Americans." *The Miami Herald*, August 13, 2003: B7.

¹⁵⁵⁸ Corral. "CANF Outraged by Return of Dozen Cubans."

¹⁵⁵⁹ Wallsten. "Lieberman Rips Bush in Attempt to Woo Cubans."

¹⁵⁶⁰ Corral, Oscar. "CANF Officer Quits Amid Flap Over President Bush's Policy." *The Miami Herald*, August 13, 2003: B3.; "Cruise Ship Blast Victims Fight Return to Homeland." *The Miami Herald*, August 13, 2003: B3.

¹⁵⁶¹ Corral. "CANF Officer Quits Amid Flap Over President Bush's Policy."; "Cruise Ship Blast Victims Fight Return to Homeland."

Thirteen members of the Hispanic Caucus of Florida's state House of Representatives made public statements and wrote a letter to President Bush urging him to act on Cuba by indicting Castro, revising the migration policy, supporting dissidents, and strengthening Radio and TV Marti.¹⁵⁶² They advised Bush that he could not count on Cuban-Americans' support in the next election if he failed to act.¹⁵⁶³ Thirty-four local South Florida Republican officials wrote a similar message to the administration, adding a request to implement Title III of the Helms-Burton Act.¹⁵⁶⁴

The White House insisted that Bush's support of Cuba spoke for itself and that his veto threat kept GOP members from lifting the embargo.¹⁵⁶⁵ NSA Condoleezza Rice responded to the South Florida Republican state lawmakers' letter, assuring them that Bush took Cuba policy seriously and listing nine actions that the administration had already taken to promote a free Cuba.¹⁵⁶⁶ Her letter discussed the indictments, "breaking down the information blockade" like introducing satellite broadcasts for Radio and TV Marti, assistance to families of political prisoners, cracking down on espionage, reforming travel restrictions, blocking Cuban public diplomacy campaigns, prosecuting violations of travel restrictions, and creating a multilateral coalition to promote human

¹⁵⁶² Corral, Oscar. "State GOP Legislators Urge Action on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, August 11, 2003: A1.; Putney. "Changes Among Cuban Americans."

¹⁵⁶³ Corral. "State GOP Legislators Urge Action on Cuba."

¹⁵⁶⁴ Corral, Oscar. "Local Republicans Write Bush Urging New Cuba Policy." *The Miami Herald*, August 16, 2003: B1.

¹⁵⁶⁵ Corral. "CANF Outraged by Return of Dozen Cubans."; Wallsten. "Lieberman Rips Bush in Attempt to Woo Cubans."

¹⁵⁶⁶ Corral, Oscar. "Strong Words for Tough Stance on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 17, 2003: B1.

rights in Cuba.¹⁵⁶⁷ The response indicated the importance of the Cuban-American constituency to Bush for his reelection.¹⁵⁶⁸ But Cuban exiles wanted more action.¹⁵⁶⁹

Bush quickly responded to exile pressure. He fast-tracked the case the government had been working on since at least mid-2001, and the United States indicted three members of Cuba's air force for murdering four members of Brothers to the Rescue in 1996.¹⁵⁷⁰ The administration also announced that it would begin transmitting TV Marti via satellite.¹⁵⁷¹ Despite all the money that the U.S. Government had poured into TV Marti, the Cuban government had consistently blocked the signal until they switched to satellite.¹⁵⁷² The administration had been working on the case furiously since May and meeting with the Diaz-Balart brothers.¹⁵⁷³ They had yet to charge the Castro brothers, which would be hard for a head of state.¹⁵⁷⁴

¹⁵⁶⁷ Corral. "Strong Words for Tough Stance on Cuba."

¹⁵⁶⁸ Corral. "Strong Words for Tough Stance on Cuba."

¹⁵⁶⁹ Corral. "Strong Words for Tough Stance on Cuba."

¹⁵⁷⁰ Peter Wallsten and Larry Lebowitz. "Exiles Say Charges Follow Pressure on Bush." *The Miami Herald*, August 22, 2003: A1.; Jay Weaver and Gail Epstein Nieves. "Indictment Largely Symbolic Without a U.S.-Cuba Treaty on Extradition." *The Miami Herald*, August 22, 2003: A14.; Nancy San Martin and Tim Johnson. "White House Urged Charges In 1996 Cuba Shoot-Down." *The Miami Herald*, August 30, 2003: A6.

¹⁵⁷¹ Wallsten and Lebowitz. "Exiles Say Charges Follow Pressure on Bush.; San Martin and Johnson. "White House Urged Charges In 1996 Cuba Shoot-Down."

¹⁵⁷² Buckley, Cara. "Fat Albert's A Spy in The Sky." *The Miami Herald*, April 11, 2004: B1.; Robles, Frances. "Deflated Blimps Limit Broadcasts to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, August 20, 2005: A14.

¹⁵⁷³ San Martin and Johnson. "White House Urged Charges In 1996 Cuba Shoot-Down."

¹⁵⁷⁴ Peter Wallsten and Larry Lebowitz. "Exiles Say Charges Follow Pressure on Bush." *The Miami Herald*, August 22, 2003: A1.; Jay Weaver and Gail Epstein Nieves. "Indictment Largely Symbolic Without a U.S.-Cuba Treaty On Extradition." *The Miami Herald*, August 22, 2003: A14.; San Martin and Johnson. "White House Urged Charges In 1996 Cuba Shoot-Down."

On October 10, 2003, Bush announced from a podium in the White House Rose Garden the creation of the Commission for the Assistance to a Free Cuba, a plan to prepare for a transition to democracy in Cuba.¹⁵⁷⁵ He assigned Secretary Mel Martinez and Secretary Colin Powell to lead the commission.¹⁵⁷⁶ Bush also announced that the United States would be issuing more visas for Cubans to come to the United States to manage the migration situation better.¹⁵⁷⁷ Castro made another public accusation that the U.S. government, in cahoots with the “Miami mafia,” was planning to assassinate him and criticized the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba.¹⁵⁷⁸ Secretary Colin Powell emphasized that it was a transition plan to prepare for when Castro was gone, not a plan to oust him.¹⁵⁷⁹

The Treasury voided licenses for nonprofits that the administration and many Cuba watchers felt abused their humanitarian relief missions for tourism.¹⁵⁸⁰ The new licensing rules, which amped-up enforcement, had a side effect of cutting off many medical supply’ conduits.¹⁵⁸¹ The Treasury announced that they would review and

¹⁵⁷⁵ Davies, Frank. "Bush Vows to Push Castro Harder." *The Miami Herald*, October 11, 2003: A1.; Whitefield, Mimi. "Castro lived to see renewal of diplomatic ties between U.S. and Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, November 26, 2016.

¹⁵⁷⁶ Davies. "Bush Vows to Push Castro Harder."

¹⁵⁷⁷ Davies. "Bush Vows to Push Castro Harder."

¹⁵⁷⁸ San Martin, Nancy. "Bush, Exiles Plotting to Kill Me, Castro Says." *The Miami Herald*, January 31, 2004: A1.

¹⁵⁷⁹ San Martin. "Bush, Exiles Plotting to Kill Me, Castro Says."

¹⁵⁸⁰ Buckley, Cara. "U.S. Hard Line on Cuba Halts Some Aid Trips." *The Miami Herald*, September 21, 2003: B6.

¹⁵⁸¹ Buckley. "U.S. Hard Line on Cuba Halts Some Aid Trips."

restrict the policy regarding remittances to Cuba.¹⁵⁸² The announcement, which may have been a way to shore up more support in an election year, caused particular stress among the less powerful within the Cuban-American community.¹⁵⁸³ Dr. Lisandro Perez explained, “The [Cuban Americans] who are in a position to try and influence U.S. policy are not the same people who have relatives in Cuba.”¹⁵⁸⁴ Many Cuban families depended on remittances from their relatives in the United States.¹⁵⁸⁵ Remittances were Cuba’s second-largest revenue source after tourism, and they amounted to between \$400 million and \$1 billion.¹⁵⁸⁶ Hardliners objected to any of the money ending up in the Cuban government’s hands and propping up the regime.¹⁵⁸⁷

Hardline exile organizations, scholars, and politicians created a transition proposal to submit to the Commission.¹⁵⁸⁸ The document, entitled “Socio-Economic Reconstruction, suggestions and recommendations for a post-Castro Cuba,” rejected moderate approaches to Cuba like the Varela Project.¹⁵⁸⁹ The members of Congress involved also supported a new Cuban Socio-Economic Reconstruction Commission project in Miami.¹⁵⁹⁰ The report prioritized just compensation for property owners,

¹⁵⁸² Ovalle, David. "Cuba Remittance Limits Feared." *The Miami Herald*, February 16, 2004: B1.

¹⁵⁸³ Ovalle. "Cuba Remittance Limits Feared."

¹⁵⁸⁴ Ovalle. "Cuba Remittance Limits Feared."

¹⁵⁸⁵ Ovalle. "Cuba Remittance Limits Feared."

¹⁵⁸⁶ Ovalle. "Cuba Remittance Limits Feared."

¹⁵⁸⁷ Ovalle. "Cuba Remittance Limits Feared."

¹⁵⁸⁸ Corral, Oscar. "Exiles Offer Post-Castro Cuba Plan." *The Miami Herald*, February 21, 2004: A1.

¹⁵⁸⁹ Corral. "Exiles Offer Post-Castro Cuba Plan."

¹⁵⁹⁰ Corral. "Exiles Offer Post-Castro Cuba Plan."

making loans and credit available in the transition to privatization, and emphasizing individual rights and liberties.¹⁵⁹¹

Bush unveiled the report from the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba in May 2004.¹⁵⁹² With it, he announced several policy changes: spending a total of \$45 million over the next two years to support the cause of democracy in Cuba, \$36 million to go to dissidents and projects that support democracy and marginalized Cuban communities, \$18 million dollars to upgrade the transmission equipment for Radio and TV Marti and for an airplane to aid it, \$5 million for public diplomacy and information dissemination abroad about Cuba and U.S. policy, tightening travel restrictions to eliminate abuses, limiting remittances to per household instead of per individual and to immediate family members, permitting Cuban-American family reunification visits to Cuba to once every three years instead of every year and reducing their per diem allotment and limited the visits to fourteen days, making new arrivals wait three years before visiting, establishing a Cuban Asset Targeting Group to investigate money transfers, cracking down on mules who carry money, denying visas to Cuban regime officials, and establishing a Transition Coordinator job at the State Department.¹⁵⁹³

¹⁵⁹¹ Corral. "Exiles Offer Post-Castro Cuba Plan."

¹⁵⁹² Karl Ross and Nancy San Martin. "Bush to Tighten Cuba Sanctions, Seek New Funds." *The Miami Herald*, May 7, 2004: A1.

¹⁵⁹³ Ross and San Martin. "Bush to Tighten Cuba Sanctions, Seek New Funds."; Yanez, Luisa. "Policy on Cuba Will Cost Bush Votes, Group Warns." *The Miami Herald*, May 11, 2004: B5.; Robles, Frances. "Deflated Blimps Limit Broadcasts to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, August 20, 2005: A14.

Representative Lincoln Diaz-Balart and CLC's Ninoska Perez-Castellon lauded the changes.¹⁵⁹⁴ CANF welcomed the funding for dissidents and Radio and TV Marti transmissions but believed tightening travel and aid restrictions would be harmful to families and curtail democracy promotion on the island.¹⁵⁹⁵ Carlos Saladrigas considered the policies a mixed bag, saying, "We need to learn to do things that hurt the government, but not at the expense of the people. That's a very delicate ethical balance. We believe we need to help the Cuban people." Cuban-Americans who still helped support family back in Cuba were most concerned and considered it an attack on Cuban families.¹⁵⁹⁶ Perez-Castellon disagreed, "It's not about being able to send your family money or being able to visit your family. There's 12 million people in Cuba and not all of them receive funds from abroad or have relatives who visit them.... It's about bringing freedom to all Cubans, not just a few."¹⁵⁹⁷ Some organizations—the Antonio Maceo Brigade and Alianza Martiana among them—warned that the new policies would cost Bush votes among more moderate Cuban-Americans, considering 100,000 of the 140,000 Cuban-Americans who had visited the island the previous year lived in South Florida.¹⁵⁹⁸ Some organizations collected signatures to petition the administration to remove restrictions,

¹⁵⁹⁴ Ross and San Martin. "Bush to Tighten Cuba Sanctions, Seek New Funds."

¹⁵⁹⁵ Ross and San Martin. "Bush to Tighten Cuba Sanctions, Seek New Funds."; Clark, Lesley. "Bush's Cuba Moves Stir Backlash." *The Miami Herald*, May 31, 2004: B1.

¹⁵⁹⁶ Ross and San Martin. "Bush to Tighten Cuba Sanctions, Seek New Funds."; Yanez. "Policy on Cuba Will Cost Bush Votes, Group Warns."; Clark. "Bush's Cuba Moves Stir Backlash."; Defede, Jim. "U.S. Restrictions on Trips To Cuba Are Inhumane." *The Miami Herald*, June 29, 2004: B1.

¹⁵⁹⁷ Ross and San Martin. "Bush to Tighten Cuba Sanctions, Seek New Funds."

¹⁵⁹⁸ Yanez. "Policy on Cuba Will Cost Bush Votes, Group Warns."; Clark. "Bush's Cuba Moves Stir Backlash."

and others promoted voter drives for newer citizens.¹⁵⁹⁹ The debate unintentionally focused on the morality of Bush's policies rather than on the dissidents' struggle against the Castro regime.¹⁶⁰⁰ Bush's Republican strategists bet on catering to the "historical exile" hardliners' dependable votes (the "heart of the community," according to Perez-Castellon) rather than newer arrivals who might not be registered would be more advantageous in the election.¹⁶⁰¹ The disparate reactions offered the Democratic Party an opportunity to capitalize on the generally solidly Republican voting bloc.¹⁶⁰²

Turning the Tide for Reelection

As always, the road to the White House ran through Florida, and fundraising there started early. Wealthy Cuban business owners showered their favorite candidates with donations, which gave the donors leverage with policy decisions.¹⁶⁰³ Cuban-American political strategists and team members helped the candidates navigate Florida and solicit voters. The incumbent president was the presumed Republican candidate, but several candidates competed for the Democratic ticket. By January 2002, potential 2004 Democratic presidential candidates had already begun visiting and fundraising in Florida.¹⁶⁰⁴ Senator John Kerry (D-MA) announced his presidential candidacy in

¹⁵⁹⁹ Clark. "Bush's Cuba Moves Stir Backlash."

¹⁶⁰⁰ Defede. "U.S. Restrictions on Trips to Cuba Are Inhumane."

¹⁶⁰¹ Clark. "Bush's Cuba Moves Stir Backlash."; Defede. "U.S. Restrictions on Trips to Cuba Are Inhumane."

¹⁶⁰² Clark. "Bush's Cuba Moves Stir Backlash."

¹⁶⁰³ Modesto Maidique, interview with the author. March 26, 2018.

¹⁶⁰⁴ Bridges, Tyler. "'Third Senator' Returning to Florida." *The Miami Herald*, January 19, 2002: B3.

December 2002 and started fundraising in Miami later the same week.¹⁶⁰⁵ He made sure to meet with prominent exiles like Alfredo Duran and kept in contact with CANF, especially at a time when Cuban-Americans expressed dissatisfaction with Bush.¹⁶⁰⁶

Democrats sought to take advantage of the tension between the administration and the Cuban-American community in Florida.¹⁶⁰⁷ While fundraising in South Florida for his 2004 presidential campaign, Joe Lieberman visited Radio and TV Marti to urge Bush to follow through with his commitment to Cuban democracy and deliver a message of hope to the people on the island.¹⁶⁰⁸ Candidate Joe Lieberman criticized Bush for ‘abandoning’ Cuban-Americans, which demonstrated how Democrats worked to make more inroads into the Cuban-American vote.¹⁶⁰⁹ Lieberman fundraised with Cuban-American businessman Jorge Perez and met with other Cuban-American community leaders in Miami.¹⁶¹⁰ John Kerry, John Edwards, and other Democratic hopefuls reached out to the exile leadership.¹⁶¹¹ Presidential candidate Senator John Kerry, who opposed the

¹⁶⁰⁵ Bridges, Tyler. "Kerry Visits Miami To Start Raising Funds." *The Miami Herald*, December 7, 2002: B5.

¹⁶⁰⁶ Bridges. "Kerry Visits Miami To Start Raising Funds."

¹⁶⁰⁷ Wallsten, Peter. "Clark Hints He Would Explore Cuba Ties." *The Miami Herald*, December 3, 2003: B1.

¹⁶⁰⁸ Figueras, Tere. "Candidate's Radio Message Resonates with Cubans." *The Miami Herald*, May 9, 2003: B1.

¹⁶⁰⁹ Wallsten, Peter. "Lieberman Rips Bush in Attempt to Woo Cubans." *The Miami Herald*, July 30, 2003: A1.

¹⁶¹⁰ Wallsten. "Lieberman Rips Bush in Attempt to Woo Cubans."; Corral, Oscar. "Lieberman's Faith, Convictions Central." *The Miami Herald*, January 8, 2004: A6.

¹⁶¹¹ Wallsten. "Cubans' Return 'Just Not Right,' Gov. Bush Says." *The Miami Herald*, August 1, 2003: A1.; Wallsten, Peter. "Kerry Brings Up Rival's GOP Votes." *The Miami Herald*, September 24, 2003: A8.; Wallsten. "Clark Hints He Would Explore Cuba Ties."

sanctions on Cuba in 2000, now supported them.¹⁶¹² Presidential candidate Howard Dean spoke of wanting to roll back the embargo but said it was the wrong time because of Castro's crackdown on dissidents.¹⁶¹³ As Joe Garcia reiterated, "Look, the road to the White House goes through South Florida, and anyone who's running for president is looking at the numbers."¹⁶¹⁴

Unlike other Democratic presidential candidates, retired Army General Wesley Clark stated that he would be willing to discuss easing the embargo without committing to it.¹⁶¹⁵ He argued that engagement helped bring about the fall of the Iron Curtain, which communists created themselves rather than the West imposing it on them.¹⁶¹⁶ He considered unilateral embargoes ineffective.¹⁶¹⁷

The candidates sought Cuban support as they campaigned in Miami.¹⁶¹⁸ Roland Sanchez-Medina, a CANF and Cuban American Bar Association board member, helped advise Kerry.¹⁶¹⁹ In an interview with Univision's Jorge Ramos in an attempt to improve his weak Hispanic support, Kerry said that he backed the economic embargo but also

¹⁶¹² Wallsten, Peter. "Keep Cuba Sanctions, Democratic Presidential Candidate Kerry Says." *The Miami Herald*, September 1, 2003: A1.; Wallsten. "Kerry Brings Up Rival's GOP Votes."

¹⁶¹³ Wallsten, Peter. "Democratic Contender Dean Alters Cuba Stand." *The Miami Herald*, August 26, 2003: A1.

¹⁶¹⁴ Wallsten. "Democratic Contender Dean Alters Cuba Stand."

¹⁶¹⁵ Wallsten. "Clark Hints He Would Explore Cuba Ties."

¹⁶¹⁶ Wallsten. "Clark Hints He Would Explore Cuba Ties."

¹⁶¹⁷ Wallsten. "Clark Hints He Would Explore Cuba Ties."

¹⁶¹⁸ Corral, Oscar. "Cubans Hope for Strong Anti-Castro Pitch." *The Miami Herald*, April 18, 2004: B6.

¹⁶¹⁹ Corral. "Cubans Hope for Strong Anti-Castro Pitch."

supported easing travel restrictions as a way to promote democracy in Cuba.¹⁶²⁰ Kerry had been instrumental in lifting the trade embargo on Vietnam in the 1990s.¹⁶²¹

Cuban-American Florida state Representative Gaston Cantens agreed to join the 2004 Bush campaign as chairman of “Hispanics for Bush” after a private meeting in which Bush assured Cantens that there would be more action on Cuba.¹⁶²² He wanted Bush to do more, but he conceded, “If he were not president, the embargo would have been lifted.”¹⁶²³ He and state Senator Rudy Garcia appeared at a public news conference with the campaign to demonstrate Cuban support despite the rift that had grown between the community and the administration.¹⁶²⁴ U.S. Representatives Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Lincoln Diaz-Balart, and Mario Diaz-Balart and State Representatives Marco Rubio, John Quinones, and Juan Zapata also joined Bush’s Florida steering committee.¹⁶²⁵ Many Cuban-American political operatives did not show up to the reelection campaign kickoff rally and private reception that Jeb Bush held for his brother in Miami.¹⁶²⁶ They cited prior commitments, but it also highlighted the continued tension between the community and the administration.¹⁶²⁷ A Bendixen poll for the Cuban Study Group showed that

¹⁶²⁰ Clark. "Kerry Backs Embargo and Easing Cuba Travel."

¹⁶²¹ Clark. "Kerry Backs Embargo and Easing Cuba Travel."

¹⁶²² Lesley Clark and Peter Wallsten. "Rift with Bush Is Still Open." *The Miami Herald*, October 2, 2003: B1.

¹⁶²³ Clark and Wallsten. "Rift with Bush Is Still Open."

¹⁶²⁴ Clark and Wallsten. "Rift with Bush Is Still Open."

¹⁶²⁵ Clark and Wallsten. "Rift with Bush Is Still Open."

¹⁶²⁶ Clark, Lesley. "Concerns Over Cuba Policy Linger." *The Miami Herald*, February 1, 2004: B3.

¹⁶²⁷ Clark. "Concerns Over Cuba Policy Linger."

many Cuban-Americans believed that Bush had not lived up to his promises to the community, but the majority still planned to vote for him.¹⁶²⁸ Overall, they felt that Bush had a good Cuba policy.¹⁶²⁹ People underestimated the advantage that Jeb Bush gave his brother not just among Cuban-Americans but among Hispanic voters generally, with whom Republicans tended to struggle.¹⁶³⁰

Democrats tried to capitalize on the rift between the administration and Cuban-Americans to do as well or better than Clinton had with them.¹⁶³¹ An FIU-Sun Sentinel poll said that 60 percent of Cuban-American voters planned to vote for Bush in the 2004 presidential election.¹⁶³² Party strategists and fundraisers met with Cuban-Americans to plan a summit for Florida Hispanic voters, ad campaigns, voter registration drives, and more.¹⁶³³ Joe Garcia remarked, "Not only has the president failed to formulate a policy on Cuba, he's failed all of Latin America."¹⁶³⁴ Representative Menendez was optimistic about Democrats' abilities to woo Cubans, saying, "When you get past that threshold [of

¹⁶²⁸ Wallsten, Peter. "'Car-Boat' Case A Dilemma for President." *The Miami Herald*, February 10, 2004: B1.

¹⁶²⁹ Wallsten. "'Car-Boat' Case A Dilemma for President." *The Miami Herald*, February 10, 2004: B1.

¹⁶³⁰ Wallsten. "Goal: Divide GOP Voting Bloc."

¹⁶³¹ Wallsten, Peter. "Goal: Divide GOP Voting Bloc." *The Miami Herald*, February 28, 2004: B1.

¹⁶³² Wallsten, Peter. "Kerry Says Bush Is Soft on Chávez." *The Miami Herald*, March 24, 2004: A1.

¹⁶³³ Wallsten. "Goal: Divide GOP Voting Bloc."; Clark, Lesley. "Kerry Backs Embargo and Easing Cuba Travel." *The Miami Herald*, May 6, 2004: A6.

¹⁶³⁴ Wallsten. "Kerry Says Bush Is Soft on Chávez."

Cuba policy], Cuban-Americans are progressive and care about education, Social Security and student aid, just like everyone else.”¹⁶³⁵

Former Secretary Mel Martinez competed with Bill McCollum and others for the Republican nomination for Bob Graham’s seat representing Florida in the U.S. Senate.¹⁶³⁶ The White House and Virginia Senator George Allen had convinced him to run.¹⁶³⁷ Martinez supported repatriating Cubans who came to the United States illegally for economic reasons rather than credible fear of persecution, but he still had support from most South Florida Hispanic voters.¹⁶³⁸ Even Representative Lincoln Diaz-Balart admitted it was a risky stance.¹⁶³⁹ Martinez won the Republican nomination and faced Democratic candidate Betty Castor in the general election.¹⁶⁴⁰ “As Florida goes, so goes the nation. And, many political pundits say, as South Florida goes, so goes Florida.”¹⁶⁴¹ The number of votes they accrued in the primaries showed Martinez had a considerable advantage over Castor in South Florida, and she had to try to make up for it.¹⁶⁴² She had

¹⁶³⁵ Wallsten. "Lieberman Rips Bush in Attempt to Woo Cubans."; Wallsten, Peter. "Cubans' Return `Just Not Right,' Gov. Bush Says." *The Miami Herald*, August 1, 2003: A1.

¹⁶³⁶ Caputo, Marc. "Martinez Gambling on Cuba Stand." *The Miami Herald*, July 18, 2004: B1.

¹⁶³⁷ Corral. "A Historic Day for Martinez, Exiles."

¹⁶³⁸ Caputo. "Martinez Gambling on Cuba Stand."

¹⁶³⁹ Caputo. "Martinez Gambling on Cuba Stand."

¹⁶⁴⁰ Marc Caputo and Beth Reinhard. "Castor, Martinez Battle in S. Florida." *The Miami Herald*, September 22, 2004: B1.

¹⁶⁴¹ Caputo and Reinhard. "Castor, Martinez Battle in S. Florida."

¹⁶⁴² Caputo and Reinhard. "Castor, Martinez Battle in S. Florida."

to make up for not campaigning more in South Florida and among Hispanic voters earlier to have a shot in November.¹⁶⁴³

Joe Garcia stepped down as executive director of CANF to join the New Democrat Network to help moderate Democrats in the 2004 election campaign, particularly with the Cuban-American vote and other Hispanics' changing demographics.¹⁶⁴⁴ Garcia's leadership in the CANF had helped scare away some older hardliners but had attracted some newer and younger exiles.¹⁶⁴⁵ A June New Democrat Network poll showed the Cuban community's political views continued to moderate.¹⁶⁴⁶ Far more U.S.-born Cuban-Americans supported Kerry over Bush, and he edged out Bush among most-Mariel Cuban emigres.¹⁶⁴⁷ However, over 80 percent of pre-Mariel Cuban exiles supported Bush, and they were much more politically active.¹⁶⁴⁸

Joe Garcia called Bush's administration "probably the worst... we've ever had on Cuba policy," as he introduced in Little Havana the first ads of a \$6 million Hispanic media campaign in late September.¹⁶⁴⁹ Hialeah Mayor Raul Martinez believed that they

¹⁶⁴³ Caputo and Reinhard. "Castor, Martinez Battle in S. Florida."

¹⁶⁴⁴ Clark, Lesley. "Push Aims at Luring Cuban Voters." *The Miami Herald*, September 2, 2004: B1.

¹⁶⁴⁵ Clark. "Push Aims at Luring Cuban Voters."

¹⁶⁴⁶ Clark. "Push Aims at Luring Cuban Voters."

¹⁶⁴⁷ Clark. "Push Aims at Luring Cuban Voters."

¹⁶⁴⁸ Clark. "Push Aims at Luring Cuban Voters."

¹⁶⁴⁹ Ross, Karl. "Exile: President Bush Has Failed to Bring Democracy to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 22, 2004: B3.; Ovalle, David. "Campaigns Are Wooing Florida's Hispanics." *The Miami Herald*, September 29, 2004: A1.

could win many potential Cuban Democrat votes.¹⁶⁵⁰ “They didn’t want to be seen as ‘bad Cubans.’ In the Cuban community it’s a stigma to be a Democrat. But I think they’re starting to come out.”¹⁶⁵¹ In one ad, Garcia emphasized how little the administration had done for Cuba until the election year rolled around.¹⁶⁵² Alfredo Duran, a pro-dialogue activist, explained what he viewed as the real reason Cuban-Americans tend to be Republican: “It really has nothing to do with U.S. policy toward Cuba. It’s basically street politics. The Democratic party basically ignored a Cuban-American community while the Republican party saw an opening.”¹⁶⁵³ Ruiz said that “the key to power and influence for Cuban Americans is to never allow any political party ‘to take our vote for granted.’”¹⁶⁵⁴

A September Bendixen poll for New Democrat Network showed Democrats gaining ground with Hispanics over the previous five months, but a majority of all voters felt that Kerry did not present a “clear agenda for the future.”¹⁶⁵⁵ Seventy-two percent of likely Cuban-American voters supported Bush, helping Bush lead 57% to Kerry’s 37% support among Florida Hispanic voters.¹⁶⁵⁶ For comparison, Bush won 65% of the

¹⁶⁵⁰ Ross. "Exile: President Bush Has Failed to Bring Democracy to Cuba."; Ovalle. "Campaigns Are Wooing Florida's Hispanics."

¹⁶⁵¹ Ross. "Exile: President Bush Has Failed to Bring Democracy to Cuba."

¹⁶⁵² "Campaign Briefs." *The Miami Herald*, October 28, 2004: B6.

¹⁶⁵³ Corral. "Cuban Policy Discussion Stays Respectful."

¹⁶⁵⁴ Corral. "Cuban Policy Discussion Stays Respectful."

¹⁶⁵⁵ Davies, Frank. "Democrats Enjoy Image Boost Among Hispanics." *The Miami Herald*, September 16, 2004: A8.

¹⁶⁵⁶ Davies. "Democrats Enjoy Image Boost Among Hispanics."

Florida Hispanic vote in the 2000 election and won Florida by less than 600 votes.¹⁶⁵⁷ Bush made sure to check in with Cuban-Americans often on the campaign trail.¹⁶⁵⁸ Hardline Republicans who had become disillusioned with Bush coalesced around his campaign after the announcement of new policies and as the election drew nearer.¹⁶⁵⁹ The Bush campaign leaned heavily into Spanish television and radio advertisements.¹⁶⁶⁰ President Bush won Florida by over 380,000 ballots this time around.¹⁶⁶¹ Mel Martinez won his Senate election. The restrictions on family travel and remittances may have cost Bush some Cuban-American votes in the 2004 election.¹⁶⁶²

CANF had seen years of contention and in-fighting, so when they chose a new director after an election season that had pitted current and former CANF leadership against one another, they chose someone with a desire to unite. Alfredo Mesa, a former aide to Miami-Dade Mayor Alex Penelas, became the new executive director of CANF on November 15, 2004.¹⁶⁶³ A U.S.-born registered independent, he considered himself a “consensus builder” and wanted to bridge the gap between older and younger Cuban-Americans of different ideological stances with a common goal of getting rid of Castro.¹⁶⁶⁴

¹⁶⁵⁷ Davies. "Democrats Enjoy Image Boost Among Hispanics."

¹⁶⁵⁸ Clark. "Push Aims at Luring Cuban Voters."

¹⁶⁵⁹ Clark. "Push Aims at Luring Cuban Voters."

¹⁶⁶⁰ Ovalle. "Campaigns Are Wooing Florida's Hispanics."

¹⁶⁶¹ Clark, Lesley. "State's GOP To Fete Bush, Selves." *The Miami Herald*, January 16, 2005: A1.

¹⁶⁶² Clark, Lesley. "Exile Group Gets New Leader." *The Miami Herald*, November 15, 2004: B1.

¹⁶⁶³ Clark. "Exile Group Gets New Leader."

¹⁶⁶⁴ Clark. "Exile Group Gets New Leader."

With all the changes happening in the community and national politics, Cuban-American Democrats had hoped to convert more of their compatriots during the 2004 election season. Despite his hiccups with the Cuban-American community, George W. Bush won Florida by five percentage points and around three-quarters of the Cuban-American vote.¹⁶⁶⁵ Mel Martinez won Florida with 49 percent of the vote to become the first Cuban-American Senator after resigning from his groundbreaking Cabinet position. Elected officials, particularly those from South Florida, prepared a collective effort to block embargo opponents in Bush's second term.

Conclusion

Demographic shifts, Jorge Mas Canosa's death, and Elian Gonzalez had caused the Cuban-American community to reevaluate their goals, strategies, and reputations regarding Cuba and Cuba policy. The rifts in CANF and the proliferation of new Cuban-American organizations reflected the maturation of pluralism in the community. They adapted to the changing circumstances, enabling Cuban-Americans to remain relevant. Dissidents had become the center of the Castro resistance movement rather than exiles. Although trade disputes were spirited, the most divisive debates came in regards to policies that affected those with Cuban families abroad, such as Cuban-American travel to the island, remittance restrictions, and aid restrictions.

¹⁶⁶⁵ Lopez-Gottardi, Cristina. "2016 Highlighted the Growing Complexity of the Cuban-American Vote | Op-Ed | US News," November 16, 2016. <https://www.usnews.com/opinion/op-ed/articles/2016-11-16/2016-highlighted-the-growing-complexity-of-the-cuban-american-vote>.; Adam C. Smith, David Adams, Alex Leary. "Key To Victory In Florida: Campaign Cast Wide Net". St. Petersburg Times (Florida). November 6, 2008 Thursday.

Early in his administration, George W. Bush had plans for U.S. involvement in Latin America, and he had developed a better rapport with Latinos than other Republican politicians. Cuban-Americans helped him win the 2000 election, and he had appointed many Cuban-Americans to leadership positions. However, after the September 11 terrorist attack, the “war on terror” consumed the administration’s attention regarding foreign policy and national security, diverting their focus away from Latin America and toward the Middle East. Additionally, popular U.S. opinion viewed the embargo negatively, and anti-embargo movements gained momentum. Embargo opponents gained momentum during that period, but Castro’s decision to squelch dissidents caused Cuba to lose footing with potential defenders. Fidel Castro began to crack down on dissidents, jailing seventy-five in March 2003, dubbed as the “Black Spring” in the Cuban community. Cuban-Americans were indignant that the U.S. launched a full-scale attack on Iraq while the dictator at their doorstep remained in power after four decades.

Cuba was not a priority, and he made few changes to Cuba policy until Cuban-Americans expressed discontentment leading up to the 2004 election. The closer the presidential election approached, the more Bush felt pressure to act on Cuba. Warned that he might lose Cuban-American votes in the next election, Bush entrusted top advisors to create the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba to review Cuba policy and create a plan for democratic transition for Cuba. His administration implemented measures to cut diplomatic dialogue, travel, cultural exchanges, and money flow to the island. Bush threatened to veto any anti-embargo legislation, new PACs provided donations to pro-embargo legislators, and new Cuban-American legislators increased hardliners’ profile in Congress. True to character, Bush responded aggressively and unilaterally with sanctions,

but unlike the Middle East, he did not employ military force against Cuba. The force of the embargo would have to suffice. Ultimately, Bush did win reelection and continued to promote a more hardline, anti-communist foreign policy toward Cuba.

CHAPTER 7: GEORGE W. BUSH'S SECOND TERM

Introduction

President George W. Bush's first term exposed divisions within the two main national political parties and within the Cuban-American community regarding Cuba policy. The anti-embargo movement gained steam within each sector. Divisions within the parties Cuba policies occurred over business, humanitarian aid, dissident empowerment, and foreign policy strategies for promoting human rights and democracy. Above all, Cuban-Americans disagreed about policies that affected separated Cuban families: remittances, travel, repatriation, and aid. These polemics endured into the second Bush term. Cuban exile organizations and interest groups expanded and evolved to reflect these divisions.

Nationally, Republicans controlled the U.S. House from 2001 to 2006 and the Senate for a brief period in 2001 and from 2003 to 2006. Cuban-Americans earned their first seats in the U.S. Senate, starting in 2005. Thus, Republicans and their allies had greater access and influence with Congress, the President, and executive agencies for much of Bush's presidency. The nationwide disagreements over immigration invariably affected Cubans entering the United States despite their preferred immigration status under the Cuban Adjustment Act. The 2008 economic recession overshadowed all other political issues that year.

Internationally, the United States remained the hegemon, but China challenged U.S. preeminence. Bush was unpopular outside of the United States, and his national approval rating continuously decreased. Populist socialist leaders won elections throughout the Americas, ushering in a "Pink Tide" that began with Hugo Chavez in

Venezuela in 1998. Venezuela and others arranged special trade agreements that bolstered the Cuban economy. They aligned with Cuba, and the United States' ostracism of Cuba caused friction at hemispheric meetings. Fidel Castro also transferred leadership of the Cuban government to his younger brother during this time, and Raul began to institute limited measures to enable small private enterprise on the island. In contrast to Bush's status quo Cuba policy, the changing international and domestic environment set the stage for bigger developments in the following administration.

Second Term, Second Chance

Cuban-Americans filled more federal leadership positions, both through appointments and elections. They served both as bridges and gatekeepers for the community, with the new Congressional Cuba Democracy Caucus being a prime example. As CANF's prestige decreased, Cuban exile organizations jostled for influence and created coalitions to amplify their messages. These messages echoed the growing pluralism within the community. Nevertheless, Cuban-American hardliners like the Republican legislators, many appointed officials, and the Cuban Liberty Council had the greatest influence within the administration.

Bush appointed more prominent Cuban-Americans to leadership positions in his second term. Starting in 2005, Carlos Gutierrez served as Secretary of Commerce, Eduardo Aguirre as Ambassador to Spain, and Alfonso Martinez-Fonts, Jr., as Assistant Secretary for the Private Sector Office in the Department of Homeland Security. He also appointed Lisette McSoud Mondello as Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Frank

Ruben Jimenez as General Counsel of the U.S. Department of the Navy, and Luis Aguilar as Commissioner of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

Mel Martinez received a warm welcome when he arrived at the Capitol.¹⁶⁶⁶ Exiles saw in him the embodiment of exile success, who had gone from a Pedro Pan child to a member of the Presidential Cabinet and U.S. Senator.¹⁶⁶⁷ He was assigned to the Senator Foreign Relations Committee and planned to foster ties with Latin America and promote Cuba's freedom.¹⁶⁶⁸ New Jersey Representative Bob Menendez (D) became the second Cuban-American U.S. Senator via special appointment in 2006. Cuban-American Albio Sires (D) took his place in the House of Representatives. They totaled four in the House and two in the Senate.

U.S. Senator Jon Corzine (D-NJ) won the New Jersey gubernatorial election, thereby leaving a vacancy in his Senate seat.¹⁶⁶⁹ He ultimately chose Bob Menendez to replace him, making Menendez the second Cuban-American U.S. Senator and one of three Hispanic Senators then serving.¹⁶⁷⁰ Hispanic groups called on the Democrats, who often sought Hispanic support in elections, to support Menendez as the replacement.¹⁶⁷¹ Republican Cuban-American lawmakers, who had frequently collaborated with him on

¹⁶⁶⁶ Corral, Oscar. "A Historic Day for Martinez, Exiles." *The Miami Herald*, January 5, 2005: A1.

¹⁶⁶⁷ Corral. "A Historic Day for Martinez, Exiles."

¹⁶⁶⁸ Corral. "A Historic Day for Martinez, Exiles."

¹⁶⁶⁹ Clark, Lesley. "S. Fla. Pushes for Latin Senator." *The Miami Herald*, November 22, 2005: A1.

¹⁶⁷⁰ Clark. "S. Fla. Pushes for Latin Senator."; Clark, Lesley. "Second Cuban Senator Elates Miami." *The Miami Herald*, December 8, 2005: A1.

¹⁶⁷¹ Clark. "S. Fla. Pushes for Latin Senator."

Cuba legislation, and the Cuban-American community enthusiastically supported him.¹⁶⁷²

Having pro-embargo Cuban-American Senators on each side of the aisle also benefited pro-embargo efforts regardless of which party controlled the executive branch.¹⁶⁷³

CANF's new leadership attempted to repair its relationship with the Republicans and offered to co-sponsor the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute's inaugural gala for Hispanic Congress members, which George W. Bush's nephew George P. Bush and Emilio Estefan headlined.¹⁶⁷⁴ The institute officially said that they do not take money from nonprofit organizations, but Representative Mario Diaz-Balart, who headed the institute, clarified, "The bottom line is their money was not taken and it's not because they were a nonprofit, it's because they're not welcome."¹⁶⁷⁵ Instead, twenty-four CANF board members bought individual tickets and attended the Grand Hispanic Gala anyway.¹⁶⁷⁶ Some of the notable donors included Al Cardenas, Sergio Pino, and Armando Codina.¹⁶⁷⁷ CANF board members had also contributed over \$2 million combined to Bush's presidential campaigns in 2000 and 2004.¹⁶⁷⁸

¹⁶⁷² Clark. "S. Fla. Pushes for Latin Senator."

¹⁶⁷³ Clark. "Second Cuban Senator Elates Miami."

¹⁶⁷⁴ Clark. "State's GOP To Fete Bush, Selves."

¹⁶⁷⁵ Clark, Lesley. "Gala Snubs Cuban Foundation." *The Miami Herald*, January 18, 2005: B1.; Clark, Lesley. "Gala's Snub Is No Obstacle." *The Miami Herald*, January 20, 2005: B1.

¹⁶⁷⁶ Clark. "Gala's Snub Is No Obstacle."

¹⁶⁷⁷ Clark. "State's GOP To Fete Bush, Selves."

¹⁶⁷⁸ Clark. "Gala's Snub Is No Obstacle."

When CANF did not show allegiance to Bush in 2000, the Cuban Liberty Council became more influential.¹⁶⁷⁹ The Bush administration had relied on the Cuban Liberty Council for advice more than CANF.¹⁶⁸⁰

Sixteen Cuban exile organizations in South Florida created a blueprint for governing a post-Castro Cuba entitled "Pillars for a Cuban Consensus."¹⁶⁸¹ CANF, Agenda Cuba, and the Cuban Study Group participated.¹⁶⁸² These were some of the recommendations: allowing all Cubans on the island and in the diaspora to participate politically, eliminating the death penalty and releasing political prisoners, amnesty "within the boundaries established by international law," unrestricted travel, giving property deeds to current tenants, and compensating former owners or their descendants for expropriated property. The idea came from an October Cuba conference in Rome.¹⁶⁸³ The influential conservative groups Cuban Liberty Council and Cuba Democracy Advocates did not participate.¹⁶⁸⁴

CANF and the Democracy Movement planned to attend a meeting of dissidents and encouraged other exiles to support the assembly.¹⁶⁸⁵ The Cuban Liberty Council, Brigade 2506, and lawmakers refused to go but said that they would provide economic

¹⁶⁷⁹ Marquez. "Door open for CANF to help shape policy."

¹⁶⁸⁰ Chardy, Alfonso. "Exile group: Not enough money getting to Cuban dissidents." *The Miami Herald*, May 15, 2008: B1.

¹⁶⁸¹ White, Nicole. "Cuban Exiles Prep Post-Castro Plan." *The Miami Herald*, April 19, 2005: B3.

¹⁶⁸² White. "Cuban Exiles Prep Post-Castro Plan."

¹⁶⁸³ White. "Cuban Exiles Prep Post-Castro Plan."

¹⁶⁸⁴ White. "Cuban Exiles Prep Post-Castro Plan."

¹⁶⁸⁵ Corral, Oscar. "Exile Group May Visit Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, March 11, 2005: A1.

support to the dissidents.¹⁶⁸⁶ The Cuban Liberty Council refused to go to Castro's Cuba under any circumstances but said that they would provide economic support.¹⁶⁸⁷ Brigade 2506 pledged to help them financially over a phone call with dissident Felix Antonio Bonne Carcasses, for which fifty people were present, including Representatives Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Mario Diaz-Balart were present.¹⁶⁸⁸ Representative Lincoln Diaz-Balart said he respected decisions to go and not to go but strongly supported the dissident meeting.¹⁶⁸⁹

The dissident assembly in Havana, "the largest and most public gathering of Cuban dissidents since Fidel Castro seized power in 1959," occurred on May 20-21, 2005.¹⁶⁹⁰ About two hundred dissidents and guests showed up.¹⁶⁹¹ Cuban authorities harassed, interrogated, detained, deported, or denied entry to several intended attendees: Polish, German, and Czech lawmakers; international journalists; academics; dissidents traveling from elsewhere in Cuba; and activists (including one CANF representative).¹⁶⁹²

¹⁶⁸⁶ Corral. "Exile Group May Visit Cuba."; Corral, Oscar. "Dissidents Energize Exiles, Lawmakers." *The Miami Herald*, March 23, 2005: B1.

¹⁶⁸⁷ Corral, Oscar. "Exile Group May Visit Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, March 11, 2005: 1A.

¹⁶⁸⁸ Corral, Oscar. "Dissidents Energize Exiles, Lawmakers." *The Miami Herald*, March 23, 2005: 1B.

¹⁶⁸⁹ Corral, Oscar. "Exile Group May Visit Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, March 11, 2005: 1A.; Corral, Oscar. "Dissidents Energize Exiles, Lawmakers." *The Miami Herald*, March 23, 2005: 1B.

¹⁶⁹⁰ San Martin, Nancy. "'A Triumph' In Cuba As Dissidents Gather." *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 2005: A1.

¹⁶⁹¹ San Martin. "'A Triumph' In Cuba As Dissidents Gather."

¹⁶⁹² San Martin. "'A Triumph' In Cuba As Dissidents Gather."

The European Union, Poland, German, and Italy condemned Cuba's actions.¹⁶⁹³ President Bush sent a recorded message of solidarity to the dissidents.¹⁶⁹⁴

Several Cuban-American exile organizations struggled to survive financially, stay relevant, and recruit younger members.¹⁶⁹⁵ The Spanish American League Against Discrimination (SALAD), the Camara De Comercio Latina de USA (CAMACOL), the Municipios de Cuba en el Exilio, the Hispanic Heritage Council, the Cuban American National Council (CANC), and even CANF had lost much of their appeal.¹⁶⁹⁶ The Latin Builders Association and the Cuban American Bar Association remained successful, having about 800 and 1700 members, respectively.¹⁶⁹⁷ People offered several explanations for the lack of enthusiasm for many exile organizations: less interest in the Cuban cause among younger generations, a generational divide in priorities and strategy, older members and founders unwilling to cede the reins, exile politics, a glass ceiling for women, and the idea that many were created with the expectation of disbanding when Cuba was free.¹⁶⁹⁸

Conservative Cuban-American hardliners created a stronger coalition of caucuses, organizations, and PACs to defend against attacks on the embargo in Bush's second term. Although they had somewhat evolved their policies on aid and dissident support, their

¹⁶⁹³ San Martin. "'A Triumph' In Cuba As Dissidents Gather."

¹⁶⁹⁴ San Martin. "'A Triumph' In Cuba As Dissidents Gather."

¹⁶⁹⁵ Corral, Oscar. "Hispanic Groups Look to Future." *The Miami Herald*, November 7, 2005: A1.

¹⁶⁹⁶ Corral. "Hispanic Groups Look to Future."

¹⁶⁹⁷ Corral. "Hispanic Groups Look to Future."

¹⁶⁹⁸ Corral. "Hispanic Groups Look to Future."

ideas became less popular within the dynamic Cuban-American demographic. Nevertheless, their influence on Congress was pivotal in the Congressional embargo debates and executive branch policymaking circles.

Congress and Cuba

The backlash against the anti-embargo forces on Capitol Hill gained considerably more strength in 2005. Since 2001, efforts to loosen embargo restrictions gained popularity, and proponents passed several amendments that would loosen restrictions on business and travel, even though most did not make it to the final bills due to the threat of a White House veto.¹⁶⁹⁹ The Cuba Democracy Caucus, Cuba Democracy Advocates, and the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC managed to regain some of the ground that farm-state Republicans, Democrats, the Cuba Working Group, agricultural lobbyists, and others had gained in the fight over Cuba policy.¹⁷⁰⁰

Mauricio Claver-Carone, director of the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC and Washington lobbyist for the supposedly unrelated Cuba Democracy Advocates organization, threw himself into contacting and donating to lawmakers.¹⁷⁰¹ The PAC, created in August 2003, had raised \$750,000 since then; courted high profile donors, board members, and public officials; arranged meetings phone calls with dissidents and

¹⁶⁹⁹ Bachelet. "House Blocks Efforts to Ease U.S. Sanctions Against Cuba."; Bachelet. "New Lobby Kills Threats to Embargo."; Whitefield, Mimi. "Castro lived to see renewal of diplomatic ties between U.S. and Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, November 26, 2016.

¹⁷⁰⁰ Bachelet, Pablo. "House Blocks Efforts to Ease U.S. Sanctions Against Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, July 1, 2005: A1.; Bachelet, Pablo. "New Lobby Kills Threats to Embargo." *The Miami Herald*, July 12, 2005: A1.

¹⁷⁰¹ Bachelet. "New Lobby Kills Threats to Embargo."

activists; and donated over \$250,000 to 133 House candidates and 52 Senate candidates, about 70% of which were Republican.¹⁷⁰² Thirty-three House members had switched their positions since the donations.¹⁷⁰³

U.S. legislators officially announced the formation of the bipartisan, bicameral Cuba Democracy Caucus on April 27, 2005, to promote civil society and democracy in Cuba.¹⁷⁰⁴ CANF lobbyist Camila Ruiz had been working with Congress members to create the caucus for a year to fight back the forces working against the embargo on Capitol Hill, like the Cuba Working Group.¹⁷⁰⁵ The agenda prioritized: maintain the trade and travel ban, insist that Havana allow reciprocal lobbying for U.S. interests, justice for Cuban government crimes against U.S. citizens like the shutdown of the Brothers to the Rescue planes, strengthen the flow of information to Cuba, defend the hemisphere against Castro, work with domestic and international legislations to promote democracy in Cuba, assist Cuba in transitioning to democracy, and “protect U.S. taxpayers from providing U.S. subsidies and export insurance for goods received by the Castro regime.”¹⁷⁰⁶ Freshman Representative Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (D-FL) was the whip for the Cuba Democracy Caucus and worked tirelessly among freshman and senior Congress members to consolidate support for the embargo.¹⁷⁰⁷

¹⁷⁰² Bachelet. "New Lobby Kills Threats to Embargo."; Bachelet. "House Blocks Efforts to Ease U.S. Sanctions Against Cuba."

¹⁷⁰³ Bachelet. "New Lobby Kills Threats to Embargo."

¹⁷⁰⁴ Corral, Oscar. "Caucus Wants Firm Pressure on Castro." *The Miami Herald*, April 27, 2005: A1.

¹⁷⁰⁵ Corral. "Caucus Wants Firm Pressure on Castro."

¹⁷⁰⁶ Corral. "Caucus Wants Firm Pressure on Castro."

¹⁷⁰⁷ Bachelet. "New Lobby Kills Threats to Embargo."

Flake's amendment to lift restrictions on sending personal hygiene products to Cuba failed.¹⁷⁰⁸ On June 29, the Senate defeated an amendment that would permit greater humanitarian travel.¹⁷⁰⁹ On June 30, the House voted down three separate amendments to loosen restrictions on family travel to Cuba, ease student travel to Cuba, and lift the embargo.¹⁷¹⁰ Jeff Flake and Charles Rangel continued to be leading opponents of the embargo; Cuban-American Congress members continued to defend the embargo.¹⁷¹¹ The U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council's John Kavulich noted that Castro had been purchasing fewer food products from the United States recently to provide further incentive for Congress members with agricultural interests to ease restrictions.¹⁷¹² "The Cuban government has a genetic need to be a part of the U.S. political discourse," he remarked.¹⁷¹³

Members of Congress fought over the prospect of drilling for oil in the Florida Straits as oil prices rose.¹⁷¹⁴ Representative Lincoln Diaz-Balart and CANF supported Senator Bill Nelson's proposal to sanction firms that drill in Cuban waters and ban Cuba from drilling for oil near Florida by letting a 1977 agreement regarding overlapping

¹⁷⁰⁸ Bachelet. "House Blocks Efforts to Ease U.S. Sanctions Against Cuba."

¹⁷⁰⁹ Bachelet. "House Blocks Efforts to Ease U.S. Sanctions Against Cuba."

¹⁷¹⁰ Bachelet. "House Blocks Efforts to Ease U.S. Sanctions Against Cuba."

¹⁷¹¹ Bachelet. "House Blocks Efforts to Ease U.S. Sanctions Against Cuba."; Reinhard, Beth. "Congressman's entry in Dade campaign may backfire." *The Miami Herald*, April 8, 2008.

¹⁷¹² Bachelet. "House Blocks Efforts to Ease U.S. Sanctions Against Cuba."

¹⁷¹³ Bachelet. "House Blocks Efforts to Ease U.S. Sanctions Against Cuba."

¹⁷¹⁴ Clark, Lesley. "Nelson Gains Backers for Cuban Oil Ban." *The Miami Herald*, April 29, 2006: A3.

economic zones with Cuba lapse.¹⁷¹⁵ International law, however, held that the United States could not prevent Cuba from drilling in its sovereign waters, but the legislation could have the effect of creating enough uncertainty to dissuade investors.¹⁷¹⁶ Cuba already had contracts with several foreign companies to explore offshore drilling: Canada's Sherritt International Corporation, Spain's Repsol YPF and its Norwegian and Indian partners, and Sinopec of China.¹⁷¹⁷ Senator Mel Martinez had some reservations about Nelson's bill.¹⁷¹⁸ Energy companies and Cuban-Americans took opposite sides on the debate as they fought for support from Republicans and the administration.¹⁷¹⁹ Marathon Oil Corporation wanted to bid for Cuba's oil exploration lots rather than allow foreign countries to drill off Florida's coasts.¹⁷²⁰ Like Jose Sorzano, Hardliners viewed it as "an assault on the embargo masquerading as an attempt to get energy because we need energy."¹⁷²¹ Representative Jeff Flake argued that foreign countries like China would have an advantage in a post-Castro Cuba if the United States maintained the embargo.¹⁷²²

Given the stipulations of the Helms-Burton Act, the best chance for ending the embargo lay in Congressional repeal, but the likelihood of a successful repeal was low.

¹⁷¹⁵ Clark. "Nelson Gains Backers for Cuban Oil Ban."

¹⁷¹⁶ Clark. "Nelson Gains Backers for Cuban Oil Ban."

¹⁷¹⁷ Clark. "Nelson Gains Backers for Cuban Oil Ban."

¹⁷¹⁸ Clark. "Nelson Gains Backers for Cuban Oil Ban."

¹⁷¹⁹ Newton-Small, Jay. "Bush Support Divided Over Oil, Embargo." *The Miami Herald*, June 13, 2006: C1.

¹⁷²⁰ Newton-Small. "Bush Support Divided Over Oil, Embargo."

¹⁷²¹ Newton-Small. "Bush Support Divided Over Oil, Embargo."

¹⁷²² Newton-Small. "Bush Support Divided Over Oil, Embargo."

There was bipartisan support for each side, but status quo maintenance generally prevailed over change in the U.S. political system.

Fugitives and Spies

Espionage, violence, and harboring fugitives prolonged the stalemate between the United States and Cuba and prevented reconciliation. The issues affected the Cuban-American community more acutely than the U.S. federal government in that they were often the primary victims or sources of controversies. However, these problems undermined national security as well in that Cuba shared and sold intelligence with hostile actors.

Luis Posada Carriles, who hid in El Salvador for years, turned up in Miami, where he applied for asylum.¹⁷²³ Venezuela and Cuba sought his arrest and extradition for terrorism charges.¹⁷²⁴ Even though he had been on an immigration watch list for years, Posada claimed that he had crossed the Mexican border by bus, but others suspected that Cuban exiles had brought him to the United States from Mexico on a private boat.¹⁷²⁵ He denied or deflected questions about all crimes he had allegedly committed and recanted

¹⁷²³ San Martin, Nancy. "Activist Emerged from Shadows." *The Miami Herald*, March 31, 2005: A2.; Corral, Oscar. "Posada's Presence Would Rally Exiles, Perplex U.S." *The Miami Herald*, April 3, 2005: B1.; Alfonso Chardy and Oscar Corral. "In Miami, Posada Tells of Trip." *The Miami Herald*, May 17, 2005: A1.

¹⁷²⁴ Chardy and Corral. "In Miami, Posada Tells of Trip."; "Posada Extradition Issue Poses Major Credibility Challenge for U.S." *The Miami Herald*, May 18, 2005: A12.

¹⁷²⁵ Chardy and Corral. "In Miami, Posada Tells of Trip."; Jay Weaver and Oscar Corral. "Posada Allies Denied Release." *The Miami Herald*, November 22, 2005: B1.

any previous admissions.¹⁷²⁶ Authorities arrested him in Miami on May 17 and took him to El Paso for detention and trial.¹⁷²⁷ Posada sought asylum, claiming that Fidel Castro was persecuting him, even though Posada had managed to evade Castro over several decades in several countries.¹⁷²⁸ His attorney planned to apply for Posada's citizenship because he had served in the U.S. military at the time of the Vietnam War.¹⁷²⁹

The question of what to do with Luis Posada Carriles caused a dilemma for the United States as it sought Assata Shakur's return.¹⁷³⁰ The U.S. Government added Joanne Chesimard, also known as Assata Shakur, to the terrorism watch list and offered a \$1 million reward for the capture and return of the fugitive who had escaped prison in 1979 and eventually found refuge in Cuba.¹⁷³¹ According to Philip Peters of the Lexington Institute, the United States designated nations that harbored terrorists as terrorist states and made no exceptions, which would cause a problem when other countries considered Posada a terrorist.¹⁷³² Dennis Hays said that Posada should be tried but that the United States could not trust Venezuela or Cuba to hold a fair trial or trust Venezuela not to extradite Posada to Cuba.¹⁷³³ However, the United States and Venezuela had had an

¹⁷²⁶ Chardy and Corral. "In Miami, Posada Tells of Trip."; Chardy, Alfonso. "Posada Says Castro Is Persecuting Him." *The Miami Herald*, August 31, 2005: B4.

¹⁷²⁷ Chardy. "Posada Says Castro Is Persecuting Him."

¹⁷²⁸ Chardy. "Posada Says Castro Is Persecuting Him."

¹⁷²⁹ Chardy. "Posada Says Castro Is Persecuting Him."

¹⁷³⁰ "Posada Extradition Issue Poses Major Credibility Challenge for U.S."

¹⁷³¹ Yanez, Luisa. "Exile Group to Renew Call for Capture Of Fugitive In Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, May 17, 2005: B3.

¹⁷³² "Posada Extradition Issue Poses Major Credibility Challenge for U.S."

¹⁷³³ "Posada Extradition Issue Poses Major Credibility Challenge for U.S."

extradition treaty since 1922.¹⁷³⁴ The possibility of extradition to Cuba was the administration's excuse for not extraditing him to Venezuela.¹⁷³⁵ The White House left it up to the courts.¹⁷³⁶ The judge told Posada that he would be extradited to Venezuela if he lost his case and appeals for protection.¹⁷³⁷

After Carriles returned to the United States in 2005, the FBI returned to the investigation of Luis Posada Carriles's alleged role in the 1997 Havana bombings.¹⁷³⁸ Three FBI agents traveled to Havana in fall 2006 with the cooperation of Cuban intelligence, who had blocked access to evidence for years, to conduct investigations for a federal grand jury in Newark, NJ.¹⁷³⁹ The New Jersey grand jury looked into wire transfers to Central America from exiles in New Jersey to finance Posada's alleged bombing campaigns in Cuba between 1993 and 1998.¹⁷⁴⁰ Exiles and human rights groups questioned the accuracy of any evidence from the Cuban government because of their justice system's poor reputation.¹⁷⁴¹ A Cuban intelligence officer tied Alfredo Domingo

¹⁷³⁴ Corral, Oscar. "Exiles Reluctant to Publicly Back Militant Posada." *The Miami Herald*, May 19, 2005: A1.

¹⁷³⁵ Corral. "Exiles Reluctant to Publicly Back Militant Posada."

¹⁷³⁶ Corral. "Exiles Reluctant to Publicly Back Militant Posada."

¹⁷³⁷ Chardy. "Posada Says Castro Is Persecuting Him."

¹⁷³⁸ Chardy, Alfonso. "FBI, Cuba Cooperating on Posada." *The Miami Herald*, May 3, 2007: A1.

¹⁷³⁹ Chardy. "FBI, Cuba Cooperating on Posada."

¹⁷⁴⁰ Chardy. "FBI, Cuba Cooperating on Posada."

¹⁷⁴¹ Chardy. "FBI, Cuba Cooperating on Posada."

Otero and CANF to the attacks, which CANF flatly denied, but the FBI affidavit did not.¹⁷⁴²

Due to their experience with the Elian Gonzalez media coverage, exile organizations made a conscientious effort to avoid demonstrations on behalf of Posada that might make the community look bad or distract from the dissident assembly.¹⁷⁴³ They asked others to hold off at least until there had been a determination on Posada's application for asylum and his arrest status.¹⁷⁴⁴ The Bush administration stated that it would not deport him to Venezuela or Cuba. Activist Chin Martinez accused them of making a partisan decision to not protest against Bush the way they had against Clinton, but there had also been demonstrations against Bush Sr. on behalf of Orlando Bosch.¹⁷⁴⁵

In January 2006, a federal judge indicted Dr. Carlos M. and Elsa Alvarez for working as unregistered foreign agents.¹⁷⁴⁶ It became public that the couple, who worked at Florida International University, had been spying for the Cuban government for decades.¹⁷⁴⁷ The couple had confessed to the FBI during summer 2005 and were arraigned in Washington DC in December.¹⁷⁴⁸ They did not provide classified

¹⁷⁴² Chardy. "FBI, Cuba Cooperating on Posada."

¹⁷⁴³ Corral. "Exiles Reluctant to Publicly Back Militant Posada."

¹⁷⁴⁴ Corral. "Exiles Reluctant to Publicly Back Militant Posada."

¹⁷⁴⁵ Corral. "Exiles Reluctant to Publicly Back Militant Posada."

¹⁷⁴⁶ Noah Bierman and Jay Weaver. "FBI: FIU Couple Spied for Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, January 10, 2006: A1.; Jay Weaver and Noah Bierman. "Alleged Spy Couple Did Not Recruit." *The Miami Herald*, January 11, 2006: A1.; Luisa Yanez and Noah Bierman. "Spy Case A Burden for FIU Leader." *The Miami Herald*, January 16, 2006: B1.

¹⁷⁴⁷ Bierman and Weaver. "FBI: FIU Couple Spied for Cuba."; Weaver and Bierman. "Alleged Spy Couple Did Not Recruit."; Yanez and Bierman. "Spy Case A Burden for FIU Leader."

¹⁷⁴⁸ Bierman and Weaver. "FBI: FIU Couple Spied for Cuba."

government or military secrets to the Cuban government, and there was no evidence that they recruited even though the Cuban government had asked them, but they did provide intelligence on the exile community and organizations in Miami.¹⁷⁴⁹ They had many friends in the community through their involvement at FIU and at Saint Thomas Catholic Church, and the friends felt betrayed.¹⁷⁵⁰ The many spy cases and incidents of violence in Miami and Cuba had reified the culture of distrust on both sides of the Florida Straits.¹⁷⁵¹ In the case of Carlos and Elsa Alvarez, the prosecutor revealed that the FBI had acquired their reports for the Cuban Intelligence Service on Cuban exile elites and a U.S. government study on telecommunications in Cuba.¹⁷⁵² Prosecutors believed that Carlos had been spying since 1977 and that Elsa had become involved in 1982.¹⁷⁵³ They struck plea deals in exchange for lesser charges: for Carlos, conspiring to act as an unregistered foreign agent, and for Elsa, pleading guilty to knowing about it and harboring him.¹⁷⁵⁴

Each perceived betrayal of trust made it more difficult for opposing actors to negotiate in good faith. The many spy cases and incidents of violence in Miami and Cuba reified the culture of skepticism on both sides of the Florida Straits and within the Cuban-

¹⁷⁴⁹ Bierman and Weaver. "FBI: FIU Couple Spied for Cuba."; Weaver and Bierman. "Alleged Spy Couple Did Not Recruit."

¹⁷⁵⁰ Noah Bierman And Jay Weaver. "FBI: FIU Couple Spied For Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, January 10, 2006: 1A.; Jay Weaver And Noah Bierman. "Alleged Spy Couple Did Not Recruit." *The Miami Herald*, January 11, 2006: 1A.

¹⁷⁵¹ Martin, Lydia. "Spy Culture Takes Toll On Exiles' Psyche." *The Miami Herald*, February 8, 2006: 1A.

¹⁷⁵² Jay Weaver. "U.S.: Couple shared vital data with Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, February 27, 2007: 1A.

¹⁷⁵³ Weaver. "U.S.: Couple shared vital data with Cuba."

¹⁷⁵⁴ Weaver. "U.S.: Couple shared vital data with Cuba."

American community.¹⁷⁵⁵ They exposed latent sympathies for militants but the unwillingness to defend them as adamantly and publicly as in the past.

Immigration

Competing interests at local, national, and international levels made navigating immigration issues exceptionally complex. Cuba considered U.S. immigration policies for Cubans to blame for uncontrolled migration, whereas the United States faulted Castro's political repression, economic mismanagement, and purposeful manipulation of mass exodus. Especially after 9/11, U.S. Republicans generally viewed immigration as a high security and economic threat, while Democrats sought ways to reform immigration to absorb the influx. Congress had passed few meaningful immigration reform bills in decades, even though it was often on the agenda. There was increased interest in passing comprehensive immigration reform in Bush's second term, but Bush's stance was more moderate than much of his party. The parties remained deadlocked in negotiations. Conservative Cuban-Americans, who had benefited from preferential immigration laws, rarely mobilized for immigration issues unless they differentiated Cubans. Many older exiles often viewed laws like the Cuban Adjustment Act as irrelevant to newer exiles, whose motivations often had more to do with economic considerations than political repression. As some of the most prominent Hispanics in the Republican Party, though, the Cuban-American politicians often tried to mediate between Congressional factions during immigration negotiations.

¹⁷⁵⁵ Martin, Lydia. "Spy Culture Takes Toll on Exiles' Psyche." *The Miami Herald*, February 8, 2006: A1.

A U.S. State Department report argued that Cuba was not complying with the 1994/1995 migration accords.¹⁷⁵⁶ Cuba was not stopping boats leaving the island in their territorial waters, had not permitted a new registration for the lottery since 1998, refused to accept excludables, and blocked exit visas for over 500 of the 20,000 recipients of the U.S. visa lottery, of which 171 were doctors.¹⁷⁵⁷ Cuba said that the United States was trying to provoke a mass exodus because it took too long to grant and process visas.¹⁷⁵⁸ Outgoing chief of the Havana mission, James Cason, unequivocally said earlier that month that any claims of the United States attempting to spark a mass exodus were false.¹⁷⁵⁹ Meanwhile, the number of rafters had more than doubled to 2,617 between October 2004 and September 2005 compared to October 2003 to October 2004 because of the Cuban economy's poor state.¹⁷⁶⁰ Representative Ros-Lehtinen and Senator Mel Martinez called the Cuban government untrustworthy and criticized the accords, which had established the "wet foot, dry foot" policy.¹⁷⁶¹

The Coast Guard repatriated some shipwrecked Cuban asylum seekers who had made it to a defunct bridge because the old bridge was no longer attached to the islands of the Florida Keys.¹⁷⁶² This interpretation of the "wet foot, dry foot" law infuriated

¹⁷⁵⁶ Corral, Oscar. "U.S. Says Cuba Not Trying to Halt Migrants." *The Miami Herald*, September 29, 2005: A1.

¹⁷⁵⁷ Corral. "U.S. Says Cuba Not Trying to Halt Migrants."

¹⁷⁵⁸ Corral. "U.S. Says Cuba Not Trying to Halt Migrants."

¹⁷⁵⁹ Corral. "U.S. Says Cuba Not Trying to Halt Migrants."

¹⁷⁶⁰ Corral. "U.S. Says Cuba Not Trying to Halt Migrants."

¹⁷⁶¹ Corral. "U.S. Says Cuba Not Trying to Halt Migrants."

¹⁷⁶² Larry Lebowitz and Oscar Corral. "Cubans Sent Home; Picked Wrong Bridge." *The Miami Herald*, January 10, 2006: A1.

Cuban-Americans, who again expressed disappointment in the administration's handling of Cuba policy and demanded a review of Clinton-era policies.¹⁷⁶³ Miami Mayor Manny Diaz, U.S. Senator Mel Martinez, and Representatives Mario and Lincoln Diaz-Balart called for changes to the "wet foot, dry foot" policy.¹⁷⁶⁴ CANF sent a letter to the White House and put together a coalition of exile groups to go to Washington and lobby the President to review the policy.¹⁷⁶⁵ Ramon Saul Sanchez began a hunger strike that lasted for twelve days.¹⁷⁶⁶ Lawyers of the families of the deportees challenged the decision regarding what constitutes U.S. territory.¹⁷⁶⁷ A letter from Presidential candidate George W. Bush in 2000 to Representative Lincoln Diaz Balart promised, "If I am president, my administration will conduct a thorough review of all Clinton-Gore executive decisions with respect to Cuba, including those regarding immigration policy," and exiles said Bush had not lived up to his promise.¹⁷⁶⁸ Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced that the administration was putting together another executive commission to review Cuba policies.¹⁷⁶⁹

¹⁷⁶³ Lebowitz and Corral. "Cubans Sent Home; Picked Wrong Bridge."; Frances Robles and Oscar Corral. "Cuba Policy: `Something Has to Change'." *The Miami Herald*, January 12, 2006: B4.; Susana Barciela. "A Long History: Seeking Safe Harbor and U.S. Territory." *The Miami Herald*, February 4, 2006: A22.

¹⁷⁶⁴ Lebowitz and Corral. "Cubans Sent Home; Picked Wrong Bridge."

¹⁷⁶⁵ Lebowitz and Corral. "Cubans Sent Home; Picked Wrong Bridge."; Corral, Oscar. "Boat People Lived by Forage." *The Miami Herald*, February 4, 2006: B1.

¹⁷⁶⁶ Lebowitz and Corral. "Cubans Sent Home; Picked Wrong Bridge."; Oscar Corral and Carli Teproff. "Celebration, Solidarity." *The Miami Herald*, January 16, 2006: B1.; Ovalle, David. "Migrant Dead After Chase at Sea." *The Miami Herald*, July 9, 2006: B1.

¹⁷⁶⁷ Lebowitz and Corral. "Cubans Sent Home; Picked Wrong Bridge."

¹⁷⁶⁸ Lebowitz and Corral. "Cubans Sent Home; Picked Wrong Bridge."

¹⁷⁶⁹ Lebowitz and Corral. "Cubans Sent Home; Picked Wrong Bridge."

Congress debated immigration reform, and some proposed criminalizing immigrants who lacked proper paperwork.¹⁷⁷⁰ Jorge Mas Santos created an ad to encourage Cuban-Americans to protest such proposals.¹⁷⁷¹ Senator Mel Martinez attempted to broker compromises between different sides in the Congressional debate on comprehensive immigration reform.¹⁷⁷² Mi Familia Vota en Accion's Jorge Mursuli, New Democrat Network's Joe Garcia, Miami Archbishop John C. Favalora, and Miami City Commissioner Joe Sanchez were among those who encouraged Cuban-Americans to become involved in defending humane immigration reform.¹⁷⁷³ Cuban-American women radio hosts were some of Miami's biggest detractors of undocumented immigrants.¹⁷⁷⁴

President Bush's approval ratings were below forty percent, so he went on the road to places like Miami to build up support.¹⁷⁷⁵ Florida Republicans defended him even as some in the party distanced themselves.¹⁷⁷⁶ Representative Mario Diaz-Balart praised low taxes.¹⁷⁷⁷ Bush's approval rating among Hispanics nationwide, which he had

¹⁷⁷⁰ Clark, Lesley. "TV Ad Urges U.S. Cubans To Support Law Reforms." *The Miami Herald*, April 6, 2006: B3.

¹⁷⁷¹ Clark. "TV Ad Urges U.S. Cubans To Support Law Reforms."

¹⁷⁷² Clark. "TV Ad Urges U.S. Cubans To Support Law Reforms."; Caputo, Marc. "Fla. GOP Fears Losing Hispanics." *The Miami Herald*, August 15, 2006: B1.

¹⁷⁷³ Clark, Lesley. "TV Ad Urges U.S. Cubans To Support Law Reforms." *The Miami Herald*, April 6, 2006: B3.; Chardy, Alfonso. "Archbishop Pushes Migrant 'Justice'." *The Miami Herald*, April 7, 2006: B2.

¹⁷⁷⁴ Corral, Oscar. "Women on Airwaves Setting the Agenda On Cuba Issues." *The Miami Herald*, May 8, 2006: A1.

¹⁷⁷⁵ Clark, Lesley. "President Hopes to Get, Give Boost in S. Florida." *The Miami Herald*, July 27, 2006: B3.

¹⁷⁷⁶ Clark. "President Hopes to Get, Give Boost in S. Florida."

¹⁷⁷⁷ Clark. "President Hopes to Get, Give Boost in S. Florida."

carefully built for the GOP, had fallen with the failed immigration reform attempt.¹⁷⁷⁸ In Florida, Bush went from 49 percent of the Hispanic vote in 2000 to 56 percent in 2004.¹⁷⁷⁹ Republicans had gained somewhere between 19 and 32 percentage points with Hispanics between the 1996 and 2004 presidential elections, but the immigration debates reversed the gains.¹⁷⁸⁰ Immigration was the number one issue for Hispanics, and discrimination moved to number two.¹⁷⁸¹ “The debate now breaks along two lines in Washington. Senate bill supporters want to create a “path to citizenship” for “undocumented workers.” Supporters of the House bill - opposed by all three Cuban-American representatives in Florida - want more border walls and deportations, decrying the Senate’s costly “amnesty” plan for the 11 million “illegals.””¹⁷⁸²

The United States launched a program to give defecting Cuban doctors preferential immigration status sometime in fall 2006.¹⁷⁸³ Their fast-track entry could take months due to the requirements for extra security screening for applications from states on the U.S. state sponsors of terrorism list, so applicants had to wait in safe houses.¹⁷⁸⁴ Hundreds applied within the first six months, and over one hundred had

¹⁷⁷⁸ Clark. "President Hopes to Get, Give Boost in S. Florida."; Caputo, Marc. "Fla. GOP Fears Losing Hispanics." *The Miami Herald*, August 15, 2006: B1.

¹⁷⁷⁹ Caputo. "Fla. GOP Fears Losing Hispanics."

¹⁷⁸⁰ Caputo. "Fla. GOP Fears Losing Hispanics."

¹⁷⁸¹ Caputo. "Fla. GOP Fears Losing Hispanics."

¹⁷⁸² Caputo. "Fla. GOP Fears Losing Hispanics."

¹⁷⁸³ Pablo Bachelet. "U.S. program for defecting Cuban doctors a success." *The Miami Herald*, March 11, 2007: A14.

¹⁷⁸⁴ Bachelet. "U.S. program for defecting Cuban doctors a success."

already arrived by March 2007.¹⁷⁸⁵ Cuba had 40,000 doctors and other medical workers working in 69 countries, 15,000 of whom were in Venezuela.¹⁷⁸⁶ Some Cuban doctors who had defected to the United States created Solidaridad sin Fronteras (Solidarity without Borders) in 2005, and it helped to field inquiries.¹⁷⁸⁷

Cuban exiles still advocated for Cuban refugees, but their ability to impact migration laws diminished over time. The more the public viewed Cubans as equivalent to other immigrants, the more they treated Cubans as such. Yet, immigration laws continued to give them preferential treatment, regardless of changing circumstances.

Raul Takes Over

Cuba underwent significant leadership changes in the latter half of Bush's administration, causing a political recalculation of U.S.-Cuban relations. Fidel Castro ceded power to his brother, Raul, on July 31, 2006.¹⁷⁸⁸ Immediately, rumors flew about his health and whether he died.¹⁷⁸⁹ Celebrants banged pots and pans throughout Miami because he was no longer in power.¹⁷⁹⁰ They hoped that the time for change had finally

¹⁷⁸⁵ Bachelet. "U.S. program for defecting Cuban doctors a success."

¹⁷⁸⁶ Bachelet. "U.S. program for defecting Cuban doctors a success."

¹⁷⁸⁷ Bachelet. "U.S. program for defecting Cuban doctors a success."

¹⁷⁸⁸ Corral, Oscar. "Castro Cedes Power." *The Miami Herald*, August 1, 2006: A1.

¹⁷⁸⁹ Corral. "Castro Cedes Power."; Menendez, Ana. "The `Transition' Has Begun - In Cuba And U.S." *The Miami Herald*, December 6, 2006: B1.; Frances Robles. "At 81 Or 80, Castro Still A No-Show." *The Miami Herald*, August 14, 2007: A1.; Corral, Oscar. "The day Fidel Castro ceded power to his brother." *The Miami Herald*, November 26, 2016.

¹⁷⁹⁰ Corral. "Castro Cedes Power."

come.¹⁷⁹¹ Activists in Miami prepared to return to Cuba once they received confirmation that it was time and offered their help to dissidents, the people, and potential government defectors via diplomats and local contacts.¹⁷⁹² Mothers Against Repression and the Cuban Democratic Directorate stepped up their “noncooperation campaign” to get the people to stop cooperating with the government.¹⁷⁹³ Expropriated property claimants prepared to reclaim their property or compensation, but many exile leaders urged the community to be cautious about unintentionally feeding fears that exiles would kick people out of their homes.¹⁷⁹⁴ Cuban state-controlled media drummed up opposition to exiles and support for the continuity of the revolution.¹⁷⁹⁵ The remaining members of paramilitary groups, like Alpha 66, prepared for an insurgency.¹⁷⁹⁶ The Bush administration maintained that Cubans on the island should lead the way in a democratic transition and that military intervention was not an option, but Cuba watchers debated the role that the United States should play.¹⁷⁹⁷ Condoleezza Rice offered support to democracy advocates in Cuba over Radio and TV Marti.¹⁷⁹⁸ CANF’s Pepe Hernandez was disappointed that the signals from

¹⁷⁹¹ Corral. "Castro Cedes Power."; Menendez. "The `Transition' Has Begun - In Cuba And U.S."

¹⁷⁹² De Valle, Elaine. "Exiles' Plans Dependent on Cubans, Raúl's Ouster." *The Miami Herald*, August 2, 2006: A15.

¹⁷⁹³ De Valle. "Exiles' Plans Dependent on Cubans, Raúl's Ouster."

¹⁷⁹⁴ Driscoll, Amy. "Clash Looms on Title to Land In Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, August 20, 2006: A1.

¹⁷⁹⁵ "Cuban Media Blasts Exiles in S. Florida." *The Miami Herald*, August 4, 2006: A21.

¹⁷⁹⁶ De Valle. "Exiles' Plans Dependent on Cubans, Raúl's Ouster."

¹⁷⁹⁷ Clark, Lesley. "Bush Seeks Change in Cuba; Strategy Unclear." *The Miami Herald*, August 15, 2006: A10.

¹⁷⁹⁸ "How events in Cuba shaped and reshaped Miami." *The Miami Herald*, November 26, 2016.

the administration suggested hesitance to intervene.¹⁷⁹⁹ Representative Ros-Lehtinen and lobbyist Mauricio Claver-Carone were confident that the President was willing to intervene, but Claver-Carone blamed career bureaucrats for being resistant to change in favor of stability.¹⁸⁰⁰

In light of the transfer of leadership in Cuba, Consenso Cubano (Cuban Consensus), an umbrella organization for about two dozen moderate exile organizations, released a report calling for the Bush administration and the new Congress to ease restrictions on travel, humanitarian aid, and remittances to Cuba for the sake of Cuban-American families.¹⁸⁰¹ Cuba Study Group, CANF, the Democracy Movement, the Christian Democratic Party of Cuba, and others constituted the Cuban Consensus, which said the restrictions “violate fundamental rights of Cubans, damage the Cuban family, and constitute ethical contradictions.”¹⁸⁰² Meanwhile, Senator Chris Dodd co-sponsored a bill to allow Americans to travel to Cuba.¹⁸⁰³

President Bush gave a speech on Cuba at the State Department on October 23, 2007.¹⁸⁰⁴ Bush defined his position on Cuba, called Cuba a “tropical gulag,” encouraged the people of Cuba and the military to pursue democracy, permitted NGOs to donate

¹⁷⁹⁹ Clark. "Bush Seeks Change in Cuba; Strategy Unclear."

¹⁸⁰⁰ Clark. "Bush Seeks Change in Cuba; Strategy Unclear."

¹⁸⁰¹ Corral, Oscar. "Exile Groups Join in Urging an Easing of Cuba Restrictions." *The Miami Herald*, December 4, 2006: B1.; Menendez. "The 'Transition' Has Begun - In Cuba And U.S."

¹⁸⁰² Corral. "Exile Groups Join in Urging an Easing of Cuba Restrictions."

¹⁸⁰³ Reinhard, Beth. "Obama calls for adjustments to Cuba travel ban." *The Miami Herald*, August 20, 2007.

¹⁸⁰⁴ Woods, Casey. "Bush." *The Miami Herald*, October 24, 2007.; "Reaction to President Bush's speech on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, October 24, 2007.

computers, let Cuban students access to U.S. educational scholarships, and reprimanded other countries for not doing more to help.¹⁸⁰⁵ Like many prominent conservative Cuban-Americans, the Bush administration eschewed the prospect of valuing stability over freedom, which they accused U.S. bureaucrats and other countries of doing.¹⁸⁰⁶ The Latin American Working Group pointed out that Cuba's economy had grown 11.1% in 2006, largely due to tourism, and that isolation only ensured that the United States would have little say in the future of Cuba.¹⁸⁰⁷ They continued:

Specifically, the president's speech on Cuba brings nothing new to the table. It comes at a time when the president perhaps is looking for a distraction from the declining situation in Iraq, sagging political support in Florida, and the upcoming United Nations vote condemning the United States' embargo on Cuba -- a similar vote passed 183-4 last year, the 15th consecutive loss for the United States.¹⁸⁰⁸

Fidel resigned as the President of the Council of State on February 24, 2008.¹⁸⁰⁹

The Cuban National Assembly elected Raul as the new president and catered to the older, hardline communists to reorganize leadership.¹⁸¹⁰ Cuba specialists and Miami Cubans did not believe that his exit could make a fundamental difference in Cuba until Raul was gone, and it was clear that they no longer called the shots, and even then, they lined up

¹⁸⁰⁵ Woods. "Bush."; Pablo Bachelet and Frances Robles. "Bush Calls Cuba 'A Tropical Gulag'." *The Miami Herald*, October 25, 2007: A1.

¹⁸⁰⁶ Bachelet and Robles. "Bush Calls Cuba 'A Tropical Gulag'."

¹⁸⁰⁷ "Reaction to President Bush's speech on Cuba."

¹⁸⁰⁸ "Reaction to President Bush's speech on Cuba."

¹⁸⁰⁹ Thomas, Cal. "Cuba: Adiós, in-Fidel." *The Miami Herald*, February 22, 2008: A21.

¹⁸¹⁰ Bachelet, Pablo. "Raúl Castro elected Cuba's new president." *The Miami Herald*, February 25, 2008: A1.; Bachelet, Pablo. "The Old Guard." *The Miami Herald*, February 25, 2008: A1.

ideologists to replace them.¹⁸¹¹ Bernardo Benes did note that it gave Raul “some space to make his own decisions.”¹⁸¹² Condoleezza Rice urged the government to embrace democracy.¹⁸¹³

The transfer of power in Cuba had the potential to alter the course of U.S.-Cuban relations. Raul instituted reforms, but U.S. sanctions persisted. Bush’s implication that his administration valued freedom over stability spoke volumes about his administration’s approach toward Cuba and his administration’s overall foreign policy doctrine. It also enabled other countries, such as Venezuela and China, to establish footholds and exert greater influence in Cuba vis-à-vis the United States.

Aid to Cuba

Cuban-Americans still largely determined the parameters of allowable U.S. private and public aid to Cuba, even though they often disagreed among themselves about what should be lawful. They determined who qualified to receive the aid, how much they could receive, and how to transfer it. Nevertheless, the community consistently aided their island compatriots, especially during disaster situations. The topic enabled a venue for CANF to reassert its relevance during a presidential campaign year.

A CANF study released in 2008 (echoing findings of a PWC audit, GAO, and *The Miami Herald*) found that less than 17 percent of the \$65 million in federal U.S. aid

¹⁸¹¹ "Reaction from South Floridians." *The Miami Herald*, February 20, 2008: B2.; Thomas. "Cuba: Adiós, in-Fidel.;" Bachelet. "Raúl Castro elected Cuba's new president.;" "What They're Saying." *The Miami Herald*, February 25, 2008: A20.

¹⁸¹² "Reaction from South Floridians."

¹⁸¹³ "What They're Saying."

earmarked for Cuban dissidents (the Cuba Democracy program at USAID) over the previous decade reached Cuba.¹⁸¹⁴ Instead, it mostly went to academic studies and exile organizations.¹⁸¹⁵ CANF's Pepe Hernandez offered five recommendations: permitting direct cash aid to dissidents and their families, a cost-share requirement for funding, sub-grants to independent Cuban civil society organizations, requiring a minimum of 75% of grant money to go to direct aid to Cuban civil society, and a USAID monitoring at the Interests Section in Havana.¹⁸¹⁶ This upset many grant recipients. The Cuban Democratic Directorate and the Center for a Free Cuba condemned the report as a smear on the exile community.¹⁸¹⁷

Congress placed a hold on the \$45.7 million for USAID's democracy programs in Cuba, pending a review.¹⁸¹⁸ Recent audits and allegations of improper use by grantees like the Center for a Free Cuba and the Group in Support of Democracy caused a reevaluation of the regulations and procedures.¹⁸¹⁹ The Bush administration ordered that the grants should favor international advocacy organizations over Cuban exile groups.¹⁸²⁰

¹⁸¹⁴ Hernandez, Francisco 'Pepe'. "We can't let the dissidents down." *The Miami Herald*, May 15, 2008: A21.; Chardy, Alfonso. "Exile group: Not enough money getting to Cuban dissidents." *The Miami Herald*, May 15, 2008: B1.

¹⁸¹⁵ Chardy. "Exile group: Not enough money getting to Cuban dissidents."

¹⁸¹⁶ Hernandez. "We can't let the dissidents down."

¹⁸¹⁷ Chardy, Alfonso. "Exile group: Not enough money getting to Cuban dissidents." *The Miami Herald*, May 15, 2008: B1.

¹⁸¹⁸ Robles, Frances. "Cuba Programs: Funding for free Cuba is frozen." *The Miami Herald*, July 22, 2008: B1.

¹⁸¹⁹ Robles. "Cuba Programs: Funding for free Cuba is frozen."

¹⁸²⁰ Robles. "Cuba Programs: Funding for free Cuba is frozen."; Marquez, Myriam. "Pride keeps storm aid from Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 27, 2008.

After Castro lifted the ban on Cubans owning personal cell phones and computers, which most Cuban citizens could not afford anyway, on May 20, Cuban Solidarity Day, Bush announced that the administration would allow Cuban-Americans to send cell phones to their families on the island.¹⁸²¹ The rates were still prohibitively expensive.¹⁸²² The Cuban Democratic Directorate applauded the move, but CANF said that they had been sending cell phones for years and what the dissidents really needed was greater access to money.¹⁸²³ Western Union offices in Cuba began asking dissidents picking up money if the source was a direct relative, thus using the U.S. remittance restrictions to deny funding to dissidents, who could not get jobs under the regime.¹⁸²⁴

Category 4 Hurricane Gustav hit western Cuba on August 30, 2008. Category 4 Hurricane Ike hit eastern Cuba on September 8, 2008. Ike damaged 537,000 homes and left 3.2 million people without power and 1.7 million people homeless.¹⁸²⁵ It destroyed 350 bridges, damaged 600 municipal water wells, and felled 500 miles of telephone and power poles.¹⁸²⁶ The United Nations and Babun Group Consulting estimated three to four billion dollars in damage.¹⁸²⁷ The large-scale devastation mobilized disaster relief from

¹⁸²¹ Frances Robles and Alfonso Chardy. "Bush says U.S. residents can send cellphones to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 2008.

¹⁸²² Robles and Chardy. "Bush says U.S. residents can send cellphones to Cuba."

¹⁸²³ Robles and Chardy. "Bush says U.S. residents can send cellphones to Cuba."; Reinhard. "Obama urges direct diplomacy with Cuba, Latin America."

¹⁸²⁴ Robles, Frances. "Cuba using US rules to block aid to dissidents." *The Miami Herald*, June 13, 2008.

¹⁸²⁵ Frances Robles. "Dispute delaying U.S. aid to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 12, 2008: 1A.; Roth, Daniel Shoer. "Differences set aside to help Cubans." *The Miami Herald*, September 18, 2008: B3.; Marquez, Myriam. "Pride keeps storm aid from Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 27, 2008.

¹⁸²⁶ Frances Robles. "Dispute delaying U.S. aid to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 12, 2008: 1A.

¹⁸²⁷ Frances Robles. "Dispute delaying U.S. aid to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 12, 2008: 1A.

South Florida. In addition to the license they already held to send up to \$100,000 to civil society and dissident groups in Cuba, CANF obtained a short-term OFAC license to facilitate Cuban-Americans sending up to \$250,000 in aid to the island beyond the U.S. Government's restrictions on remittances.¹⁸²⁸ Hundreds waited in line to fill out the CANF applications; they quickly reached the maximum and applied for more, but the Treasury excluded sending money to specific individuals under humanitarian assistance requirements in CANF's renewed license.¹⁸²⁹ CANF pressured the Cuban government to remove the 20% tax on converting U.S. dollars to the Cuban convertible peso (C.U.C.).¹⁸³⁰ Besides exile and international relief organizations, Jewish, Muslim, and Catholic charities were among the prominent organizations assisting relief efforts in South Florida for Cuba.¹⁸³¹

Embargo restrictions and a tense diplomatic relationship impaired U.S. efforts to provide disaster relief to Cuba.¹⁸³² By September 12, the United States government had sent \$20 million to Haiti and only \$100,000 to Cuba.¹⁸³³ The aid came quickly to Haiti,

¹⁸²⁸ "CANF gets new license to send money to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 10, 2008. ; Charles, Jacqueline. "Aid's path to Haiti, Cuba is fraught with obstacles." *The Miami Herald*, September 14, 2008: 1A.

¹⁸²⁹ Frances Robles. "Dispute delaying U.S. aid to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 12, 2008: 1A.; Marquez, Myriam. "Pride keeps storm aid from Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 27, 2008. ; "U.S. curbs post-storm aid to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 27, 2008: B2.

¹⁸³⁰ "CANF gets new license to send money to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 10, 2008.

¹⁸³¹ "CANF gets new license to send money to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 10, 2008. ; Charles, Jacqueline. "Aid's path to Haiti, Cuba is fraught with obstacles." *The Miami Herald*, September 14, 2008: 1A.; Roth, Daniel Shoer. "Differences set aside to help Cubans." *The Miami Herald*, September 18, 2008: B3.

¹⁸³² Frances Robles. "Dispute delaying U.S. aid to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 12, 2008: 1A.

¹⁸³³ Frances Robles. "Dispute delaying U.S. aid to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 12, 2008: 1A.

but poor infrastructure delayed the disbursement; the U.S. aid came slowly for Cuba due to bureaucracy, but distribution was efficient.¹⁸³⁴ Russia, China, Venezuela, Spain, Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico all quickly assisted Cuba.¹⁸³⁵ The United States initially offered to send \$100,000 and an inspection team; Cuba declined free aid and criticized what they viewed as preconditions.¹⁸³⁶ They requested the U.S. lift the sanctions that prohibited Cuba from purchases from U.S. companies on credit, despite Cuba's record of defaulting on loans.¹⁸³⁷ U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez pointed out that foreign assessment teams were standard, such as the one that Venezuela sent with their aid to Cuba.¹⁸³⁸ Representative Bill Delahunt proposed a bill in Congress to lift the "anti-family and anti-American" restrictions temporarily, even though he would have preferred it to be permanent.¹⁸³⁹ Dissidents appealed to Gutierrez and Laura Bush to support a moratorium on sanctions.¹⁸⁴⁰ The United States offered planeloads of disaster relief supplies, but Cuba declined.¹⁸⁴¹ USAID then offered to send Cuba \$6.3 million of

¹⁸³⁴ Charles, Jacqueline. "Aid's path to Haiti, Cuba is fraught with obstacles." *The Miami Herald*, September 14, 2008: 1A.

¹⁸³⁵ Frances Robles. "Dispute delaying U.S. aid to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 12, 2008: 1A.

¹⁸³⁶ Frances Robles. "Dispute delaying U.S. aid to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 12, 2008: 1A.

¹⁸³⁷ Frances Robles. "Dispute delaying U.S. aid to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 12, 2008: 1A.; Robles, Frances. "Cuba silent on latest U.S. hurricane aid offer." *The Miami Herald*, September 22, 2008. ; Marquez, Myriam. "Pride keeps storm aid from Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 27, 2008.

¹⁸³⁸ Frances Robles. "Dispute delaying U.S. aid to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 12, 2008: 1A.

¹⁸³⁹ Clark, Lesley. "U.S. Foreign Policy: Talk of lifting Cuba restrictions renewed." *The Miami Herald*, September 19, 2008: B5.

¹⁸⁴⁰ Santos, Jorge Mas. "U.S. Policy: Help Cubans enact change from within." *The Miami Herald*, October 25, 2008: A19.

¹⁸⁴¹ Robles, Frances. "Cuba silent on latest U.S. hurricane aid offer." *The Miami Herald*, September 22, 2008.

construction materials for rebuilding with no conditions. Cuba did not respond at first, but Fidel said that they did not need money from imperialists.¹⁸⁴² Gutierrez pointed out that even temporary relief from the embargo would require congressional legislation and meeting the requirements of laws like the Helms-Burton Act, which he said they knew and just used as a ploy to delay the offer of free aid; he accused the Cuban leadership of “putting pride, power and their own ego ahead of the suffering of the Cuban people.”¹⁸⁴³ According to Jose Cardenas, USAID already donated \$1.7 million to Cuba through nongovernmental organizations.¹⁸⁴⁴

Jorge Mas Santos published a set of policy recommendations at the end of October for the election’s soon-to-be-winners.¹⁸⁴⁵ He referred to Reagan’s anti-communist policies in Eastern Europe as a reference point and noted that the parties could not depend on the Cuban vote just by pay lip-service. “Two primary considerations have driven U.S. policy on Cuba: the Cuban-American vote in South Florida and avoiding a mass migration from Cuba.”¹⁸⁴⁶ He pointed out the contradiction of allowing U.S. businesspeople to trade with and travel to Cuba easily while limiting Cuban-American families’ travel and remittances and forbidding person-to-person humanitarian

¹⁸⁴² Robles, Frances. "Cuba silent on latest U.S. hurricane aid offer." *The Miami Herald*, September 22, 2008. ; Marquez, Myriam. "Pride keeps storm aid from Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 27, 2008.

¹⁸⁴³ Robles, Frances. "Cuba silent on latest U.S. hurricane aid offer." *The Miami Herald*, September 22, 2008.

¹⁸⁴⁴ Robles, Frances. "Cuba silent on latest U.S. hurricane aid offer." *The Miami Herald*, September 22, 2008.

¹⁸⁴⁵ Mas Santos. "U.S. Policy: Help Cubans enact change from within."

¹⁸⁴⁶ Mas Santos. "U.S. Policy: Help Cubans enact change from within."

assistance.¹⁸⁴⁷ He recommended that the next administration give support to internal opposition, use sanctions as bargaining chips for reform, permit direct aid to the opposition and civil society, reform the regulations for U.S.-Cuba democracy programs, and overall change their approach to Cuba policy.¹⁸⁴⁸

The presidential election and the state of the economy overshadowed other events in 2008, but Cuban-Americans always monitored the island and provided feedback to the U.S. Government. Cuban-American legislators ensured its place on the Congressional agenda and utilized their influence within the administration. Disasters tested the limits of the embargo, but more than anything, the maintenance of family connections on the island propelled demands for reform.

2008 Elections

The growing Hispanic vote was a crucial demographic for the swing state of Florida during U.S. presidential elections.¹⁸⁴⁹ Even within the Cuban-American community, the changing demographics of the electorate provided new opportunities for Democrats in historically-Republican voting blocs. Florida Hispanic voters increasingly registered as independents and less as Republicans, even in Miami-Dade County.¹⁸⁵⁰ Fifty-nine percent of Hispanic voters in Miami-Dade were registered Republicans in

¹⁸⁴⁷ Mas Santos. "U.S. Policy: Help Cubans enact change from within."

¹⁸⁴⁸ Mas Santos. "U.S. Policy: Help Cubans enact change from within."

¹⁸⁴⁹ Ferre. "Presidential Race: Puerto Rico's ironic role."

¹⁸⁵⁰ Reinhard. "Hispanics Shunning Party Labels."

1997, compared to less than half in 2007.¹⁸⁵¹ One-quarter of Miami-Dade Hispanic voters and one-third of Broward Hispanic voters were unaffiliated.¹⁸⁵² The independents tended to be younger Cuban voters or (naturalized citizens) immigrants from other Latin American countries.¹⁸⁵³ Cuban-Americans were still more Republican than the overall Hispanic community.¹⁸⁵⁴ Of nearly 1.3 million Hispanic voters in Florida, 600,000 were Cuban-American.¹⁸⁵⁵ Cuban-Americans were about seven percent of the Florida electorate.¹⁸⁵⁶ Democrats now outnumbered Republicans among Florida Hispanics.¹⁸⁵⁷ The Democratic Party had been closely monitoring changes in Florida voting patterns and looked to expand their efforts to flip Congressional seats nationwide that year to build on their 2006 gains.¹⁸⁵⁸

The three most prominent South Florida Cuban-American Representatives—
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Mario Diaz-Balart, and Lincoln Diaz-Balart—all faced major

¹⁸⁵¹ Reinhard. "Hispanics Shunning Party Labels."

¹⁸⁵² Reinhard. "Hispanics Shunning Party Labels."

¹⁸⁵³ Reinhard. "Hispanics Shunning Party Labels."

¹⁸⁵⁴ Reinhard. "Hispanics Shunning Party Labels."

¹⁸⁵⁵ Ferre, Maurice. "Presidential Race: Puerto Rico's ironic role." *The Miami Herald*, May 30, 2008: A17.

¹⁸⁵⁶ Clark. "Obama faces challenge to win over Floridians."

¹⁸⁵⁷ Casey Woods and Beth Reinhard. "McCain, Obama clash over U.S. Cuba policy." *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 2008: A1.; Vasquez, Michael. "Few fireworks fly at candidates' forum - South Florida's six congressional candidates appear together at forum." *The Miami Herald*, October 9, 2008: A1.

¹⁸⁵⁸ Beras and Clark. "It's official: Joe Garcia takes on Mario Diaz-Balart.;" Alfonso Chardy. "Ros-Lehtinen Challenged." *The Miami Herald*, February 10, 2008: B1.; Chardy, Alfonso. "Cuba issue stokes S. Florida races." *The Miami Herald*, February 25, 2008: B1.; Clark. "Ambitious challengers target three in Congress.;" Clark, Lesley. "Obama faces challenge to win over Floridians." *The Miami Herald*, May 22, 2008: A1.; Clark, Lesley. "Race For Congress: Congressional challengers, incumbents fight to the end for votes." *The Miami Herald*, November 3, 2008: A1.

challengers that year.¹⁸⁵⁹ The economy was the biggest issue in the fall of 2008 as the Great Recession hit, but analysts still tended to view the competitive races as referenda on Cuba policy.¹⁸⁶⁰ The candidates frequently remarked on one another's Cuba records, even if it was not their primary focus.¹⁸⁶¹ Regardless of whether the candidates wanted to make the election a referendum on Cuba, the issue played prominently.¹⁸⁶²

The 2007 FIU Cuba Poll showed that 64% of Miami-Dade Cuban-Americans preferred looser travel restrictions, but a September 2006 *Miami Herald* poll showed that 85.2% of Cuban-American voters in the 21st district preferred the stricter rules.¹⁸⁶³ Later in 2008, the Foundation for Normalization of U.S./Cuba Relations released a Hamilton Campaigns poll that showed that most voters in the 21st and 25th congressional districts supported unlimited Cuban exile travel to Cuba.¹⁸⁶⁴ The Democratic challengers believed that travel restrictions hurt the United States' ability to influence the island positively.¹⁸⁶⁵

¹⁸⁵⁹ Clark, Lesley. "Joe Garcia to challenge Mario Díaz-Balart." *The Miami Herald*, February 6, 2008.; Erika Beras and Lesley Clark. "It's official: Joe Garcia takes on Mario Diaz-Balart." *The Miami Herald*, February 7, 2008.; Clark, Lesley. "Ambitious challengers target three in Congress." *The Miami Herald*, February 25, 2008: B1.

¹⁸⁶⁰ Vasquez. "Few fireworks fly at candidates' forum - South Florida's six congressional candidates appear together at forum."; Clark, Lesley. "Campaign 2008: Bush Cuba policy up for test at polls." *The Miami Herald*, October 10, 2008: A1.

¹⁸⁶¹ Clark, Lesley. "Race for Congress: Congressional challengers, incumbents fight to the end for votes." *The Miami Herald*, November 3, 2008: A1.

¹⁸⁶² Chardy. "Cuba issue stokes S. Florida races."

¹⁸⁶³ Chardy. "Cuba issue stokes S. Florida races."

¹⁸⁶⁴ Chardy, Alfonso. "Generational gap found on Cuba travel." *The Miami Herald*, June 18, 2008.

¹⁸⁶⁵ Clark, Lesley. "Democratic critics: More travel to Cuba would help." *The Miami Herald*, February 19, 2008.

In late January and early February, Raul Martinez, a long-serving Mayor of Hialeah, announced that he would challenge Lincoln Diaz-Balart.¹⁸⁶⁶ Lincoln banked on loyal older voters turning out.¹⁸⁶⁷ Lincoln insisted that Cuba meet the conditions in the Helms-Burton Act before the United States would negotiate.¹⁸⁶⁸ Martinez was cautious about the idea of negotiations but did not rule them out; he wanted to be in the room if the United States talked with Cuban authorities to advocate for Cubans and the diaspora.¹⁸⁶⁹ In the predominantly Cuban-American districts that the Diaz-Balart brothers represented, the voters' top priority for Congress was withdrawing from Iraq; getting rid of Castro was sixth.

Joe Garcia announced that he would challenge Mario Diaz-Balart.¹⁸⁷⁰ The district leaned less heavily Republican than before and had the fewest Cuban-Americans of the three Hispanic districts.¹⁸⁷¹ Garcia made sure to emphasize domestic issues like the environment, the economy, and the Iraq War, particularly when rivals tried to steer the conversation to his views on Cuba, because younger Cuban-Americans and Democrats believed that the community was more interested in domestic issues and had moderated

¹⁸⁶⁶ Clark. "Joe Garcia to challenge Mario Díaz-Balart."; Beras and Clark. "It's official: Joe Garcia takes on Mario Diaz-Balart."; Chardy. "Ros-Lehtinen Challenged."; Chardy. "Cuba issue stokes S. Florida races."

¹⁸⁶⁷ Chardy. "Cuba issue stokes S. Florida races."; Putney. "Candidates: It's time for straight talk, not clichés, about Cuba."

¹⁸⁶⁸ Chardy. "Cuba issue stokes S. Florida races."

¹⁸⁶⁹ Chardy. "Cuba issue stokes S. Florida races."

¹⁸⁷⁰ Clark. "Joe Garcia to challenge Mario Díaz-Balart."; Beras and Clark. "It's official: Joe Garcia takes on Mario Diaz-Balart."; Chardy. "Ros-Lehtinen Challenged."; Chardy. "Cuba issue stokes S. Florida races."

¹⁸⁷¹ Clark. "Joe Garcia to challenge Mario Díaz-Balart."; Beras and Clark. "It's official: Joe Garcia takes on Mario Diaz-Balart."

its views on Cuba.¹⁸⁷² Garcia assured voters that he believed in maintaining the embargo but rescinding the restrictions on remittances and Cuban-American travel to the island.¹⁸⁷³ Their public appearances together, debates, and ads against each other grew increasingly acrimonious as the election approached, but they tended to focus more on domestic policy than foreign policy.¹⁸⁷⁴ Garcia criticized Diaz-Balart for focusing too much on Cuba at the expense of other issues and aligning with Bush's Cuba policies rather than the community's desires; Diaz-Balart called him soft on tyranny.¹⁸⁷⁵

Colombian-American, Jewish businesswoman Annette Taddeo faced the biggest challenge in trying to unseat Ros-Lehtinen, who had held her seat since 1989.¹⁸⁷⁶ Ros-Lehtinen closely aligned herself with Bush, maintained a hard line on Cuba, was the ranking member on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and had a strong record for

¹⁸⁷² Beras and Clark. "It's official: Joe Garcia takes on Mario Diaz-Balart.," Chardy. "Cuba issue stokes S. Florida races.," Putney, Michael. "Candidates: It's time for straight talk, not clichés, about Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 2008: A25.; Clark. "Obama faces challenge to win over Floridians.," Clark, Lesley. "Campaign 2008: Bush Cuba policy up for test at polls." *The Miami Herald*, October 10, 2008: A1.

¹⁸⁷³ Beras and Clark. "It's official: Joe Garcia takes on Mario Diaz-Balart.," Yanez, Luisa. "Local race, wider focus." *The Miami Herald*, November 2, 2008: L2.

¹⁸⁷⁴ Kaleem, Jaweed. "Campaign 2008congressional Election: Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, Democrat Joe Garcia square off in debate." *The Miami Herald*, August 23, 2008: B6.; Clark. "Challenges to Diaz-Balarts draw national attention.," Chardy, Alfonso. "Fireworks at congressional candidate forum in Miami-Dade." *The Miami Herald*, October 7, 2008.; Clark. "Anti Diaz-Balart 527 launches a new website.," Vasquez, Michael. "Few fireworks fly at candidates' forum." *The Miami Herald*, October 9, 2008: A1.; Yanez. "Congressional candidate Joe Garcia had early interest in politics.," "The Miami Herald recommends - For U.S. House District 25." *The Miami Herald*, October 14, 2008: A16.; De Valle, Elaine. "Mario Diaz-Balart: Mario Diaz-Balart unfazed by challenge to seat." *The Miami Herald*, October 14, 2008: A1.; Clark, Lesley. "Where was Lincoln?" *The Miami Herald*, October 31, 2008.; Clark, Lesley. "Race for Congress: Congressional challengers, incumbents fight to the end for votes." *The Miami Herald*, November 3, 2008: A1.

¹⁸⁷⁵ De Valle. "Mario Diaz-Balart: Mario Diaz-Balart unfazed by challenge to seat.," "The Miami Herald recommends." *The Miami Herald*, October 14, 2008: A16.; Clark. "Race for Congress: Congressional challengers, incumbents fight to the end for votes."

¹⁸⁷⁶ Chardy. "Ros-Lehtinen Challenged."

successfully advocating for her constituents on domestic issues.¹⁸⁷⁷ Like the other challengers, Taddeo focused her message on domestic issues and supported keeping the embargo but lifting the remittance and travel restrictions on Cuban-Americans.¹⁸⁷⁸ Annette Taddeo said that she admired Obama but was unwilling to “go as far as he did” on Cuba.¹⁸⁷⁹ Taddeo supported CANF’s position on ensuring 80% of democracy funding for Cuba reached dissidents.¹⁸⁸⁰

Garcia, Taddeo, and Martinez fundraised more than the Diaz-Balarts, but the Republican House incumbents had more “cash on hand.”¹⁸⁸¹ Donations came from multiple sources and increased the competitiveness of the race. They also demonstrated changing attitudes among the donor class. Jorge Mas Santos’s CRC and Carlos Saladrigas likely targeted the Diaz-Balarts when they contributed large sums to One South Florida, a 527.¹⁸⁸² Mas Santos and Saladrigas also each contributed the maximum individual donation permitted to Joe Garcia’s campaign.¹⁸⁸³ MasTec contributed \$20,000

¹⁸⁷⁷ Chardy. "Ros-Lehtinen Challenged."

¹⁸⁷⁸ Chardy. "Ros-Lehtinen Challenged."

¹⁸⁷⁹ Mazzei, Patricia. "Annette Taddeo wouldn't go as far as Obama on Cuba talks." *The Miami Herald*, May 25, 2008.

¹⁸⁸⁰ Mazzei. "Annette Taddeo wouldn't go as far as Obama on Cuba talks."

¹⁸⁸¹ Clark. "Challenges to Diaz-Balarts draw national attention."; Yanez. "Congressional candidate Joe Garcia had early interest in politics."; Vasquez. "Few fireworks fly at candidates' forum - South Florida's six congressional candidates appear together at forum."; De Valle. "Mario Diaz-Balart: Mario Diaz-Balart unfazed by challenge to seat."

¹⁸⁸² Clark, Lesley. "New 527 targets Diaz-Balarts?" *The Miami Herald*, August 13, 2008.; Clark, Lesley. "Challenges to Diaz-Balarts draw national attention." *The Miami Herald*, September 25, 2008.; Clark, Lesley. "Anti Diaz-Balart 527 launches a new website." *The Miami Herald*, October 7, 2008.

¹⁸⁸³ Clark. "New 527 targets Diaz-Balarts?"

to Garcia's campaign.¹⁸⁸⁴ Various 527s also ran ads for and against all the candidates.¹⁸⁸⁵ Patriot Majority spent \$1 million against Lincoln Diaz-Balart.¹⁸⁸⁶

Presidential candidate Barack Obama openly supported a new approach to Cuba during his campaign.¹⁸⁸⁷ In 2003, Obama said he was willing to lift the embargo but now said that he supported it.¹⁸⁸⁸ Now, Obama's priority was to roll back the 2004 restrictions on remittances and travel; he was also willing to negotiate with Castro.¹⁸⁸⁹ He supported unrestricted travel and remittances to Cuba for Cuban-Americans.¹⁸⁹⁰ In his opinion, "Cuban-American connections to family in Cuba are not only a basic right in humanitarian terms, but also our best tool for helping to foster the beginnings of grassroots democracy on the island."¹⁸⁹¹ Obama also controversially said that he would be willing to meet with the leaders of Cuba, Venezuela, and Iran, which his opponent Hillary Clinton called "irresponsible and frankly naïve."¹⁸⁹² President Bush called

¹⁸⁸⁴ Yanez, Luisa. "Congressional candidate Joe Garcia had early interest in politics." *The Miami Herald*, October 13, 2008.

¹⁸⁸⁵ Clark. "Challenges to Diaz-Balarts draw national attention."

¹⁸⁸⁶ Clark. "Race for Congress: Congressional challengers, incumbents fight to the end for votes."

¹⁸⁸⁷ Reinhard, Beth. "Obama calls for adjustments to Cuba travel ban." *The Miami Herald*, August 20, 2007.

¹⁸⁸⁸ Woods and Reinhard. "McCain: Keep Cuba embargo in place."; Woods and Reinhard. "McCain, Obama clash over U.S. Cuba policy."; Woods, Casey. "Cuban-American Response: Foundation warm to Obama's ideas." *The Miami Herald*, May 24, 2008: A4.

¹⁸⁸⁹ Andres Oppenheimer. "Time to Make Music in Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, February 28, 2008: A7.; Reinhard. "Barack Obama's First Florida Campaign Trip in Nine Months Will Include a Cuba Policy Speech."; Chardy. "Exiles See Reminders of Home."

¹⁸⁹⁰ Reinhard. "Obama calls for adjustments to Cuba travel ban."

¹⁸⁹¹ Reinhard. "Obama calls for adjustments to Cuba travel ban."

¹⁸⁹² Reinhard. "Obama calls for adjustments to Cuba travel ban."

“some” “foolish” for being willing to “negotiate with terrorists and radicals.”¹⁸⁹³ McCain considered Obama’s approach naïve and dangerous to national security.¹⁸⁹⁴ The approval rating for dialogue with the Cuban government in the FIU Cuba Poll went from 40 percent in 1991 to 65 percent in 2008.¹⁸⁹⁵

By May, Obama and McCain were the projected winners of their parties’ presidential nominations, but the race was still close between Obama and Hillary Clinton.¹⁸⁹⁶ Obama, McCain, and Clinton descended on Florida during the week of Cuban Independence Day in May.¹⁸⁹⁷ The timing and location ensured that they would present their policies on Cuba among their other foreign and domestic policy views.¹⁸⁹⁸

Cuban-American Arlene Benigno—who had experience working with Jeb Bush and Charlie Crist—was John McCain’s campaign director for Florida.¹⁸⁹⁹ McCain declined an invitation to meet with CANF because they invited Obama to speak to them in May, to which they also invited McCain and Hillary.¹⁹⁰⁰ Presidential hopeful Senator

¹⁸⁹³ Reinhard, Beth. "Bush suggests Obama wants 'appeasement,' foreign policy debate headed to FL." *The Miami Herald*, May 15, 2008.

¹⁸⁹⁴ Clark and Reinhard. "Three presidential candidates to visit Florida."; Woods and Reinhard. "McCain, Obama clash over U.S. Cuba policy."; Reinhard. "Obama rallies raucous crowd in Tampa."

¹⁸⁹⁵ Reinhard. "Hispanics Shunning Party Labels."

¹⁸⁹⁶ Reinhard. "Barack Obama's First Florida Campaign Trip in Nine Months Will Include a Cuba Policy Speech."; 1991 FIU Cuba Poll; 2008 FIU Cuba Poll

¹⁸⁹⁷ Clark and Reinhard. "Three presidential candidates to visit Florida."; Woods and Reinhard. "McCain, Obama clash over U.S. Cuba policy."; Reinhard, Beth. "Obama rallies raucous crowd in Tampa." *The Miami Herald*, May 21, 2008.

¹⁸⁹⁸ Reinhard. "Barack Obama's First Florida Campaign Trip in Nine Months Will Include a Cuba Policy Speech."

¹⁸⁹⁹ Klas, Mary Ellen. "Cuban-American woman leads McCain's Florida campaign." *The Miami Herald*, June 28, 2008.

¹⁹⁰⁰ Reinhard, Beth. "Cuban exile politics wedge McCain." *The Miami Herald*, July 8, 2008.

John McCain took a hardline approach to Cuba even though he played a significant role in ending the U.S. embargo on Vietnam.¹⁹⁰¹

McCain's May 20 event in Miami hosted relatives of the deceased Brothers to the Rescue pilots, activists, officials, and groups representing Cubans, Venezuelans, Colombians, and Nicaraguans.¹⁹⁰² He also visited a museum for Cuban political prisoners, the Casa del Preso.¹⁹⁰³ McCain criticized Obama's opposition to free trade with Colombia and his stance on Cuba, saying, "These steps would send the worst possible signal to Cuba's dictators -- there is no need to undertake fundamental reforms, they can simply wait for a unilateral change in U.S. policy."¹⁹⁰⁴ He expressed sympathy with Cuban prisoners of conscience because of his experiences as a prisoner of war.¹⁹⁰⁵ Lincoln Diaz-Balart echoed McCain's criticisms of Obama and criticized CANF for hosting Obama, calling CANF "irrelevant."¹⁹⁰⁶

Obama addressed an enthusiastic crowd at the CANF Independence Day luncheon on May 23.¹⁹⁰⁷ Before Obama took the podium, Florida House Speaker Marco Rubio said

¹⁹⁰¹ Oppenheimer, Andres. "The Oppenheimer Report: Time to make music in Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, February 28, 2008: A7.

¹⁹⁰² Clark and Reinhard. "Three presidential candidates to visit Florida."

¹⁹⁰³ Clark and Reinhard. "Three presidential candidates to visit Florida."

¹⁹⁰⁴ Woods and Reinhard. "McCain: Keep Cuba embargo in place."; Woods and Reinhard. "McCain, Obama clash over U.S. Cuba policy."

¹⁹⁰⁵ Woods and Reinhard. "McCain: Keep Cuba embargo in place."

¹⁹⁰⁶ Clark, Lesley. "Dems ding the Diaz-Balarts, Lincoln hits Obama, CANF." *The Miami Herald*, May 22, 2008.

¹⁹⁰⁷ Reinhard. "Barack Obama's First Florida Campaign Trip in Nine Months Will Include a Cuba Policy Speech."; "Cuban Independence events in South Florida."; Reinhard. "Obama urges direct diplomacy with Cuba, Latin America."; Woods. "Cuban-American Response: Foundation warm to Obama's ideas."; "Obama meets Miami Cubans on level ground." *The Miami Herald*, May 25, 2008: B1.

that U.S. leaders should never negotiate with tyrants.¹⁹⁰⁸ Jorge Mas Santos spoke of CANF's policy priorities (for an executive order) at the luncheon.¹⁹⁰⁹ He focused on making it easier to send money to dissidents through direct cash aid, engaging with "democratic forces" on the island even within the government and military, rebuilding U.S. intelligence, and lifting the 2004 travel and remittance restrictions.¹⁹¹⁰ Obama reiterated his willingness to engage in "direct diplomacy" with Cuba without preconditions.¹⁹¹¹ Obama expressed a willingness to listen to and learn from the community.¹⁹¹² CANF did not support direct diplomacy with Cuba but supported rolling back the 2004 restrictions; the invitation to speak was not an endorsement of Obama.¹⁹¹³ Leadership chose him to speak to offer a fresh perspective reflective of changing attitudes.¹⁹¹⁴

Republicans struggled with Hispanics because of the anti-immigrant rhetoric in the immigration debate on Capitol Hill in Washington.¹⁹¹⁵ The immigration policy debates were hurting the GOP with Hispanic voters; Florida Hispanic voters favored

¹⁹⁰⁸ Reinhard. "Obama urges direct diplomacy with Cuba, Latin America."

¹⁹⁰⁹ Mas Santos, Jorge. "CANF's vision for new times." *The Miami Herald*, June 7, 2008: A22.

¹⁹¹⁰ Mas Santos. "CANF's vision for new times."

¹⁹¹¹ Reinhard. "Obama urges direct diplomacy with Cuba, Latin America."

¹⁹¹² Woods. "Cuban-American Response: Foundation warm to Obama's ideas."

¹⁹¹³ Reinhard, Beth. "Cuban exile politics wedge McCain." *The Miami Herald*, July 8, 2008.

¹⁹¹⁴ Reinhard. "Obama urges direct diplomacy with Cuba, Latin America."; Woods. "Cuban-American Response: Foundation warm to Obama's ideas."

¹⁹¹⁵ Reinhard. "Lessons from Orlando for Democrats."; Lesley Clark and Beth Reinhard. "Hopeful: No Border Wall." *The Miami Herald*, May 30, 2007: B3.

Democrats in 2006 for the first time in 30 years.¹⁹¹⁶ State Representative brushed off the claim that the Cuban-American community would support the Democrats' position, saying, "They're deluding themselves if they think there's going to be any change. Cubans vote on Cuba. And they don't distinguish on travel restrictions and the embargo."¹⁹¹⁷ Mauricio Claver-Carone and the GOP operatives believed that voters ultimately supported the hardline policies on sanctions and travel and that time and time again voters had proven that when others questioned the hard line, they still preferred it; the Democratic candidates all believed that voters, like them, approved of the economic embargo but wanted looser travel restrictions.¹⁹¹⁸ President Bush helped raise money for Republicans and met with Cuban-American leaders in Miami.¹⁹¹⁹ His national approval ratings were low, but he remained popular with conservative Cuban-Americans.¹⁹²⁰ Claver-Carone credited him with fostering the most robust civil society in Cuba since the revolution.¹⁹²¹ Republicans suffered from Bush's low approval ratings, a terrible economy, home foreclosures, loss of jobs, the Democrats out-fundraising them, and Obama's campaign organizing.¹⁹²² Bush's approval rating at the time was 39 percent.¹⁹²³

¹⁹¹⁶ Reinhard. "Hispanics Shunning Party Labels."

¹⁹¹⁷ Clark. "Campaign 2008: Bush Cuba policy up for test at polls."

¹⁹¹⁸ Clark. "Ambitious challengers target three in Congress."; Woods and Reinhard. "McCain, Obama clash over U.S. Cuba policy."

¹⁹¹⁹ Reinhard. "Obama campaign in the Cuban-American community: If at first you don't succeed..."; Clark. "Campaign 2008: Bush Cuba policy up for test at polls."

¹⁹²⁰ Clark. "Campaign 2008: Bush Cuba policy up for test at polls."

¹⁹²¹ Clark. "Campaign 2008: Bush Cuba policy up for test at polls."

¹⁹²² Clark. "Race for Congress: Congressional challengers, incumbents fight to the end for votes."

¹⁹²³ Reinhard. "Hispanics Shunning Party Labels."

The local Republican candidates made sure to shore up support on Miami's Spanish-language radio stations.¹⁹²⁴

Democrats started to learn how to catch up to Republican Hispanic outreach in Florida, which they had mostly neglected for years.¹⁹²⁵ They began starting earlier in campaigns, amping up their absentee voter outreach, and creating more Spanish ads.¹⁹²⁶ The DCCC and related organizations invested more money in the districts, including Spanish language ads.¹⁹²⁷ Democrats registered more voters than Republicans.¹⁹²⁸ Democrats reserved \$3.9 million for airtime in Florida campaigns (nearly \$2 million against the Diaz-Balarts), and Republicans spent \$2.6 million to defend the Diaz-Balarts.¹⁹²⁹ The South Florida House races were competitive races that drew a lot of attention and resources.¹⁹³⁰ Democrats had put a strong emphasis that year on voter registration drives, even signing up new citizens outside of naturalization ceremonies.¹⁹³¹

¹⁹²⁴ Clark. "Race for Congress: Congressional challengers, incumbents fight to the end for votes."

¹⁹²⁵ Reinhard, Beth. "Lessons from Orlando for Democrats." *The Miami Herald*, April 28, 2007: B1.; Beth Reinhard. "Hispanics Shunning Party Labels." *The Miami Herald*, August 12, 2007: A1.

¹⁹²⁶ Reinhard. "Lessons from Orlando for Democrats."

¹⁹²⁷ Clark. "Ambitious challengers target three in Congress."; Clark, Lesley. "Joe Garcia gets help from the Dean-iacs." *The Miami Herald*, February 28, 2008.; Clark, Lesley. "Dems ding the Diaz-Balarts, Lincoln hits Obama, CANF." *The Miami Herald*, May 22, 2008.

¹⁹²⁸ Clark. "Challenges to Diaz-Balarts draw national attention."; Yanez. "Congressional candidate Joe Garcia had early interest in politics."

¹⁹²⁹ Clark. "Challenges to Diaz-Balarts draw national attention."; Clark. "Race for Congress: Congressional challengers, incumbents fight to the end for votes."

¹⁹³⁰ Yanez. "Congressional candidate Joe Garcia had early interest in politics."

¹⁹³¹ Clark. "Race for Congress: Congressional challengers, incumbents fight to the end for votes."; Reinhard. "Barack Obama's First Florida Campaign Trip in Nine Months Will Include a Cuba Policy Speech."

Puerto Rican former Miami Mayor Maurice Ferre recognized the potential impact of Hispanics on the 2008 election and set out to form a South Florida Latin American/Caribbean Policy Council.¹⁹³² "Do these Hispanics warrant a special view on current U.S. issues that affect Latin America? Why should Latinos be different from other U.S. subgroups that have special interests, like the Jewish community on Israel and the Greek Americans on Cyprus/Turkey issues?"¹⁹³³ Florida had 1.3 million Hispanic voters.¹⁹³⁴ Five hundred fifty-five thousand were Cuban-Americans, of whom 85% voted for Bush in 2004.¹⁹³⁵ An 80% turnout and a ten percentage point decrease in Republican presidential votes among Cuban-Americans would result in a 100,000 plurality gain for Obama.¹⁹³⁶ A Pew Hispanic poll showed Obama had a 66-23 percent lead over McCain with Hispanics nationwide, and his Latino coordinator announced a \$20 million national Hispanic campaign.¹⁹³⁷ Obama spent a lot of money campaigning on Spanish radio.¹⁹³⁸ Obama was winning Hispanics in every battleground state except Florida in early October 2008, but he continued to aggressively pursue Cuban-American votes with Senator Menendez and state Representative Luis Garcia.¹⁹³⁹

¹⁹³² Ferre, Maurice. "Elections: Hispanic vote keeps on growing." *The Miami Herald*, August 7, 2008: A31.

¹⁹³³ Ferre. "Elections: Hispanic vote keeps on growing."

¹⁹³⁴ Ferre. "Elections: Hispanic vote keeps on growing."

¹⁹³⁵ Ferre. "Elections: Hispanic vote keeps on growing."

¹⁹³⁶ Ferre. "Elections: Hispanic vote keeps on growing."

¹⁹³⁷ Ferre. "Elections: Hispanic vote keeps on growing."

¹⁹³⁸ Clark. "Race for Congress: Congressional challengers, incumbents fight to the end for votes."

¹⁹³⁹ Reinhard, Beth. "Obama campaign in the Cuban-American community: If at first you don't succeed...." *The Miami Herald*, October 9, 2008.

Obama led McCain in districts that had gone for Bush four years prior.¹⁹⁴⁰ Obama's campaign foreign policy advisor Frank Sanchez said that Obama would do what he could to lift the travel and remittance restrictions "within [the] possible and practical bounds of his authority."¹⁹⁴¹ Obama's win in Florida despite campaigning on changing Cuba policy gave him room to maneuver in exploring new policy options.¹⁹⁴² Obama won around 35 percent of the Cuban-American vote; he performed better in the community than any other Democratic presidential candidate had in the previous thirty years, except for Bill Clinton in 1996.¹⁹⁴³

The Diaz-Balarts won their reelections and returned to Washington, D.C., where Republicans had lost significant power.¹⁹⁴⁴ They did not have much leverage on Cuba policy with Obama.¹⁹⁴⁵ With that said, though, the Diaz-Balarts and Ros-Lehtinen won their districts, and Democrats like Senator Bob Menendez and Representative Debbie Wasserman-Schultz supported the sanctions.¹⁹⁴⁶

The GOP stance on immigration had hurt them in the election, but immigration remained a hot button issue in both parties, and Lincoln Diaz-Balart wanted to provide

¹⁹⁴⁰ Clark. "Race for Congress: Congressional challengers, incumbents fight to the end for votes."

¹⁹⁴¹ Clark. "Diaz-Balart brothers face Democrat-dominated White House and Congress."

¹⁹⁴² Clark. "Diaz-Balart brothers face Democrat-dominated White House and Congress."

¹⁹⁴³ Clark. "Diaz-Balart brothers face Democrat-dominated White House and Congress."; Woods, Casey. "Voting: Obama first Democrat to win Florida's Hispanic vote." *Miami Herald, The* (FL), November 6, 2008: A1.; William March. "Black, Hispanic Support Gave Florida To Obama". *The Tampa Tribune* (Florida). November 6, 2008 Thursday.

¹⁹⁴⁴ Lesley Clark. "Diaz-Balart brothers face Democrat-dominated White House and Congress." *The Miami Herald*, November 22, 2008.

¹⁹⁴⁵ Clark. "Diaz-Balart brothers face Democrat-dominated White House and Congress."

¹⁹⁴⁶ Clark. "Diaz-Balart brothers face Democrat-dominated White House and Congress."

bipartisan leadership on the subject and support for the Dream Act.¹⁹⁴⁷ Republicans hoped that the Diaz-Balarts could help them improve their numbers with Hispanics again in the future.¹⁹⁴⁸

Obama's election challenged a prevailing message in the Castro regime: the United States and capitalist nations were irredeemably racist, even though the Castro regime had limited Afro-Cuban representation in the communist party leadership.¹⁹⁴⁹

Mas Santos managed to gain access to the newly elected Obama administration by taking a bipartisan approach, which is what his father had done.¹⁹⁵⁰ Mas Canosa had made it clear that he never wanted either party to take Cuban-Americans for granted in the way that Democrats tended to take Black voters for granted.¹⁹⁵¹ Policies that CANF was likely to advance included: expanding Radio/TV Marti, money to opposition, maintaining the embargo but returning to pre-2004 travel and remittance restrictions.¹⁹⁵² Senator Mel Martinez admitted that it was time for a change in Cuba policy to make it less unilateral, get Cuba to remove the 20% tax on remittances, and "to have more nuance and flexibility...but not give the government a free pass."¹⁹⁵³

¹⁹⁴⁷ Clark. "Diaz-Balart brothers face Democrat-dominated White House and Congress."

¹⁹⁴⁸ Clark. "Diaz-Balart brothers face Democrat-dominated White House and Congress."

¹⁹⁴⁹ Marquez, Myriam. "Obama's win challenges Castro ideals." *The Miami Herald*, November 16, 2008: B1.

¹⁹⁵⁰ Marquez, Myriam. "Door open for CANF to help shape policy." *The Miami Herald*, November 9, 2008: B1.

¹⁹⁵¹ Marquez. "Door open for CANF to help shape policy."

¹⁹⁵² Marquez. "Door open for CANF to help shape policy."

¹⁹⁵³ Marquez. "Door open for CANF to help shape policy."

CANF's Camilla Ruiz Gallardo wrote an essay advocating change, even though it could be problematic because Cuban-Americans could not be content with Cuba's status quo.¹⁹⁵⁴ She lamented the Helms-Burton Act's weak enforcement, especially the continued waiver of Title III, compared to Reagan's approach toward communism.¹⁹⁵⁵ She said that the regime resold the \$700 million in U.S. goods that they received in 2008 for a profit.¹⁹⁵⁶ She called out the 2004 policies as being hard on families and the promotion of Cuban civil society.¹⁹⁵⁷ She concluded:

During the transfer of power from Fidel to Raúl Castro, perhaps one of the most critical moments in the past 50 years of Cuba's history, we surrendered an opportunity to bolster these forces. That's why our Cuba policy needs to be altered. This does not mean a weakening of sanctions. On the contrary, the embargo should remain in place until there is substantive, democratic reform. But we do need to move beyond today's policy that surrenders Cuba's destiny to the Castros and unleash the power of direct aid, communication and support that can lead to the transformative change we all want -- in Cuba.¹⁹⁵⁸

Unprecedented African-American turnout and an economic recession secured the victory for the first Black U.S. President, but the election illustrated significant shifts in the Cuban-American electorate. In the previous thirty years, the only Democratic presidential candidate who had performed as well as Obama with the community was Bill Clinton in 1996. Since 1996, Miami-Dade voters had split the ticket between Democrats

¹⁹⁵⁴ Ruiz Gallardo, Camila. "Current Cuba policy is weak and ineffective." *The Miami Herald*, November 16, 2008: L1.

¹⁹⁵⁵ Ruiz Gallardo. "Current Cuba policy is weak and ineffective."

¹⁹⁵⁶ Ruiz Gallardo. "Current Cuba policy is weak and ineffective."

¹⁹⁵⁷ Ruiz Gallardo. "Current Cuba policy is weak and ineffective."

¹⁹⁵⁸ Ruiz Gallardo. "Current Cuba policy is weak and ineffective."

for President and Republicans for local representation, but Obama helped make the county decisively blue for presidential candidates for the next decade.

Conclusion

Even though hardliners overpowered the Cuba policy conversation in the Bush administration and CANF's influence faded, CANF's evolution reflected the changes in the community at large. Pepe Hernandez, one of the elder statesmen and one of the prominent voices at CANF, in describing his personal conversion on Cuba policy, epitomized the progression.¹⁹⁵⁹ His comments in an interview with reporter Ana Menendez encapsulated the shift that individuals and, in many ways, the Miami Cuban community at large had undergone over the decades:

Before, we thought we could go to Cuba and invade and establish democracy by force and the U.S. would help us. Those times are over. A man like me who has struggled and dreamt has to reach the conclusion that the future does not belong to my generation. Change in Cuba has to come from inside. I'm speaking as someone who had a lot to do with the policies, or at least someone whom people want to blame for them. But Cuba has bought some \$900 million from the U.S., including the paper used to print Granma. That's something people don't understand. Embargo? What embargo? Who's ever heard of an exile group begging the U.S. government to stop them from visiting their homeland? What other group says to the U.S., 'Please don't let me help my family.' It's absurd. The worst thing for me [about the travel ban] is that there are people in my generation who asked for this.¹⁹⁶⁰

¹⁹⁵⁹ Menendez, Ana. "CANF leader's unlikely philosophical shift." *The Miami Herald*, May 17, 2008.; Luisa Yanez and Laura Figueroa. "Cuba travel changes split old, new exiles." *The Miami Herald*, April 14, 2009.; Levin, Jordan. "Juanes concert supporters show changing paradigm." *The Miami Herald*, September 20, 2009: L1.; Mazzei, Patricia. "Campaign 2010: Democratic House candidate Joe Garcia more mellow this time around." *The Miami Herald*, October 23, 2010.

¹⁹⁶⁰ Menendez. "CANF leader's unlikely philosophical shift."

On another occasion, Hernandez said that CANF did not support Bush's travel and remittance policies because "We are not the ones that should be separating Cuban families.... We have to increase the ability of exile community to support their relatives inside the island."¹⁹⁶¹ Even the Bay of Pigs veterans' brigade focused their efforts on supporting dissidents to strengthen civil society in Cuba.¹⁹⁶²

The Cuban-American community underwent a major shift during the Bush years. Polling demonstrated a steady decrease in support for hardline policies, even among Cuban-Americans. CANF moderated, and an inter-generational dispute ensued, causing the old guard to break off and form the conservative Cuban Liberty Council. The CLC became more influential during the Bush years than CANF. More Cuban-American organizations formed to represent a broader range of opinions, including more representation for Cuban-Americans who sought normalization policies, such as the Cuba Study Group. The U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC and the Cuba Democracy Caucus formed to block increasing anti-embargo movements. The proliferation of Cuban-American legislators and high-level political appointments also provided pushback. Hardline policies increasingly relied on legislators more than special interest groups. However, Cuban-Americans had little comparative influence over the immigration debate at large. By the end of his second term, Bush tightened regulations regarding the embargo, remittances, and travel. Surprisingly, Barack Obama made inroads into the Cuban-American community even though, or perhaps because, his 2008 presidential campaign

¹⁹⁶¹ Reinhard. "Obama urges direct diplomacy with Cuba, Latin America."

¹⁹⁶² Putney. "Candidates: It's time for straight talk, not clichés, about Cuba."

promised to increase remittances and Cuban-American travel again while maintaining the embargo.

Meanwhile, Cuba's domestic politics had changed significantly, as had its relationships in the international system. Venezuela's patronage helped Cuba to emerge from its economic depression. The rise of socialist governments in Latin America gave Cuba more influence in the region. Fidel's transfer of power to Raul preceded several economic liberalization measures that enabled limited private enterprise on the island. The changing domestic scenes in Washington, Miami, and Havana opened the door for President Barack Obama's historic changes.

CHAPTER 8: BARACK OBAMA

Introduction

Before he assumed office as President of the United States, Barack Obama promised Miami Cubans that he would change the U.S. approach to Cuba policy but keep the embargo. His top priority was to reverse the Bush administration's policies limiting Cuban-American travel to visit family on the island and remittances. The domestic and international scene had changed. People were eager to see what Obama would do.

By the time President Barack Obama assumed office on January 20, 2009, fifty years of post-revolution migration had resulted in a population of 1.6 million Cuban-Americans living in the United States.¹⁹⁶³ At least three generations of Cuban-Americans were politically active. The year of migration, generation, age, and where they lived within the United States had significant impacts on their political opinions. The historical exiles from the first decade or so of Castro's rule tended to be the most conservative and most preferred hardline policies. However, they were a decreasing demographic within the Cuban-American community. Moreover, even some former hardliners were giving up on the embargo after several decades. More recent migrants were more likely to have friends and family in Cuba, and younger Cuban-Americans were less conservative. More recent arrivals tended to support laws that enabled Cuban-Americans to travel to the island and send remittances, both of which Bush had cut back to cut off funds to the

¹⁹⁶³ "Hispanics of Cuban Origin in the United States, 2008 | Pew Research Center," April 22, 2010. <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2010/04/22/hispanics-of-cuban-origin-in-the-united-states-2008/>.

regime.¹⁹⁶⁴ New exiles organizations, lobbies, and PACs formed to reflect this changing dynamic. Groups that promoted dialogue and more open relations between the United States and Cuba, like the Cuba Study Group, gained prominence and rivaled traditional hardliners while other groups, like CANF, moderated their views. Meanwhile, the Cuban-American members of U.S. Congress maintained isolationist policies. This remained true for almost every national-level Cuban-American elected official during the Obama years, except for Representative Joe Garcia, even as their numbers increased in both major parties. The more moderate sectors of the community had seats at the table in executive negotiations, while more conservative sectors had more power through the legislative branch. While the President had leverage in foreign policy decisions and appointments, Congress still controlled embargo legislation and confirmed appointments. Even when Cuban-Americans strove to mediate ongoing migration debates on Capitol Hill, though, of all perennial issues related to Cuba, migration was the one over which they had the least control.

Obama had promised to roll back Bush policies on Cuban-American travel, remittances, and aid that had affected Cuban-American families' ability to maintain relationships and provide for family on the island. His Cuba goals progressed throughout his presidency, first favoring maintaining family ties, then promoting policies that fostered economic independence for Cubans on the island, and finally, making grand strides toward normalization with the Cuban government.

¹⁹⁶⁴ Zenel Garcia, interview by author. July 13, 2018.; Guillermo Grenier, interview by author, March 28, 2018.

Apart from the exile community, various domestic and international factors affected the administration's Cuba policies. Raul Castro had taken over as Cuba's head of state and instituted limited measures to liberalize sectors of the Cuban economy. Many Latin American countries embraced socialist leaders, helping to prop up Cuba and pressuring the United States to improve relations with Cuba. Every year, the United Nations overwhelmingly voted to condemn the U.S. embargo on Cuba. The broad popular opinion of U.S. citizens rejected the embargo, and even Cuban-Americans increasingly supported normalization. U.S. business sectors, like agriculture, telecommunications, and travel, were interested in expanding their markets in Cuba. Others considered ending the embargo a humanitarian issue. (Both sides of the embargo justified their position using human rights defenses.) Due to the various factors and lobbies, pro- and anti-embargo legislators existed on both sides of the aisle in Congress. Obama also had his legacy to consider.¹⁹⁶⁵ Ultimately, Obama instituted the most sweeping challenge to the Cuban embargo since President John F. Kennedy instituted broad sanctions in the early 1960s.

Reassessing

Starting in 2009, Democrats controlled the White House and both chambers of Congress. New leadership created new opportunities. The landscape of Cuba interest groups had shifted dramatically during the Bush years, but the dominant hardliners did not have the same relationship with the Democrats that they had with the Republicans

¹⁹⁶⁵ Anonymous interview with the author, June 2018.

during the Bush administration. Actors with a stake in Cuba policy jockeyed for influence. They anticipated Obama at least making changes to Cuban-American remittances and travel.¹⁹⁶⁶ Obama had to learn to navigate the Cuba policy environment and the legal limits of presidential power over Cuba policy before acting. However, he was more focused on using his political capital in his first two years to combat the economic crisis and healthcare.

Obama assembled a racially and culturally diverse group of political appointees. The predominantly Republican Cuban exile community had less representation within the Democratic Party but achieved notable leadership positions. In his first two years, Obama called Frank Mora as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Western Hemisphere, Joe Garcia as the Director of the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity in the Department of Energy, Alejandro Mayorkas as the director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and Wifredo A. Ferrer as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida.¹⁹⁶⁷ Obama nominated Cuban-Puerto Rican Carlos Garcia-Perez to direct Radio and TV Marti.¹⁹⁶⁸ Dick Lobo, a Cuban-American from Tampa who headed Radio and TV Marti under Clinton, became the International Broadcast Bureau director.¹⁹⁶⁹

¹⁹⁶⁶ Robles And Clark. " U.S.-Cuba Relations: Debate on Cuba at fever pitch." ; Luisa Yanez And Lesley Clark. "A Sea Change: Policy shift on travel, airwaves reignites exiles' debate." *The Miami Herald*, April 14, 2009: 1A.

¹⁹⁶⁷ Yanez, Luisa. "Local politico, Joe Garcia, named to Obama administration post." *The Miami Herald*, July 7, 2009.; Mazzei, Patricia. "Campaign 2010: Democratic House candidate Joe Garcia more mellow this time around." *The Miami Herald*, October 23, 2010.

¹⁹⁶⁸ Tamayo, Juan O. "Radio/TV Marti: Lawyer in line to head Martí stations." *The Miami Herald*, September 22, 2010: A6.

¹⁹⁶⁹ Tamayo. "Radio/TV Marti: Lawyer in line to head Martí stations."

CANF, which had moderated after the Elian Gonzalez incident and which hardliners had kept at bay during the Bush administration, released a report entitled, “A New Course for U.S.-Cuba Policy: Advancing People-Driven Change” with recommendations for the Obama administration.¹⁹⁷⁰ They suggested increasing the maximum allowance for remittances, rescinding the 1997 federal ban on cash, relaxing USAID aid restrictions for pro-democracy civil society groups on the island, permitting more people-to-people cultural and educational travel, and targeting specific areas for targeted diplomatic engagement.¹⁹⁷¹ Above all, they wanted to “change the emphasis to the Cuban people because they are going to be the ones who change things in Cuba,” according to Pepe Hernandez.¹⁹⁷² Andy Gomez at the University of Miami noted, “For the first time, this will not stop in Miami, but U.S. foreign policy could go directly to Havana.”¹⁹⁷³ There was the question of whether early announcements would signal more changes.¹⁹⁷⁴

Later, Representative Mario Diaz-Balart and other critics complained that USAID showed political favoritism when it granted \$3.4 million to the Foundation for Human

¹⁹⁷⁰ "CANF wants 'a new direction' in US policy." *The Miami Herald*, April 9, 2009.; "Get your CANF study here." *The Miami Herald*, April 9, 2009.; Hiaasen, Carl. "CANF makes sober proposal about U.S. policy on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, April 12, 2009: L1.

¹⁹⁷¹ "CANF wants 'a new direction' in US policy."; "Get your CANF study here."; Robles And Clark. " U.S.-Cuba Relations: Debate on Cuba at fever pitch." ; Hiaasen. "CANF makes sober proposal about U.S. policy on Cuba."

¹⁹⁷² "CANF wants 'a new direction' in US policy." ; Robles And Clark. " U.S.-Cuba Relations: Debate on Cuba at fever pitch."; Hiaasen. "CANF makes sober proposal about U.S. policy on Cuba."; Yanez And Clark. "A Sea Change: Policy shift on travel, airwaves reignites exiles' debate."

¹⁹⁷³ Robles And Clark. " U.S.-Cuba Relations: Debate on Cuba at fever pitch."

¹⁹⁷⁴ Robles And Clark. " U.S.-Cuba Relations: Debate on Cuba at fever pitch."

Rights in Cuba, an NGO formerly associated with CANF.¹⁹⁷⁵ CANF released a report in 2008 criticizing how USAID awarded money for democracy programs in Cuba and how the grantees spent the money.¹⁹⁷⁶ The U.S. Government had spent over \$200 million on Cuba democracy programs since 1996, much to Castro's chagrin.¹⁹⁷⁷ CANF also had a better relationship with the administration than the conservative Cuban lobbies and Republican Cuban-American legislators.¹⁹⁷⁸

The Obama administration, with Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State, said they wanted to transform the relationship with Cuba slowly.¹⁹⁷⁹ Domestic and international pressure on Obama to change the relationship with Cuba may have given Raul Castro the impression of being in a position of strength.¹⁹⁸⁰ Still, as the first black President of the United States, Obama presented a challenge to the predominantly white and septuagenarian Cuban leadership that historically used poor U.S. race relations against

¹⁹⁷⁵ Tamayo, Juan O. "U.S. defends \$3.4M grant to Cuba program." *The Miami Herald*, December 17, 2011.; Mazzei, Patricia. "Cuba takes center stage in extra debate between Miami congressional candidates." *The Miami Herald*, October 28, 2014.

¹⁹⁷⁶ Tamayo. "U.S. defends \$3.4M grant to Cuba program."

¹⁹⁷⁷ Eaton. "Retired spy in Brothers to the Rescue case lives in obscurity in Havana."

¹⁹⁷⁸ Tamayo. "U.S. defends \$3.4M grant to Cuba program."

¹⁹⁷⁹ Robles And Clark. " U.S.-Cuba Relations: Debate on Cuba at fever pitch."

¹⁹⁸⁰ Clark, Lesley. "After Obama olive branch, next move is Cuba's." *The Miami Herald*, April 12, 2009: A1.; Luisa Yanez And Lesley Clark. "A Sea Change: Policy shift on travel, airwaves reignites exiles' debate." *The Miami Herald*, April 14, 2009: 1A.; "After Bush's tough love, it's time to give Obama's Cuba policy a try." *The Miami Herald*, April 15, 2009: B1.

the hegemon.¹⁹⁸¹ The Cuban people admired Obama, and it was a golden opportunity to reach out to them.¹⁹⁸²

Obama's Announcement

Obama held the first-ever bilingual White House briefing to announce his Cuba policy changes on Monday, April 13, 2009.¹⁹⁸³ He fulfilled the campaign promises he made at the CANF luncheon in May 2008 and elsewhere.¹⁹⁸⁴ The new policies lifted limits on Cuban-American travel and remittances, allowed U.S. communications companies to seek Cuban contracts to expand services, and broadened which humanitarian items people could send to Cuba.¹⁹⁸⁵ In March, Congress enabled Cuban-Americans to travel to Cuba every year instead of every three years.¹⁹⁸⁶ The Obama administration challenged Cuba to lower its exorbitant fees on remittances.¹⁹⁸⁷ Dan Restrepo explained, "The President's very clear that we're getting the United States out of the business of regulating the relationship between Cuban families. The Cuban

¹⁹⁸¹ Clark, Lesley. "After Obama olive branch, next move is Cuba's." *The Miami Herald*, April 12, 2009: A1.; Yanez And Clark. "A Sea Change: Policy shift on travel, airwaves reignites exiles' debate."; "After Bush's tough love, it's time to give Obama's Cuba policy a try." *The Miami Herald*, April 15, 2009: B1.

¹⁹⁸² Clark. "After Obama olive branch, next move is Cuba's."; "After Bush's tough love, it's time to give Obama's Cuba policy a try."

¹⁹⁸³ Yanez And Clark. "A Sea Change: Policy shift on travel, airwaves reignites exiles' debate."

¹⁹⁸⁴ "After Bush's tough love, it's time to give Obama's Cuba policy a try."

¹⁹⁸⁵ Yanez And Clark. "A Sea Change: Policy shift on travel, airwaves reignites exiles' debate."

¹⁹⁸⁶ Yanez And Clark. "A Sea Change: Policy shift on travel, airwaves reignites exiles' debate."

¹⁹⁸⁷ Yanez And Clark. "A Sea Change: Policy shift on travel, airwaves reignites exiles' debate."

government should get out of the business of regulating the relationship between Cuban families.”¹⁹⁸⁸

The administration’s moderate approach left pro- and anti-embargo proponents unsatisfied.¹⁹⁸⁹ Claver-Carone pointed out that the six elected representatives that represent 95% of Cuban-Americans all opposed the plan.¹⁹⁹⁰ The Diaz-Balarts, Ninoska Perez-Castellon, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, and Bob Menendez criticized it for being unilateral, exacting no concessions, undermining the Helms-Burton Act, providing funding to prop up the regime, and enabling tyranny.¹⁹⁹¹ Senator Mel Martinez said he supported opening visits to extended family and expressed hesitations on other aspects.¹⁹⁹² Fidel said it would not be enough until Obama rescinded the embargo.¹⁹⁹³

Members of both parties, business leaders, moderate exiles, and others supported the decision, but many also hoped for more.¹⁹⁹⁴ Charter travel companies expanded

¹⁹⁸⁸ Yanez And Clark. "A Sea Change: Policy shift on travel, airwaves reignites exiles' debate."; Robles, Frances. "Cuba: Changes to Cuban travel, gift rules now official." *The Miami Herald*, September 4, 2009: B5.

¹⁹⁸⁹ Yanez And Clark. "A Sea Change: Policy shift on travel, airwaves reignites exiles' debate."; Clark, Lesley. "Reactions: President Barack Obama catches heat from all sides for easing travel limits to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, April 15, 2009: A2.

¹⁹⁹⁰ Clark. "Reactions: President Barack Obama catches heat from all sides for easing travel limits to Cuba."

¹⁹⁹¹ "Reaction on the changes in Cuba travel." *The Miami Herald*, April 13, 2009.; Luisa Yanez And Laura Figueroa. "Cuba travel changes split old, new exiles." *The Miami Herald*, April 14, 2009.; Yanez And Clark. "A Sea Change: Policy shift on travel, airwaves reignites exiles' debate."; Clark. "Reactions: President Barack Obama catches heat from all sides for easing travel limits to Cuba."; "After Bush's tough love, it's time to give Obama's Cuba policy a try."

¹⁹⁹² Yanez And Clark. "A Sea Change: Policy shift on travel, airwaves reignites exiles' debate."; "After Bush's tough love, it's time to give Obama's Cuba policy a try."

¹⁹⁹³ "After Bush's tough love, it's time to give Obama's Cuba policy a try."

¹⁹⁹⁴ "Reaction on the changes in Cuba travel."; Clark. "Reactions: President Barack Obama catches heat from all sides for easing travel limits to Cuba."

services to meet the increased demand.¹⁹⁹⁵ Polls continued to show support for the embargo diminishing.¹⁹⁹⁶ Polls showed that 70 percent of Americans favored lifting the travel ban, almost half of Americans approved ending the embargo, and 69% wanted to normalize diplomatic relations.¹⁹⁹⁷ Some members of Congress used the opportunity to introduce bills to end the ban on the rest of Americans traveling to Cuba.¹⁹⁹⁸ CANF opposed the bills; for them, it was the difference between humanitarian travel versus tourism.¹⁹⁹⁹

The changes exacerbated the tensions between Cuban-American generations and migration waves.²⁰⁰⁰ "At the core of the debate [was] the very idea of what it means to be a Cuban 'exile.'"²⁰⁰¹ They debated on Spanish radio airwaves.²⁰⁰² Ironically, both Fidel and some historic exiles supported ending the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966.²⁰⁰³ The old guard felt that more recent exiles betrayed them; for the historical exiles, travel to Cuba

¹⁹⁹⁵ Yanez And Clark. "A Sea Change: Policy shift on travel, airwaves reignites exiles' debate."

¹⁹⁹⁶ Yanez, Luisa. "Among exiles, support for trade embargo diminishes." *The Miami Herald*, September 9, 2009: A2.

¹⁹⁹⁷ Douglas, William. "Lawmakers see chance to end ban on Cuba travel." *The Miami Herald*, April 17, 2009.; Clark. "Reactions: President Barack Obama catches heat from all sides for easing travel limits to Cuba."

¹⁹⁹⁸ Douglas, William. "Lawmakers see chance to end ban on Cuba travel." *The Miami Herald*, April 17, 2009.

¹⁹⁹⁹ Douglas. "Lawmakers see chance to end ban on Cuba travel."

²⁰⁰⁰ Yanez And Figueroa. "Cuba travel changes split old, new exiles."

²⁰⁰¹ Yanez And Figueroa. "Cuba travel changes split old, new exiles."

²⁰⁰² Yanez And Figueroa. "Cuba travel changes split old, new exiles."

²⁰⁰³ Yanez And Figueroa. "Cuba travel changes split old, new exiles."; Clark. "Reactions: President Barack Obama catches heat from all sides for easing travel limits to Cuba."

undermined legitimate political asylum claims.²⁰⁰⁴ Recent arrivals obtained political asylum but traveled back to Cuba with cash for their families, which injected money into the regime's economy.²⁰⁰⁵ Newer exiles prioritized providing for families and a different conception of advancing human rights.²⁰⁰⁶ Sociologist Eugenio Rothe explained that the older exiles viewed the embargo as the last option that remained for demanding justice against the bad guys for their "unresolved mourning."²⁰⁰⁷

Obama had delayed his Cuba announcement until April 2009 to coincide with the Fifth Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago. Obama planned to discuss Cuba at the summit and request that other leaders convince Cuba to lower transaction fees on remittances.²⁰⁰⁸

The Organization of American States voted to allow Cuba to return if it adhered to certain conditions.²⁰⁰⁹ Ros-Lehtinen, Menendez, the Diaz-Balarts, and Perez-Castellon viewed it as a shameful capitulation that undermined human rights and the OAS charter.²⁰¹⁰ They and their allies considered Cuba responsible for the Pink Tide in Latin America, in which socialist heads of state resurged in the 2000s. Senior Director for Western Hemisphere affairs at the National Security Council Dan Restrepo,

²⁰⁰⁴ Yanez And Figueroa. "Cuba travel changes split old, new exiles."

²⁰⁰⁵ Yanez And Figueroa. "Cuba travel changes split old, new exiles."

²⁰⁰⁶ Yanez And Figueroa. "Cuba travel changes split old, new exiles."

²⁰⁰⁷ Yanez And Figueroa. "Cuba travel changes split old, new exiles."; Yanez, Luisa. "Trade: Among exiles, support for trade embargo diminishes." *The Miami Herald*, September 9, 2009: A2.

²⁰⁰⁸ Clark. "Reactions: President Barack Obama catches heat from all sides for easing travel limits to Cuba."

²⁰⁰⁹ "Reaction in U.S. to OAS decision." *The Miami Herald*, June 3, 2009.

²⁰¹⁰ "Reaction in U.S. to OAS decision."

Representative Kendrick Meek, Jorge Mas Santos, and former Secretary Carlos Saladrigas supported the deal because they said it put the onus on Cuba to comply with the charter if they wanted reinstatement.²⁰¹¹

The written guidelines for Obama's new Cuba regulations took effect in September 2009.²⁰¹² People who worked in telecommunications and agriculture could travel to Cuba freely.²⁰¹³ Opening U.S. telecommunications companies to Cuba put the onus on the Cuban government to permit citizens' access.²⁰¹⁴ Cuban-Americans could visit extended relatives as often as they wanted and spend as long as they desired with a bigger per diem.²⁰¹⁵ People could send more and a greater variety of gifts to Cuba, except for senior government and party officials.²⁰¹⁶ The number of U.S. travelers to Cuba increased from 150,000-200,000 in 2001, to 120,000 in 2008, to 200,000 in 2009, after Obama opened up more travel for Cuban-Americans.²⁰¹⁷

Obama's early Cuba policy changes were not drastic; they often had precedence in previous administrations and substantial public support. Only the most resolute isolationists opposed the family-focused policies rather than just the manner of implementation, but the senior isolationists had disproportionate political influence. As a

²⁰¹¹ "Reaction in U.S. to OAS decision."

²⁰¹² Robles, Frances. "Changes to Cuban travel, gift rules now official." *The Miami Herald*, September 4, 2009: B5.

²⁰¹³ Robles. "Changes to Cuban travel, gift rules now official."

²⁰¹⁴ Robles. "Changes to Cuban travel, gift rules now official."

²⁰¹⁵ Robles. "Changes to Cuban travel, gift rules now official."

²⁰¹⁶ Robles. "Changes to Cuban travel, gift rules now official."

²⁰¹⁷ Tamayo. " U.S. could ease restrictions on 'purposeful' visits to Cuba."

first-term president still working to gain consensus on other pressing domestic issues, he did not gamble his political capital, and he had to assess the situation before moving further.

Obstacles

Various obstacles impeded negotiations between the United States and Cuba, including ongoing intelligence gathering and human rights issues. Espionage threatened each country's national security, and accusations of spying undermined goodwill between governments and the Cuban diaspora.²⁰¹⁸ The United States and Cuba each refused to extradite fugitives that the other sought, such as Luis Posada Carriles and Assata Shakur. The Cuban Five spies had lingered in U.S. custody since 1998. U.S. authorities arrested and imprisoned professor Walter Kendall Myers and his wife Gwendolyn Steingraber Myers in June 2009 for gathering intelligence for Cuba.²⁰¹⁹ In December, Cuban authorities arrested and imprisoned USAID telecommunications contractor Alan Gross on accusations of spying. These incidents complicated the State Department's plans to resume migration and other talks with Cuba.²⁰²⁰

²⁰¹⁸ Eaton, Tracey. "Retired spy in Brothers to the Rescue case lives in obscurity in Havana." *The Miami Herald*, October 2, 2012.

²⁰¹⁹ Frances Robles And Lesley Clark. "Spy case muddies U.S.-Cuba talks." *The Miami Herald*, June 10, 2009: 1A.

²⁰²⁰ Robles And Clark. "Spy case muddies U.S.-Cuba talks."

The Posada Carriles trial, which had started in 2007, two years after he arrived in the United States in 2005, extended into 2011.²⁰²¹ At first, a Texas judge tried to deport Posada, but no country would take him.²⁰²² Miami exiles helped raise the money for his defense against charges that he lied to immigration officials about illegally entering the country and about his alleged role in the 1997 Havana bombings.²⁰²³ Exiles from New Jersey admitted that they had wired money to Posada in Central America.²⁰²⁴ The jury acquitted Posada of all eleven charges against him.²⁰²⁵ Pepe Hernandez and Carlos Saladrigas spoke to reporters about the Cuban community's need to move on from past violence.²⁰²⁶

Each incidence of Cuban government repression sent reverberations across the Florida Straits. The Ladies in White continued marching for political prisoners in Havana. In 2010, as they marked the seventh anniversary of the 2003 crackdown, they gave special attention to Zapata's death.²⁰²⁷ Orlando Zapata Tamayo, a young black man,

²⁰²¹ Juan O. Tamayo And Alfonso Chardy. "Judge delays Posada Carriles trial." *The Miami Herald*, February 15, 2011.

²⁰²² Chardy, Alfonso. "After being acquitted, Cuban ex-CIA agent plans to return to Miami." *The Miami Herald*, April 8, 2011.

²⁰²³ Tamayo And Chardy. "Judge delays Posada Carriles trial."; Chardy. "After being acquitted, Cuban ex-CIA agent plans to return to Miami."

²⁰²⁴ Chardy, Alfonso. "Clothing tycoon wires money to Cuban militant Posada at time of bombings." *The Miami Herald*, March 3, 2011.

²⁰²⁵ Chardy. "After being acquitted, Cuban ex-CIA agent plans to return to Miami."

²⁰²⁶ Chardy. "After being acquitted, Cuban ex-CIA agent plans to return to Miami."

²⁰²⁷ Carlos Moore. "Blacks bear the brunt of Cuba's brutality." *The Miami Herald*, February 28, 2010: 5L.; Marquez, Myriam. "Gloria Estefan at intersection of art, politics." *The Miami Herald*, March 28, 2010: B1.

died in a Cuban prison on February 23, 2010, after an 83-day hunger strike.²⁰²⁸ He had been in jail since 2003.²⁰²⁹ Activists and civil rights organizations in Cuba said it demonstrated the disproportionately aggressive and unfair treatment of Afro-Cubans.²⁰³⁰ Cuban security and civilians violently attacked the demonstrators and threw them in buses.²⁰³¹ Footage of the peaceful protesters' harassment caught the international community's attention.²⁰³² Singer Gloria Estefan organized a Little Havana solidarity march on March 25 for the dissidents and journalist Guillermo Fariñas, who had been on a hunger strike since February 24.²⁰³³ CANF, the Cuban Liberty Council, Mayor Regalado, entertainers, and former political prisoners all participated.²⁰³⁴ Actor Andy Garcia led a similar march in Los Angeles.²⁰³⁵ On April 15, the politically-independent Estefans hosted an expensive fundraiser for President Barack Obama and the Democratic National Committee.²⁰³⁶ The fundraiser upset many hardliners, but the Estefans primarily

²⁰²⁸ Moore. "Blacks bear the brunt of Cuba's brutality."; Chardy, Alfonso. "Gloria Estefan calls for march to support Cuba's 'Ladies in White'." *The Miami Herald*, March 24, 2010: A1.

²⁰²⁹ Moore. "Blacks bear the brunt of Cuba's brutality."

²⁰³⁰ Moore. "Blacks bear the brunt of Cuba's brutality."

²⁰³¹ Moore. "Blacks bear the brunt of Cuba's brutality."

²⁰³² Moore. "Blacks bear the brunt of Cuba's brutality."; Marquez. "Gloria Estefan at intersection of art, politics."; Tamayo, Juan O. "Cuba: Church: Castro to free prisoners." *The Miami Herald*, July 8, 2010: A1.

²⁰³³ Moore. "Blacks bear the brunt of Cuba's brutality."; Marquez. "Gloria Estefan at intersection of art, politics."; Marquez, Myriam. "Estefans want to get Obama's ear on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, April 11, 2010: B1.

²⁰³⁴ Moore. "Blacks bear the brunt of Cuba's brutality."

²⁰³⁵ Marquez. "Gloria Estefan at intersection of art, politics."

²⁰³⁶ Marquez. "Estefans want to get Obama's ear on Cuba."; Mazzei, Patricia. "President Obama heads to Emilio and Gloria Estefan's fundraiser." *The Miami Herald*, April 15, 2010: B1.

intended to influence Obama on Cuba politics.²⁰³⁷ As community attitudes shifted, different elites emerged among the different sectors, but all supported a wide array of dissidents rather than focusing on the dissidents who best aligned with their views.

Campaign Finance

Campaign contributions and other donations always accompanied interest group politics, and they were already on a steep upward trajectory when Obama took office. It is how the biggest donors and fundraisers wielded their strength, especially in Florida, where political candidates across the country visited to solicit donations. Lobbies and PACs already had significant impacts, and campaigns were already extraordinarily expensive. However, a 2010 Supreme Court decision had a massive impact on campaign finance that affected power dynamics. As such, very wealthy embargo supporters and detractors could leverage more influence.

A quiet but significant factor in the election was a pro-embargo political action committee established in 2003. The consequential Cuban American National Foundation floundered and split into factions after the death of Jorge Mas Canosa's death and the Elian Gonzalez incident in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In the vacuum of pro-embargo Cuban foreign policy leadership, the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC emerged as a potent force. Its large donations primarily benefited Republicans but also buoyed the campaigns of pro-embargo Democrats. Among the top donors were prominent activists and wealthy Cuban-American community members, such as Javier Garcia-Bengochea, George

²⁰³⁷ Marquez. "Estefans want to get Obama's ear on Cuba."; Mazzei. "President Obama heads to Emilio and Gloria Estefan's fundraiser."

Feldenkreis, Jorge Munilla, Felipe Valls, Fausto Diaz, Benjamin Leon, their family members, and more.²⁰³⁸ U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC donation recipients included South Florida politicians Rep. Carlos Curbelo, Rep. Alcee Hastings, Rep. Wasserman-Schultz, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Rep. Frederica Wilson, Sen. Marco Rubio, and Sen. Bill Nelson, as well as other recipients nationwide.²⁰³⁹ While these contributions on their own may not have been enough to win elections, they had the potential to swing votes on Cuba policy in Congress. Many wealthy Cuban-Americans also donated directly to candidates or candidates' PACs, such as Rubio's Reclaim America PAC.²⁰⁴⁰

The nonpartisan group, Public Campaign, which favored public campaign finance over private finance, published a report on the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC's donations and lobbying for the embargo.²⁰⁴¹ It argued that the PAC's \$10.77 million in contributions to nearly 400 members of Congress successfully stalled efforts to weaken the embargo since 2004.²⁰⁴² The top five recipients of the PAC money were the Diaz-Balarts, Ros-Lehtinen, McCain, and Menendez.²⁰⁴³ Fifty-three House Democrats, who received a total of \$850,000 at an average of \$16,344, wrote a letter to Speaker Pelosi in

²⁰³⁸ "US-Cuba Democracy PAC PAC Donors • OpenSecrets." Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.opensecrets.org/political-action-committees-pacs/C00387720/donors/2016>.

²⁰³⁹ "US-Cuba Democracy PAC PAC Donors • OpenSecrets." Accessed February 16, 2021. <https://www.opensecrets.org/political-action-committees-pacs/C00387720/donors/2016>.

²⁰⁴⁰ Leary, Alex. "Rubio PAC Doles out Money to Candidates and Consultants." Tampa Bay Times, February 1, 2018. <https://www.tampabay.com/florida-politics/buzz/2018/02/01/rubio-pac-doles-out-money-to-candidates-and-consultants/>.

²⁰⁴¹ Clark, Lesley. "Money affects Cuba policy." *The Miami Herald*, November 16, 2009: B1.; <https://www.voltairenet.org/IMG/pdf/11-16cubareportfinal.pdf>

²⁰⁴² Clark. "Money affects Cuba policy."

²⁰⁴³ Clark. "Money affects Cuba policy."

November 2009 to oppose Cuba policy changes.²⁰⁴⁴ The report alleged that at least eighteen representatives in the House changed their embargo position after receiving donations.²⁰⁴⁵ Many members of Congress defended their pro-embargo position on humanitarian grounds.²⁰⁴⁶ Claver-Carone said that the PAC merely did what any other interest group does to support the candidates that support their causes.²⁰⁴⁷

With the SCOTUS decision on *Citizens United*, independent, big-money political groups became a bigger force starting in the 2010 election.²⁰⁴⁸ The *Citizens United* ruling and subsequent decisions enabled a small pool of wealthy donors to contribute massive sums to campaigns through super-PACs and dark money organizations, gave corporations and interest groups more financial influence vis-à-vis political parties, and further contributed to the exploding costs of campaigns.²⁰⁴⁹ With the right connections, Cuban-American donors could encourage policymakers in their decision-making and help elect their preferred candidates, including more Cuban-Americans.

Leslie Miller Saiontz, Jorge Mas Santos, and Ralph Patino hosted Democratic Party fundraisers, which Obama and prominent party figures attended.²⁰⁵⁰ Patino emerged

²⁰⁴⁴ Clark. "Money affects Cuba policy."

²⁰⁴⁵ Clark. "Money affects Cuba policy."

²⁰⁴⁶ Clark. "Money affects Cuba policy."

²⁰⁴⁷ Clark. "Money affects Cuba policy."

²⁰⁴⁸ Amy Sherman And Lesley Clark. "Florida congressional races attracting national money." *The Miami Herald*, October 16, 2010: A1.

²⁰⁴⁹ Lau, Tim. "Citizens United Explained | Brennan Center for Justice," December 12, 2019. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/citizens-united-explained>.; Evers-Hillstrom, Karl. "More Money, Less Transparency: A Decade under Citizens United • OpenSecrets," January 14, 2014. <https://www.opensecrets.org/news/reports/a-decade-under-citizens-united>.

²⁰⁵⁰ Marc Caputo. "Three fundraisers, one metropolis: More details of Obama's Miami trip surface." *The Miami Herald*, November 7, 2013.; Mary Ellen Klas And Lesley Clark. "With Charlie Crist as guest,

as a major Democratic fundraiser, financing projects like the Obama campaign's Futuro Fund and creating a 501c4 called ACT ("America Como Tu") to promote Hispanic political participation.²⁰⁵¹ Additionally, he was a founding member of Cuba Now and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's U.S.-Cuba Business Council.²⁰⁵² Many senior, conservative Cuban-American business people still donated generously to Republicans, helping ensure the dominance of Cuban-Americans in Florida GOP politics and the embargo's future, but they had increasing competition.

2010 Midterm Elections

In 2010, Republicans galvanized a colossal force to take back the House. Republican-associated organizations outspent Democratic ones by nearly nine times, according to a Wesleyan Media Project study.²⁰⁵³ Although Senator Mel Martinez and Representative Lincoln Diaz-Balart retired from Congress, the 2010 elections ushered in a new class of Cuban-American elected officials. Joe Garcia resigned from the Obama administration to run against Republican politician David Rivera for the Congressional seat that Mario Diaz-Balart vacated.²⁰⁵⁴ Mario Diaz-Balart's brother Lincoln retired, and

President Obama raises cash in Miami, chats with Cuban dissidents." *The Miami Herald*, November 8, 2013.; Klas And Clark. "With Charlie Crist as guest, President Obama raises cash in Miami, chats with Cuban dissidents."; Santiago, Fabiola. "Fabiola Santiago: What the dissidents told the president." *The Miami Herald*, November 12, 2013.

²⁰⁵¹ Caputo. "Three fundraisers, one metropolis: More details of Obama's Miami trip surface."

²⁰⁵² <https://latinovictory.us/project/ralph-patino/>

²⁰⁵³ Sherman And Clark. "Florida congressional races attracting national money."

²⁰⁵⁴ Mazzei, Patricia. "President Obama heads to Emilio and Gloria Estefan's fundraiser." *The Miami Herald*, April 15, 2010: B1.

the younger brother ran for his elder brother's chair unopposed.²⁰⁵⁵ On August 7, 2009, Senator Mel Martinez had announced that he would be retiring from the Senate in 2010.²⁰⁵⁶ Former Florida State Speaker of the House, Marco Rubio, contended for the Senate seat with former Florida Governor Charlie Crist and Representative Kendrick Meek. Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Representative Albio Sires (D-NJ), and Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) defended their incumbencies.

The dynamics of the Garcia versus Rivera race were notable in how it pitted two entrenched Cuban-American politicians against one another, with one of the most ardent CANF embargo defenders of the past running as a Democrat with a softened position on the embargo. Additionally, it showed the interest and desire for Cuban-Americans, especially younger generations, to focus on domestic issues in elections but the inescapability of the embargo. Even though Cuban-American candidates Joe Garcia and David Rivera tried to focus on the biggest issue of the year, the economy, the specter of Cuba often arose.²⁰⁵⁷ Rivera had worked for CANF, Florida state congress, Radio and TV Marti, and as a consultant.²⁰⁵⁸ Both had dedicated much of their lives to Cuba policy, and

²⁰⁵⁵ Mazzei, Patricia. "President Obama heads to Emilio and Gloria Estefan's fundraiser." *The Miami Herald*, April 15, 2010: B1.

²⁰⁵⁶ Reinhard, Beth. "Democrats look to 2010 under 70-degree FL skies." *The Miami Herald*, February 26, 2009.; Reinhard, Beth. "Sink on a fundraising spree." *The Miami Herald*, March 18, 2009.

²⁰⁵⁷ Lesley Clark And Patricia Mazzei. "Candidates can't escape Cuba factor." *The Miami Herald*, September 2, 2010: 1A.; Mazzei, Patricia. "Campaign 2010: Democratic House candidate Joe Garcia more mellow this time around." ; Mazzei, Patricia. "Campaign 2010 U.S. House District 25: Rivera, Garcia forage for votes." *The Miami Herald*, November 1, 2010: B1.

²⁰⁵⁸ Clark And Mazzei. "Candidates can't escape Cuba factor."; Mazzei, Patricia. "Campaign 2010: Rivera brushes off past attacks, controversies." *The Miami Herald*, October 23, 2010.

both favored the embargo and the ban on tourism.²⁰⁵⁹ Campaign contributors who favored more engagement with the island donated to Garcia, while those who preferred a harder line supported Rivera.²⁰⁶⁰ Rivera counted on voters supporting his position because they reelected Ros-Lehtinen and the Diaz-Balarts two years prior.²⁰⁶¹ Republicans had an advantage in nationwide elections that year due to anger at the Obama administration, and Republicans outnumbered Democrats in the Florida primaries by 350,000.²⁰⁶² Demographics shifted in favor of Democrats, though: Cubans made up a smaller portion of the Hispanic vote, and the electorate became younger and less Republican.²⁰⁶³ Older Cubans voted more reliably.²⁰⁶⁴ Rivera played up the issue of Cuba on Spanish radio and attacked Garcia's bona fides.²⁰⁶⁵ Obama and Joe Garcia hosted a \$1 million Democratic fundraiser in Miami in October.²⁰⁶⁶ It was a close and vicious

²⁰⁵⁹ Clark And Mazzei. "Candidates can't escape Cuba factor."

²⁰⁶⁰ Clark And Mazzei. "Candidates can't escape Cuba factor."

²⁰⁶¹ Clark And Mazzei. "Candidates can't escape Cuba factor."; Mazzei. "Campaign 2010: Rivera brushes off past attacks, controversies."; Mazzei. "Campaign 2010 U.S. House District 25: Rivera, Garcia forage for votes."

²⁰⁶² Clark And Mazzei. "Candidates can't escape Cuba factor."

²⁰⁶³ Clark And Mazzei. "Candidates can't escape Cuba factor."

²⁰⁶⁴ Clark And Mazzei. "Candidates can't escape Cuba factor."; Jaime Suchlicki, interview by author, July 30, 2018.

²⁰⁶⁵ Clark And Mazzei. "Candidates can't escape Cuba factor."; Mazzei. "Campaign 2010: Rivera brushes off past attacks, controversies."

²⁰⁶⁶ Clark, Lesley. "President Obama and Joe Garcia stop for Cuban burgers." *The Miami Herald*, October 11, 2010.

race.²⁰⁶⁷ By mid-October, Rivera raised \$1.7 million, and Garcia raised \$1.4 million.²⁰⁶⁸ Ultimately, David Rivera prevailed over Joe Garcia in the November elections.²⁰⁶⁹

Overall, Cuban-Americans retained their numbers in Congress despite the resignations that year. Cuban-American ingénue Marco Rubio successfully rode the Tea Party wave to replace Mel Martinez in the Senate. Senator Menendez and Representatives Ros-Lehtinen, Mario Diaz-Balart, and Albio Sires retained their positions. Rubio served on the Intelligence Committee and joined Menendez on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In the 2011-2013 Congressional session, all Cuban-American Congress members except Diaz-Balart sat on either the Senate Foreign Relations Committee or the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Ros-Lehtinen served as the chair of the latter.

Incrementalism

Obama announced a new set of Cuba policy changes in January 2011.²⁰⁷⁰ The changes enabled academic and cultural exchanges to obtain licenses more easily. Any American could now send up to \$2,000 per year in remittances to help support civil society and the fledgling private sector.²⁰⁷¹ A White House official described the goals as

²⁰⁶⁷ Mazzei. "Campaign 2010 U.S. House District 25: Rivera, Garcia forage for votes."

²⁰⁶⁸ Mazzei. "Campaign 2010 U.S. House District 25: Rivera, Garcia forage for votes."

²⁰⁶⁹ Clark, Lesley. "David Rivera picks a chief of staff with Miami roots, DC experience." *The Miami Herald*, December 9, 2010.

²⁰⁷⁰ Mazzei, Patricia. "Miami archbishop, CANF praise Cuba policy changes." *The Miami Herald*, January 14, 2011.; Clark, Lesley. "Limits loosened on travel to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, January 15, 2011: A1.

²⁰⁷¹ Clark. "Limits loosened on travel to Cuba."

“to support the independence of the Cuban people, making them less dependent on the Cuban state and on Cuban authorities.”²⁰⁷² Pepe Hernandez said that Obama’s new policies would “help to break the chains of dependency that the Castro regime has traditionally used to oppress those inside Cuba. The more we can do to promote their self-reliance, their knowledge of the realities of the outside world, and their independence from the Castro regime, the better are their prospects for democratic change.”²⁰⁷³ Yet, relations with Cuba remained strained despite recent overtures.²⁰⁷⁴

Meanwhile, Raul Castro implemented policies to promote a limited private sector in Cuba and streamline bureaucracy.²⁰⁷⁵ The changes authorized small private enterprises, some property ownership and sales, self-employment, permission for small private enterprises to hire employees, tax reform, and banking changes that made loans available.²⁰⁷⁶ Havana reconsidered the “final exit” category of exit permits.²⁰⁷⁷ Cuba also had to cut rations, subsidies, and budgets for sectors like education and healthcare.²⁰⁷⁸ They delayed their plans to lay off state workers and tie wages to productivity.²⁰⁷⁹

²⁰⁷² Clark. "Limits loosened on travel to Cuba."

²⁰⁷³ Clark. "Limits loosened on travel to Cuba."

²⁰⁷⁴ Eaton, Tracey. "Retired spy in Brothers to the Rescue case lives in obscurity in Havana." *The Miami Herald*, October 2, 2012.

²⁰⁷⁵ Clark. "Limits loosened on travel to Cuba."; Tamayo, Juan O. "Repression still the rule, but Cuba sees year of change." *The Miami Herald*, December 21, 2011.

²⁰⁷⁶ Tamayo. "Repression still the rule, but Cuba sees year of change."

²⁰⁷⁷ Tamayo. "Repression still the rule, but Cuba sees year of change."

²⁰⁷⁸ Tamayo. "Repression still the rule, but Cuba sees year of change."

²⁰⁷⁹ Tamayo. "Repression still the rule, but Cuba sees year of change."

The socialist Latin American heads of state had grown increasingly impatient with the Summits of the Americas denying an invitation to Cuba. The frustration over Cuba's absence reached a boiling point at the 2012 Summit of the Americas in Cartagena, Colombia.²⁰⁸⁰ The pressure for the United States to change its relationship was mounting as well as the incentives, domestically and internationally.

2012 Elections

The 2012 elections signaled a turning point with the Cuban-American community for Obama and Democrats. All Cuban-American incumbents retained their seats except for David Rivera, who engaged in a rematch against Democrat Joe Garcia. Garcia beat Rivera by focusing less on the Cuban vote.²⁰⁸¹ Until Garcia, the Democratic Cuban-Americans in Congress came from New Jersey, where Union City had been another Cuban-American stronghold. Joe Garcia was the first Cuban-American Democrat to represent South Florida, and, even though he was a moderate, he notably deviated from other Cuban-American Congress members at times.²⁰⁸² On the other side of the Capitol, Texan Tea Party Republican Ted Cruz became the third Cuban-American U.S. Senator.

²⁰⁸⁰ Cawthorne, Andrew, and Brian Ellsworth. "Latin America Rebels against Obama over Cuba | Reuters." Reuters, April 15, 2012. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-americas-summit/latin-america-rebels-against-obama-over-cuba-idUSBRE83D0E220120416>.; Feinberg, Richard. "Cuba and the Summits of the Americas." Brookings Institute, September 5, 2014. <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/cuba-and-the-summits-of-the-americas/>.; Calmes, Jackie, and William Neuman. "Summit of Americas Meeting Ends Without Consensus Statement - The New York Times." The New York Times, April 15, 2012. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/16/world/americas/summit-of-the-americas-ends-without-consensus-statement.html>.

²⁰⁸¹ Caputo, Marc. "Rep. Joe Garcia, district are at center of Cuba clashes, policy changes."

²⁰⁸² Caputo, Marc. "Rep. Garcia's push for Cuba drug trial tests support for embargo." *The Miami Herald*, October 7, 2013.; Caputo, Marc. "Rep. Joe Garcia, district are at center of Cuba clashes, policy changes." *The Miami Herald*, October 13, 2013.

Menendez would chair the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in the 2013-2014 Congress. Most strikingly, Obama won approximately half of the Cuban-American vote in 2012.²⁰⁸³ Some pollsters claimed he might have won a slight majority.²⁰⁸⁴ Regardless, it was the best Democratic presidential candidate performance among Cuban-Americans in decades. The 2012 results may have given Obama extra confidence to continue his Cuba policy reforms.

Resuming Talks

The incremental reforms that Obama and Raul instituted to allow a greater flow of people and capital between the countries may have served as confidence-building mechanisms in U.S.-Cuba relations. Obama officials signaled that more changes were coming.

Cuba loosened its foreign travel regulations on January 14, 2013, so Cuban travelers no longer needed exit permits (*tarjetas blancas*) or mandatory invitations from

²⁰⁸³ Caputo, Marc. "Rep. Garcia's push for Cuba drug trial tests support for embargo." *The Miami Herald*, October 7, 2013.; Caputo, Marc. "Rep. Joe Garcia, district are at center of Cuba clashes, policy changes." *The Miami Herald*, October 13, 2013.

²⁰⁸⁴ Lopez, Mark Hugo, and Paul Taylor. "Latino Voters in the 2012 Election | Pew Research Center." Pew Research Center, November 7, 2012. <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2012/11/07/latino-voters-in-the-2012-election/>; Allen, Greg. "Republican Lock On Florida's Cuban-American Vote May Be Over : It's All Politics : NPR." NPR, November 16, 2012. <https://www.npr.org/sections/itsallpolitics/2012/11/16/165283004/republican-lock-on-floridas-cuban-american-vote-may-be-over>; WLRN. "Obama Got Record Share Votes From Miami Cubans | WLRN," November 12, 2012. <https://www.wlrn.org/politics/2012-11-12/obama-got-record-share-votes-from-miami-cubans>; Deruy, Emily. "Cuban-Americans No Longer a Sure Bet for the GOP - ABC News." ABC News, November 13, 2012. https://abcnews.go.com/ABC_Univision/Politics/cuban-voters-swinging-democratic/story?id=17700174; Landau French, Anya. "Obama Won Record Cuban American Vote." The Christian Science Monitor, November 8, 2012. <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Americas/Latin-America-Monitor/2012/1108/Obama-won-record-Cuban-American-vote>.

foreign hosts.²⁰⁸⁵ The government intended to improve its image (“cambio fraude,” a false change, as Paya called it), comply with international norms, or increase the flow of remittances to the island.²⁰⁸⁶ However, the government had less control over the information flowing in and out with Cuban travelers.²⁰⁸⁷ Dissidents, who previously struggled to obtain exit permits, accepted invitations to travel throughout the Americas and Europe to testify of the Cuban government’s human rights abuses.²⁰⁸⁸

Dissident blogger Yoani Sanchez appeared at several Miami events.²⁰⁸⁹ Exiles across the generations and political spectrum united in their desire for Cuba to be free from dictatorship and supported her efforts.²⁰⁹⁰ Jorge Mas Santos emphasized that Cubans on the island and the diaspora needed to unite and communicate to “break the monopoly of information the regime has on its people” by supporting communication technology, independent journalists, and Radio Marti.²⁰⁹¹ In an interview with Madrid-

²⁰⁸⁵ Whitefield, Mimi. "Globe-trotting Cuban activists sway world opinion." *The Miami Herald*, April 28, 2013.; Juan O. Tamayo And Mimi Whitefield. "Cuba, US discuss resuming direct mail; migration talks to be held next month." *The Miami Herald*, June 18, 2013.

²⁰⁸⁶ Whitefield. "Globe-trotting Cuban activists sway world opinion."

²⁰⁸⁷ Whitefield. "Globe-trotting Cuban activists sway world opinion."

²⁰⁸⁸ Whitefield, Mimi. "Blogger Yoani Sánchez hits the books at the University of Miami." *The Miami Herald*, April 2, 2013.; "Winds of change - Our Opinion: Cuban blogger Yoani Sánchez’s visit has brought together Miami exiles of all political stripes, generations." *The Miami Herald*, April 4, 2013.; Andres Viglucci And Mimi Whitefield. "Blogger Yoani Sánchez gets by with a lot of help from her friends." *The Miami Herald*, April 6, 2013.

²⁰⁸⁹ Whitefield. "Blogger Yoani Sánchez hits the books at the University of Miami."; "Winds of change - Our Opinion: Cuban blogger Yoani Sánchez’s visit has brought together Miami exiles of all political stripes, generations."; Mas Santos. "Jorge Mas Santos: Uniting what Castro has divided."; Viglucci And Whitefield. "Blogger Yoani Sánchez gets by with a lot of help from her friends."

²⁰⁹⁰ "Winds of change - Our Opinion: Cuban blogger Yoani Sánchez’s visit has brought together Miami exiles of all political stripes, generations."; Viglucci And Whitefield. "Blogger Yoani Sánchez gets by with a lot of help from her friends."

²⁰⁹¹ Mas Santos. "Jorge Mas Santos: Uniting what Castro has divided."

based blogger Joan Antoni Guerrero Vall, Sanchez admitted, “The average Cuban is apathetic and indifferent, doesn’t believe in the government but also doesn’t believe that anything is going to change.”²⁰⁹² Cubans tended to view emigration as a solution, and the departure benefitted the regime.²⁰⁹³ As a result, many newer arrivals were less engaged in U.S. politics than previous generations. However, Paya’s positive reception among ideologically-diverse Cuban-American audiences demonstrated a unity of purpose and a greater willingness to work with differing viewpoints to achieve freedom for Cuba.

Soon thereafter, in 2013, the United States and Cuba resumed mostly-secret direct talks despite remaining tensions.²⁰⁹⁴ In June, they discussed direct mail, which had not existed between the two countries for fifty years.²⁰⁹⁵ Ros-Lehtinen and Claver-Carone opposed the mail talks, but CANF and others supported them.²⁰⁹⁶ They scheduled migration talks to begin again on July 17, 2013.²⁰⁹⁷ Pope Francis and the Vatican helped

²⁰⁹² Whitefield. "Globe-trotting Cuban activists sway world opinion."

²⁰⁹³ Whitefield. "Globe-trotting Cuban activists sway world opinion."

²⁰⁹⁴ Tamayo And Whitefield. "Cuba, US discuss resuming direct mail; migration talks to be held next month."; Herrero, Ric. "Dec. 17 a day of triumph for Cuban Americans." *The Miami Herald*, December 29, 2014.; Whitefield, Mimi. "U.S. says Cuba has released all 53 political prisoners." *The Miami Herald*, January 12, 2015.

²⁰⁹⁵ Tamayo And Whitefield. "Cuba, US discuss resuming direct mail; migration talks to be held next month."; Herrero. "Dec. 17 a day of triumph for Cuban Americans."; Whitefield. "U.S. says Cuba has released all 53 political prisoners."

²⁰⁹⁶ Tamayo And Whitefield. "Cuba, US discuss resuming direct mail; migration talks to be held next month."

²⁰⁹⁷ Tamayo And Whitefield. "Cuba, US discuss resuming direct mail; migration talks to be held next month."

initiate the discussions between the United States and Cuba and urged them to find solutions for their prisoners.²⁰⁹⁸

Small signs suggested that the U.S.-Cuba relationship was improving, but the governments kept the majority of the negotiations from public knowledge because of the historical precariousness of the relationship and the many interests involved. As Cuban experts William LeoGrande and Peter Kornbluh have written, back-channel communications have a long history in U.S.-Cuba relations, and Obama relied heavily on them, as well as secret meetings via official channels. Negotiators did not invite hardline legislators and activists to the discussions, but the administration did consult with more moderate and liberal members of the community. Yet, the expansive reforms did not emerge until after the 2014 midterm elections, when Obama was a lame duck and when the announcement could no longer affect elections that could determine House and Senate majorities that would determine Obama's ability to pass legislation.

2014 Midterm Elections

Florida House District 26 continued to be the most competitive district with a significant Cuban constituency. The moderate campaigns that candidates ran mirrored the tenor of the dynamic electorate. Incumbent Democratic Representative Joe Garcia faced

²⁰⁹⁸ Michael Vasquez and Marc Caputo. "History-maker: President Barack Obama, Raúl Castro open talks to thaw U.S.-Cuba relations." *The Miami Herald*, December 17, 2014.; Whitefield, Mimi. "Castro lived to see renewal of diplomatic ties between U.S. and Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, November 26, 2016.

Republican challenger Carlos Curbelo in 2014.²⁰⁹⁹ Both campaigned as moderates.²¹⁰⁰ As part of younger generations, they tried to focus on domestic matters rather than Cuba, but Cuba inevitably came up.²¹⁰¹ About a week or two before the election, they began debating about Cuba more extensively.²¹⁰² Unlike Curbelo, Garcia supported increased travel and remittances.²¹⁰³ Unlike Garcia, Curbelo supported tightening the Cuban Adjustment Act, which was popular among older, more conservative Cuban-Americans.²¹⁰⁴ Curbelo and allies criticized Garcia's tenure at CANF for "dividing our community" and ran ads calling Garcia a communist.²¹⁰⁵ They attacked one another's donors' and supporters' relationships with Cuba.²¹⁰⁶ In the end, Curbelo triumphed 51.5% to 48.5%.

Republicans won both chambers of Congress, and all of the other Cuban-American incumbents returned. Representatives Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Mario Diaz-Balart ran unopposed. Cuban-American Republican Alex Mooney joined the House of

²⁰⁹⁹ Mazzei, Patricia. "Miami Rep. Joe Garcia faces tough challenge from Carlos Curbelo." *The Miami Herald*, October 18, 2014.; Mazzei, Patricia. "Cuba takes center stage in extra debate between Miami congressional candidates." *The Miami Herald*, October 28, 2014.; Mazzei, Patricia. "Cuba politics maze traps Joe Garcia, Carlos Curbelo." *The Miami Herald*, October 30, 2014.

²¹⁰⁰ Mazzei. "Miami Rep. Joe Garcia faces tough challenge from Carlos Curbelo."; Mazzei. "Cuba politics maze traps Joe Garcia, Carlos Curbelo."

²¹⁰¹ Mazzei. "Cuba takes center stage in extra debate between Miami congressional candidates."; Mazzei. "Cuba politics maze traps Joe Garcia, Carlos Curbelo."

²¹⁰² Mazzei. "Cuba takes center stage in extra debate between Miami congressional candidates."; Mazzei. "Cuba politics maze traps Joe Garcia, Carlos Curbelo."

²¹⁰³ Mazzei. "Cuba takes center stage in extra debate between Miami congressional candidates."

²¹⁰⁴ Mazzei. "Cuba takes center stage in extra debate between Miami congressional candidates."

²¹⁰⁵ Mazzei. "Cuba takes center stage in extra debate between Miami congressional candidates."; Mazzei. "Cuba politics maze traps Joe Garcia, Carlos Curbelo."

²¹⁰⁶ Mazzei. "Cuba takes center stage in extra debate between Miami congressional candidates."

Representatives as a representative from West Virginia. The number of Cuban-Americans in Congress now reached eight: five in the House and three in the Senate. Decades of political investment in the community paid dividends.

The Thaw

On Wednesday, December 17, 2014, also known as “17D,” Barack Obama and Raul Castro announced historic changes in their countries’ bilateral relationship.²¹⁰⁷ Obama’s address acknowledged that change is difficult and pointed out that the United States already engages with China and Vietnam.²¹⁰⁸ Every other country in the hemisphere had normalized diplomatic ties with Cuba except the United States.²¹⁰⁹ The United States pledged to upgrade the U.S. Interests Section in Havana to an embassy, release the jailed and paroled Cuban Five, increase travel and remittances, and review Cuba’s State Sponsor of Terrorism designation.²¹¹⁰ Cuba would release American contractor Alan Gross, an unnamed Cuban whose work as a U.S. informant led to the arrests of several high-profile Cuban spies in the United States, and, separately, 53 other

²¹⁰⁷ Michael Vasquez and Marc Caputo. "History-maker: President Barack Obama, Raúl Castro open talks to thaw U.S.-Cuba relations." *The Miami Herald*, December 17, 2014.

²¹⁰⁸ Vasquez and Caputo. "History-maker: President Barack Obama, Raúl Castro open talks to thaw U.S.-Cuba relations."

²¹⁰⁹ Whitefield, Mimi. "Historic thaw: U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties will be reestablished Monday." *The Miami Herald*, July 18, 2015.

²¹¹⁰ Vasquez and Caputo. "History-maker: President Barack Obama, Raúl Castro open talks to thaw U.S.-Cuba relations."

political prisoners that were not a part of the brokered deal.²¹¹¹ Cuba would also reopen their embassy in Washington and allow International Red Cross and United Nations observers to monitor human rights on the island.²¹¹² Hardline Cuban-Americans called Obama the “Appeaser in Chief” because they believed he had rewarded the Cuban regime and extracted few meaningful concessions.²¹¹³ Rubio believed that many of the policies “skirt[ed] the law” and vowed to counter Obama’s measures via the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.²¹¹⁴ Mario Diaz-Balart planned to use his role on the House budget committees that oversee funding for the Treasury and State Departments to stop the measures; Ros-Lehtinen and others also battled in the House to prevent the enactment of the policies.²¹¹⁵ CANF’s statement said that the policies’ success would depend on Cuba’s reciprocation regarding political prisoners, repression, access to information, and “substantial, unreversed, progress in human, economic, civil and political rights for all of the Cuban people.”²¹¹⁶ U.S. organizations and businesses prepared for opportunities in

²¹¹¹ Vasquez and Caputo. "History-maker: President Barack Obama, Raúl Castro open talks to thaw U.S.-Cuba relations."; Whitefield, Mimi. "Human rights activists search for signs of Cuban prisoner release." *The Miami Herald*, January 6, 2015.

²¹¹² Herrero, Ric. "Dec. 17 a day of triumph for Cuban Americans." *The Miami Herald*, December 29, 2014.

²¹¹³ Vasquez and Caputo. "History-maker: President Barack Obama, Raúl Castro open talks to thaw U.S.-Cuba relations."; Anonymous interview with the author, June 2018.; Frank Calzon, interview with the author, May 11, 2018.; James Cason, interview by the author, June 26, 2018.; Daniel Pedreira, interview by the author, May 3, 2018.; Anonymous, interview by the author, May 9, 2018.

²¹¹⁴ Vasquez and Caputo. "History-maker: President Barack Obama, Raúl Castro open talks to thaw U.S.-Cuba relations."; Whitefield, Mimi. "U.S., Cuba embark on a new future." *The Miami Herald*, January 17, 2015.

²¹¹⁵ Vasquez and Caputo. "History-maker: President Barack Obama, Raúl Castro open talks to thaw U.S.-Cuba relations."; Whitefield. "U.S., Cuba embark on a new future."

²¹¹⁶ Vasquez and Caputo. "History-maker: President Barack Obama, Raúl Castro open talks to thaw U.S.-Cuba relations."

the fields of cuentapropistas, agriculture, construction materials, telecommunications, technology, shipping, and tourism.²¹¹⁷ Others waited for the Cuban government to react before investing.²¹¹⁸ Obama wanted to continue to efforts and work with Congress to end the embargo.²¹¹⁹

Washington had recovered Cuba policy from Miami, according to *Herald* writer Michael Putney.²¹²⁰ He explained:

Because Cuba didn't have huge deposits of valuable minerals (except bauxite) or vast oil fields, Washington put Cuba on the back burner for the most part. Except to fret over immigration problems and Cuba's talent for exporting revolution to Latin America and fighting the occasional proxy war in Africa. Washington had plenty of other problems to worry about, so it let Cuban Americans control U.S. policy. It did so because the Cuban diaspora to its great credit, voted in overwhelming numbers in every election and wrote big checks to politicians. Those check writers formed powerful lobbies. Currently, it's the U.S. Cuba Democracy PAC, and before that the Cuban American National Foundation. As its leader, Jorge Mas Canosa, once said after being criticized for romancing some powerful Democrats, "We don't have friends or enemies in Washington, we have interests."

President Obama has decided that his interests in Cuba are paramount - his legacy, too. Just as Richard Nixon opened relations with China, Obama wants to be remembered as the President who opened relations with Cuba. Obama's clearly right that the U.S. policy in place for 53 years hasn't changed anything in Cuba and never will. But it's far from a sure thing that Obama's Cuba policy will succeed in turning Cuba into a more open, democratic and free society.

If you look closely at what's been proposed, you find no assurances that ordinary Cubans will have any of the basic human rights they're now denied. Raúl himself said in a speech Saturday that nothing in Cuba's closed, authoritarian system will change. He's getting the better end of this deal.

²¹¹⁷ Cordle, Ina Paiva. "Cuba policy may benefit S. Fla. businesses - eventually." *The Miami Herald*, December 17, 2014.; Whitefield. "U.S., Cuba embark on a new future."

²¹¹⁸ Cordle. "Cuba policy may benefit S. Fla. businesses - eventually."

²¹¹⁹ Whitefield. "U.S.-Cuba relations: A year of change."

²¹²⁰ Putney, Michael. "A new day for U.S., Cuba, but it is no sure thing." *The Miami Herald*, December 23, 2014.

What's the United States getting? The possibility that an influx of Americans, carrying credit cards and capital, will spread democratic values. Once the toothpaste of democracy is out of the tube, the thinking goes, Castro won't be able to put it back. It's a lovely thought and here's hoping it happens. But it hasn't worked over the decades that Canada and all the Western European democracies have had a strong presence in Cuba.²¹²¹

According to many analysts, Washington had been willing to outsource Cuba policy to Miami because it was of little consequence compared to other foreign policy and security issues.²¹²² Politicians stood to reap great rewards financially and electorally for maintaining the status quo.²¹²³ Embargo proponents viewed Obama's decision to normalize relations with Cuba as a cynical attempt to secure his legacy at the Cuban people's expense.²¹²⁴

Miami's old guard resented Obama for excluding them from the Cuban policy-making process.²¹²⁵ Only one of the eight Cuban-American members of the U.S. Congress, bi-partisan Republican Rep. Carlos Curbelo, appeared to have any role in Obama's thaw.²¹²⁶ Cuban-Americans held their greatest sway in Congress. Recent House votes on Cuba matters demonstrated that they maintained a comfortable bipartisan majority for their Cuba policies.²¹²⁷ It would be nearly impossible for the Obama

²¹²¹ Putney. "A new day for U.S., Cuba, but it is no sure thing."

²¹²² Putney. "A new day for U.S., Cuba, but it is no sure thing."

²¹²³ Putney. "A new day for U.S., Cuba, but it is no sure thing."

²¹²⁴ Putney. "A new day for U.S., Cuba, but it is no sure thing."; Anonymous interview with the author, June 2018.

²¹²⁵ Mazzei, Patricia. "Once mighty, Miami's political guard left out of conversation on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, April 8, 2016.

²¹²⁶ Mazzei. "Once mighty, Miami's political guard left out of conversation on Cuba."

²¹²⁷ Mazzei. "Once mighty, Miami's political guard left out of conversation on Cuba."

administration and whoever followed it to dismantle the Helms-Burton Act.²¹²⁸ More hardline Cuban-Americans changed their minds about isolation policies as they traveled to Cuba and interacted with ordinary islanders.²¹²⁹ Lincoln Diaz-Balart, now retired from Congress, argued that the embargo kept the regime from quashing dissidents even more.²¹³⁰

Many hardline Cuban-Americans, such as Congress members, lamented that the White House had not included them in the discussions.²¹³¹ On the contrary, Ric Herrero of #CubaNow and others attested that the administration had met with many Cuban-American organizations and dissidents since early 2013, including CANF, the Cuba Study Group, #CubaNow, Roots of Hope, Yoani Sanchez, and Berta Soler.²¹³² Herrero stressed that Cuban-Americans had advocated for the Cuban government to release fifty-three Cuban political prisoners rather than the Cuban offer of a three-for-one prisoner swap for Alan Gross.²¹³³ Herrero concluded, "What Dec. 17 has taught us is that as long as we are willing to recognize when something has failed and remain open to exploring new ways of promoting democratic values in Cuba, Cuban Americans will always have a

²¹²⁸ Mazzei. "Once mighty, Miami's political guard left out of conversation on Cuba."

²¹²⁹ Mazzei. "Once mighty, Miami's political guard left out of conversation on Cuba."

²¹³⁰ Mazzei. "Once mighty, Miami's political guard left out of conversation on Cuba."

²¹³¹ Herrero. "Dec. 17 a day of triumph for Cuban Americans."; Whitefield. "U.S., Cuba embark on a new future."; Frank Calzon, interview with the author, May 11, 2018.

²¹³² Herrero. "Dec. 17 a day of triumph for Cuban Americans."; Whitefield. "U.S., Cuba embark on a new future."; Anonymous, interview by the author, March 12, 2018.; Anonymous, interview by the author, March 27, 2018.; Andrew Otazo, interview by the author, July 16, 2018.

²¹³³ Herrero. "Dec. 17 a day of triumph for Cuban Americans."; Whitefield, Mimi. "Human rights activists search for signs of Cuban prisoner release." *The Miami Herald*, January 6, 2015.

seat at the table.”²¹³⁴ Cuban-Americans remained strategic and pragmatic, he suggested, because, “small victory by small victory, the Cuban-American community is winning.”²¹³⁵ In other words, even though many foreign policy analysts mistakenly saw Obama’s announcement as bucking the influence of Cuban-Americans, Cuban-Americans were an integral part of the development of the policy—just not the usual hardliners.

Several legislators tried to stop Assistant Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson from traveling to Havana for the first round of talks on normalization and migration on January 21-22, 2015.²¹³⁶ On January 6, Senator Marco Rubio wrote President Obama to cancel Assistant Secretary Roberta Jacobson’s visit to Havana “at least until all 53 political prisoners, plus those arrested since your December 17th announcement have been released and are no longer subjected to repression.”²¹³⁷ At an event in Miami, Rubio noted how China, Vietnam, and Burma still were not democratic despite economic openings.²¹³⁸ Six more Cuban-American members of Congress—Senators Bob Menendez and Ted Cruz, and Representatives Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Mario Diaz-Balart, Carlos Curbelo, Albio Sires, and Alex Mooney—wrote a letter to Secretary Kerry on January 9

²¹³⁴ Herrero. "Dec. 17 a day of triumph for Cuban Americans."

²¹³⁵ Herrero. "Dec. 17 a day of triumph for Cuban Americans."

²¹³⁶ Whitefield, Mimi. "Human rights activists search for signs of Cuban prisoner release." *The Miami Herald*, January 6, 2015.; Whitefield. "U.S., Cuba embark on a new future."

²¹³⁷ Whitefield. "Human rights activists search for signs of Cuban prisoner release."; Whitefield. "U.S., Cuba embark on a new future."

²¹³⁸ Whitefield. "U.S., Cuba embark on a new future."

to urge them to stop the normalization.²¹³⁹ Many on both sides of the aisle and constituents across the United States favored the thaw, making the fight more difficult for the hardliners.²¹⁴⁰ The hardline community was not “well organized in terms of a game plan,” according to Cuban-American economist Carlos Sanguinety.²¹⁴¹ A State Department official announced on January 12 that they confirmed that Cuba released all 53 political prisoners, thereby undercutting Rubio’s argument.²¹⁴² Jacobson, the highest-level official to visit Cuba since 1980, proceeded with the trip.²¹⁴³

The next big test of Obama’s new strategy for promoting human rights in Cuba came during the April 2015 Summit of the Americas in Panama.²¹⁴⁴ It was the seventh summit since 1994 but the first that Cuba attended.²¹⁴⁵ New U.S. sanctions on Venezuelan officials marred the proceedings; Maduro presented a petition to Obama denouncing the actions, and Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa refused to attend.²¹⁴⁶ The United States still listed Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism.²¹⁴⁷ Meanwhile, in

²¹³⁹ Whitefield, Mimi. "U.S. says Cuba has released all 53 political prisoners." *The Miami Herald*, January 12, 2015.

²¹⁴⁰ Whitefield. "U.S., Cuba embark on a new future."

²¹⁴¹ Whitefield. "U.S., Cuba embark on a new future."

²¹⁴² Whitefield. "U.S. says Cuba has released all 53 political prisoners."

²¹⁴³ Whitefield. "U.S., Cuba embark on a new future."

²¹⁴⁴ Whitefield. "U.S., Cuba embark on a new future."

²¹⁴⁵ Nora Gamez Torres and Mimi Whitefield. "Historic encounter: Obama, Raúl Castro to have 'interaction' at summit." *The Miami Herald*, April 4, 2015.

²¹⁴⁶ Gamez Torres and Whitefield. "Historic encounter: Obama, Raúl Castro to have 'interaction' at summit."

²¹⁴⁷ Gamez Torres and Whitefield. "Historic encounter: Obama, Raúl Castro to have 'interaction' at summit."

Washington, Carlos Curbelo called attention to the many dissidents who had been arrested since the 17D announcement and shamed the OAS for embracing more interaction with Cuba.²¹⁴⁸

On July 1, 2015, Barack Obama announced the date for resuming diplomatic ties with Cuba.²¹⁴⁹ He noted that engagement enabled the United States to be a part of Cuba's future.²¹⁵⁰ The U.S. embassy in Havana and the Cuban embassy in Washington officially reopened on Monday, July 20, 2015.²¹⁵¹ The mission chiefs became charge d'affaires until the governments could officially call ambassadors.²¹⁵² The State Department reported that Cuban islanders already showed great enthusiasm.²¹⁵³ Pepe Hernandez still held reservations about the policies, including fear of complacency on the part of the international system, but said, "For the United States, it's better to leave all the confrontations and bad blood behind.... The bottom line is this is a step forward."²¹⁵⁴

Old grievances continued as migration talks commenced between the United States and Cuba.²¹⁵⁵ Cubans now traveled through South and Central America to Mexico

²¹⁴⁸ Gamez Torres and Whitefield. "Historic encounter: Obama, Raúl Castro to have 'interaction' at summit."

²¹⁴⁹ Whitefield, Mimi. "Historic thaw: U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties will be reestablished Monday." *The Miami Herald*, July 18, 2015.

²¹⁵⁰ Whitefield. "Historic thaw: U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties will be reestablished Monday."

²¹⁵¹ Whitefield. "Historic thaw: U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties will be reestablished Monday."; Whitefield, Mimi. "Resumption of U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties hits one-year mark." *The Miami Herald*, July 20, 2016.

²¹⁵² Whitefield. "Historic thaw: U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties will be reestablished Monday."

²¹⁵³ Whitefield. "Historic thaw: U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties will be reestablished Monday."

²¹⁵⁴ Whitefield. "Historic thaw: U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties will be reestablished Monday."; Whitefield. "Resumption of U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties hits one-year mark."

²¹⁵⁵ Whitefield, Mimi. "Despite talks, U.S.-Cuba migration impasse continues." *The Miami Herald*, November 30, 2015.

to reach the United States at the U.S.-Mexico border instead of by sea.²¹⁵⁶ However, Cuba still blamed the continued illegal paths to migration on the Cuban Adjustment Act and the “wet foot, dry foot” policy.²¹⁵⁷ Immigration to the United States from Cuba surged after the Obama announcement, potentially out of fear that U.S. immigration policy would change.²¹⁵⁸ Latin American countries to which travel from Cuba was much more accessible, had to institute measures to handle the influx.²¹⁵⁹ CANF looked into creating another Exodus program to assist the migrants.²¹⁶⁰ Dissidents also attested that many people wanted to escape Cuba for better lives but needed an incentive to stay and create change.²¹⁶¹

Furthermore, Raul Castro wanted the United States to return the base at Guantanamo, end the embargo, stop Radio and TV Marti, and receive reparations for the embargo and other U.S. meddling.²¹⁶² The United States still wanted compensation for confiscated properties.²¹⁶³ The United States and Cuba agreed on December 10, 2015, to

²¹⁵⁶ Whitefield. "Despite talks, U.S.-Cuba migration impasse continues."; Whitefield, Mimi. "U.S.-Cuba relations: A year of change." *The Miami Herald*, December 16, 2015.; Jorge Duany, interview by the author, March 12, 2018.

²¹⁵⁷ Whitefield. "Despite talks, U.S.-Cuba migration impasse continues."; Whitefield, Mimi. "U.S.-Cuba relations: A year of change." *The Miami Herald*, December 16, 2015.

²¹⁵⁸ Whitefield. "Despite talks, U.S.-Cuba migration impasse continues."; Whitefield. "U.S.-Cuba relations: A year of change."; Whitefield. "Resumption of U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties hits one-year mark."

²¹⁵⁹ Whitefield. "Despite talks, U.S.-Cuba migration impasse continues."

²¹⁶⁰ Whitefield. "Despite talks, U.S.-Cuba migration impasse continues."

²¹⁶¹ Whitefield. "Despite talks, U.S.-Cuba migration impasse continues."

²¹⁶² Whitefield. "U.S.-Cuba relations: A year of change."

²¹⁶³ Whitefield. "U.S.-Cuba relations: A year of change."

resume direct mail.²¹⁶⁴ They also made two environmental agreements and negotiated for resuming direct commercial flights.²¹⁶⁵

Older and more conservative Cuban-Americans did not consider immigrants who freely traveled back and forth to be political refugees.²¹⁶⁶ Representative Carlos Curbelo and Senator Marco Rubio proposed less radical revisions to the Cuban Adjustment Act.²¹⁶⁷ Exiles questioned if newer arrivals had criminal or communist ties, illegally took advantage of U.S. government social welfare, and why they did not more actively participate politically or make their political opinions public.²¹⁶⁸ Hardline Republican operators and their Democratic partners argued that the fact that voters elected hardliners proved that they represent what their constituencies want.²¹⁶⁹

Miami lawyer Marcell Felipe formed Inspire America, a 501c4, to organize political action for hardline, pro-embargo Cuban-Americans, deliver a cohesive message, and complement the efforts of Cuban-American legislators and lobbyists to defy Obama's normalization efforts.²¹⁷⁰ Felipe said that the Obama administration was "yielding to pressure from the Castro regime" and bailing them out of their economic

²¹⁶⁴ Whitefield. "U.S.-Cuba relations: A year of change."

²¹⁶⁵ Whitefield. "U.S.-Cuba relations: A year of change."

²¹⁶⁶ Gámez Torres. "Foundation's aim: unite exiles, oppose U.S. policies in Cuba."; Sebastian Arcos, interview by author, July 2018.; Jorge Duany, interview by the author, March 12, 2018.; Daniel Pedreira, interview by the author, May 3, 2018.

²¹⁶⁷ Gámez Torres. "Foundation's aim: unite exiles, oppose U.S. policies in Cuba."

²¹⁶⁸ Gámez Torres. "Foundation's aim: unite exiles, oppose U.S. policies in Cuba."

²¹⁶⁹ Mazzei. "Once mighty, Miami's political guard left out of conversation on Cuba."

²¹⁷⁰ Gámez Torres, Nora. "Foundation's aim: unite exiles, oppose U.S. policies in Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, September 4, 2016: A12.; Jorge Duany, interview by the author, March 12, 2018.

crisis.²¹⁷¹ He did not trust the results of a March 2016 Univision-*Washington Post* poll of Cubans islanders, saying that 97 percent supported the normalization efforts because he did not believe they could get accurate public opinion data under a totalitarian dictatorship.²¹⁷² Inspire America backed legislation to revise the Cuban Adjustment Act, revoke the residency of Cubans who visit the island, and make Cubans who arrive under tourist visas ineligible for the Act's provisions.²¹⁷³

Obama's 17D announcement accorded with the long-term evolution of Cuban-American public opinion. Polls before and after showed that most Cuban-Americans approved of more open relations with Cuba. However, the policies produced an immediate and profound backlash among the more entrenched, pro-embargo Cuban-American elites. Others hesitated to judge until they could see whether and how the Cuban government would reciprocate.

Obama Visits Cuba

Obama and his advisors met with Cuban-Americans before visiting Cuba. Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes, one of the architects of Obama's Cuba plan, conducted a listening tour in Miami.²¹⁷⁴ He met with students, activists, journalists, religious leaders, and community leaders in a series of meetings, primarily with moderate

²¹⁷¹ Gámez Torres. "Foundation's aim: unite exiles, oppose U.S. policies in Cuba."

²¹⁷² Gámez Torres. "Foundation's aim: unite exiles, oppose U.S. policies in Cuba."

²¹⁷³ Gámez Torres. "Foundation's aim: unite exiles, oppose U.S. policies in Cuba."

²¹⁷⁴ Rosenberg, Carol. "White House adviser: Obama may invoke Cuban exiles in Havana." *The Miami Herald*, March 11, 2016.

Cuban-Americans.²¹⁷⁵ The Cuban government freed four dissidents who were rearrested after they were a part of the 53 prisoners released for 17D; they traveled to the United States with another activist on March 15 to meet with the President.²¹⁷⁶ Cuban police arrested fifty Ladies in White protesters before Obama arrived.²¹⁷⁷ The Cuban government continued repression and mass arrests—over 7,600 that year, according to the Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation—even though the number of political prisoners fell.²¹⁷⁸

Obama visited Cuba on March 20-22, 2016, with a large delegation.²¹⁷⁹ Obama was the first U.S. President to visit the island since Calvin Coolidge nearly 90 years prior.²¹⁸⁰ On Sunday afternoon, March 20, he met with Havana Catholic Cardinal Jaime Ortega, who played a mediating role in the rapprochement.²¹⁸¹ He scheduled his meeting with Raul Castro, sessions on entrepreneurship, and state dinner on Monday.²¹⁸² Raul Castro and Obama held a press conference on Monday.²¹⁸³ CNN reporter Jim Acosta

²¹⁷⁵ Rosenberg. "White House adviser: Obama may invoke Cuban exiles in Havana."

²¹⁷⁶ Whitefield. "Castro, speech, dissidents, baseball and business to highlight Obama's Cuba trip."

²¹⁷⁷ "Want names of Cuba's political prisoners, Raúl? Here they are!" *The Miami Herald*, March 21, 2016.

²¹⁷⁸ Whitefield. "U.S.-Cuba relations: A year of change."

²¹⁷⁹ Rosenberg. "White House adviser: Obama may invoke Cuban exiles in Havana."; Whitefield. "Castro, speech, dissidents, baseball and business to highlight Obama's Cuba trip."

²¹⁸⁰ Whitefield. "Castro, speech, dissidents, baseball and business to highlight Obama's Cuba trip."

²¹⁸¹ Whitefield. "Castro, speech, dissidents, baseball and business to highlight Obama's Cuba trip."

²¹⁸² Whitefield. "Castro, speech, dissidents, baseball and business to highlight Obama's Cuba trip."

²¹⁸³ "Want names of Cuba's political prisoners, Raúl? Here they are!"; "Human-rights groups respond to Raúl Castro challenge, release political-prisoner lists." *The Miami Herald*, March 21, 2016.; Viglucci, Andres. "In Cuban Miami, wary support for President Obama's Cuba visit." *The Miami Herald*, March 22, 2016.

asked Raul Castro about political prisoners.²¹⁸⁴ Raul Castro, who rarely held press conferences, was shocked and responded, "Give me the list now of political prisoners to release. If there are political prisoners, they'll be free before nightfall."²¹⁸⁵ The younger Castro knew that he had jailed many political prisoners, but he did not view them as such, and journalists seldom challenged him.²¹⁸⁶ The Obama administration had already shared prisoner lists with the regime.²¹⁸⁷ Nevertheless, human rights organizations and activists immediately provided lists of prisoners' names.²¹⁸⁸ On Tuesday, Obama addressed the public and met dissidents, independent journalists, and other civil society.²¹⁸⁹ He advocated greater freedom of expression, commerce, and human rights, and he hailed Cuban-American success stories.²¹⁹⁰ He and Raul controversially attended an exhibition baseball game together between the Tampa Bay Rays and the Cuban national team on Tuesday before Obama left for Argentina.²¹⁹¹

²¹⁸⁴ "Want names of Cuba's political prisoners, Raúl? Here they are!"; "Human-rights groups respond to Raúl Castro challenge, release political-prisoner lists."; Viglucci. "In Cuban Miami, wary support for President Obama's Cuba visit."

²¹⁸⁵ "Want names of Cuba's political prisoners, Raúl? Here they are!"; "Human-rights groups respond to Raúl Castro challenge, release political-prisoner lists."; Viglucci. "In Cuban Miami, wary support for President Obama's Cuba visit."

²¹⁸⁶ "Want names of Cuba's political prisoners, Raúl? Here they are!"; "Human-rights groups respond to Raúl Castro challenge, release political-prisoner lists."; Viglucci. "In Cuban Miami, wary support for President Obama's Cuba visit."

²¹⁸⁷ "Human-rights groups respond to Raúl Castro challenge, release political-prisoner lists."

²¹⁸⁸ "Want names of Cuba's political prisoners, Raúl? Here they are!"; "Human-rights groups respond to Raúl Castro challenge, release political-prisoner lists."

²¹⁸⁹ Whitefield. "Castro, speech, dissidents, baseball and business to highlight Obama's Cuba trip."

²¹⁹⁰ Viglucci. "In Cuban Miami, wary support for President Obama's Cuba visit."

²¹⁹¹ Whitefield. "Castro, speech, dissidents, baseball and business to highlight Obama's Cuba trip."

Despite Rubio's busy March presidential campaigning schedule, he released a lengthy statement condemning Obama's trip to Cuba.²¹⁹² Rubio lamented

Obama's weakening of the LIBERTAD Act and visits to confiscated properties.

He concluded:

As a whole, President Obama's trip to Cuba and his policy of one-sided concessions to this regime are as naïve as his world view and as misguided as his foreign policy affecting other parts of the world. America should be standing with our allies and democracy advocates around the world, not embracing, enriching and empowering our enemies, the way President Obama is about to do in Cuba.²¹⁹³

Rubio had been praised during his presidential run for his foreign policy acuity in his service on the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee. At one point, Senators Rubio and Menendez blocked Roberta Jacobson's nomination to be the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico in retaliation for the Cuba policy.²¹⁹⁴

Miamians expressed mixed opinions toward Obama's trip to Cuba.²¹⁹⁵ Some—usually the older crowd—vehemently opposed it, but others expressed hesitant optimism.²¹⁹⁶ Seeing a free press hold Castro accountable was a highlight and gave some hope.²¹⁹⁷ President Obama's speech on Tuesday impressed many.²¹⁹⁸ The Miami Cuban community also expressed a sense of fatigue and resignation around the Cuba issue after

²¹⁹² "Marco Rubio calls Obama Cuba trip 'disgraceful.'" *The Miami Herald*, March 19, 2016.

²¹⁹³ "Marco Rubio calls Obama Cuba trip 'disgraceful'."

²¹⁹⁴ "Email shows Democrat wanted Clinton to 'go after' Rubio." *The Miami Herald*, October 17, 2016.

²¹⁹⁵ Viglucci. "In Cuban Miami, wary support for President Obama's Cuba visit."

²¹⁹⁶ Viglucci. "In Cuban Miami, wary support for President Obama's Cuba visit."

²¹⁹⁷ Viglucci. "In Cuban Miami, wary support for President Obama's Cuba visit."

²¹⁹⁸ Viglucci. "In Cuban Miami, wary support for President Obama's Cuba visit."

so many years of effort but little progress toward a free Cuba.²¹⁹⁹ For better or worse, people viewed the thaw as irreversible.²²⁰⁰ A Bendixen and Amandi poll from December 2015 showed that Cuban-Americans in the United States supported the changes, and over half supported lifting the embargo.²²⁰¹ The change would have to come from within Cuba itself rather than from outside pressure.²²⁰² They recognized that increased commerce does not demand a more open political system.²²⁰³

Cuba delayed reciprocal openings with the United States.²²⁰⁴ They cooperated more on counterterrorism, the environment, and disaster response.²²⁰⁵ Havana and Washington prioritized different areas of investment.²²⁰⁶ The United States had loosened various restrictions on U.S. business investments in Cuba, and several already took advantage of it.²²⁰⁷ Cuba wanted the United States to end the embargo, return Guantanamo, and respect Cuban sovereignty.²²⁰⁸ The United States wanted Cuba to end political repression, compensate property claimants, and return fugitives.²²⁰⁹ Cuban

²¹⁹⁹ Viglucci. "In Cuban Miami, wary support for President Obama's Cuba visit."

²²⁰⁰ Viglucci. "In Cuban Miami, wary support for President Obama's Cuba visit."

²²⁰¹ Viglucci. "In Cuban Miami, wary support for President Obama's Cuba visit."

²²⁰² Viglucci. "In Cuban Miami, wary support for President Obama's Cuba visit."

²²⁰³ Viglucci. "In Cuban Miami, wary support for President Obama's Cuba visit."

²²⁰⁴ Whitefield, Mimi. "Resumption of U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties hits one-year mark." *The Miami Herald*, July 20, 2016.

²²⁰⁵ Whitefield. "Resumption of U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties hits one-year mark."

²²⁰⁶ Whitefield. "Resumption of U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties hits one-year mark."

²²⁰⁷ Whitefield. "Resumption of U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties hits one-year mark."

²²⁰⁸ Whitefield. "Resumption of U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties hits one-year mark."

²²⁰⁹ Whitefield. "Resumption of U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties hits one-year mark."

diplomats traveled around the United States for various events, and activists in the United States felt that American diplomats should visit dissidents in Cuba more.²²¹⁰ Regarding investments, the United States continued to encourage Cuba to ease regulations on Cuban entrepreneurs and trade and expand access to information.²²¹¹ Average Cubans welcomed Obama's visit and American travel.²²¹²

Obama's opening was a risky, divisive move. It converted few hardliners to normalization and caused many fence-sitters to make a determination. Recent immigrants, younger generations, businesspeople, American travelers, policy analysts, and Cuban islanders showed extraordinary enthusiasm, but the 2016 presidential election would be the ultimate referendum on Obama's political legacy.

Presidential Primaries

Contrary to popular imagination, Donald Trump did not win Cuban-Americans in 2016 as a direct backlash against Obama's Cuba thaw and because Cubans reliably vote Republican anyway. Voting and polling trends disproved the notion that Miami Cubans were one-party or one-issue voters. Importantly, though, the most politically active, reliable voters were the older, hardline Cuban exiles.²²¹³ Nevertheless, polling suggested that Hillary Clinton may have won the majority of the Cuban-American vote that year.

²²¹⁰ Whitefield. "Resumption of U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties hits one-year mark."

²²¹¹ Whitefield. "Resumption of U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties hits one-year mark."

²²¹² Whitefield. "Resumption of U.S.-Cuba diplomatic ties hits one-year mark."

²²¹³ Jaime Suchlicki, interview by author, July 30, 2018.; Jorge Duany, interview by the author, March 12, 2018.

To understand why, it is essential to recognize the long-term relationships that each candidate had built in South Florida. Moreover, although U.S. immigration laws and South Floridian perceptions of Cuban identity may treat Cubans as exceptional in relation to other Hispanics, Trump's anti-Latino rhetoric throughout his campaign, his temperament, and his existing Florida connections repelled many important South Florida GOP members and donors, especially as he ran against other candidates with strong Florida networks.

Hillary Clinton and her family spent decades building up their connections in Florida.²²¹⁴ Many Miami elites, including Cuban-Americans, fundraised and otherwise supported her campaign.²²¹⁵ Among them were Alfonso Fanjul, former Ambassador Paul Cejas, Jorge Perez, Simon Ferro, etc.²²¹⁶ Hillary's brothers had lived in Miami since the 1980s, and one married a Cuban-American woman, Maria Victoria Arias, which deepened the Clintons' network.²²¹⁷ Bill developed connections starting in the 1980s as head of the National Governors Association and the Democratic Leadership Council.²²¹⁸ *Herald* reporter Adam Smith rightly observed, "Every serious presidential candidate develops allegiances to Florida, especially South Florida because it's a silver mine for votes and a gold mine for campaign checks."²²¹⁹

²²¹⁴ Smith, Adam. C. "Hillary Clinton's connections to Florida are complicated." *The Miami Herald*, October 19, 2016.

²²¹⁵ Smith. "Hillary Clinton's connections to Florida are complicated."

²²¹⁶ Smith. "Hillary Clinton's connections to Florida are complicated."

²²¹⁷ Smith. "Hillary Clinton's connections to Florida are complicated."

²²¹⁸ Smith. "Hillary Clinton's connections to Florida are complicated."

²²¹⁹ Smith. "Hillary Clinton's connections to Florida are complicated."

Trump first proposed running for President in 2000. The Trump organization explored third-country partnerships in Cuba in the late 1990s despite the Helms-Burton Act becoming law in 1996. However, when Trump considered running as a third-party presidential candidate, he took a hard line against Cuba. Trump officially launched his 2000 presidential campaign in November 1999 at a Miami Cuban-American National Foundation luncheon.²²²⁰ Trump defended the embargo in the campaign speech, calling the Clinton administration's "weak stance" on Cuba "inconceivable."²²²¹

Trump repeatedly offended the Hispanic community in his 2016 presidential campaign. At Trump's presidential campaign announcement speech on June 16, 2015, at Trump Tower in New York City, he infamously declared:

The U.S. has become a dumping ground for everybody else's problems.... When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best.... They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.²²²²

These racist comments brought a swift backlash from the Hispanic community, immigrant communities, and others. Former Florida Governor and then-presidential candidate Jeb Bush condemned the remarks in what would become an ongoing campaign trail feud.²²²³ An NBC News/Wall Street Journal/Telemundo

²²²⁰ Eichenwald, Kurt. "How Donald Trump's Company Violated the United States Embargo Against Cuba." *Newsweek*, September 29, 2016. <https://www.newsweek.com/2016/10/14/donald-trump-cuban-embargo-castro-violated-florida-504059.html>.

²²²¹ Trump, Donald. "Trump Campaign Speech | C-SPAN.Org." C-SPAN, November 15, 1999. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?153648-1/trump-campaign-speech>.

²²²² Trump, Donald. "Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech | Time." *Time*, June 16, 2015. <https://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/>.

²²²³ Jones, Elgin. "Around South Florida." *South Florida Times (Ft. Lauderdale, FL)*, July 9, 2015.

poll in fall 2015 found that sixty-seven percent of Latinos had a “very negative” view of Trump, having slightly improved from seventy percent in previous weeks.²²²⁴ Hillary Clinton had already made a politically disastrous move by calling for an end to the Cuba embargo at a July 2015 event at Florida International University.²²²⁵

The conservative publication *The Daily Caller* published an interview with Donald Trump in September 2015 in which the reporter asked Trump for his foreign policy opinions.²²²⁶ Asked about the opening with Cuba, Trump simply replied, “I think it’s fine. I think it’s fine, but we should have made a better deal. The concept of opening with Cuba—50 years is enough—the concept of opening with Cuba is fine. I think we should have made a stronger deal.”²²²⁷ Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, and Jeb Bush all loudly and openly opposed the new policy.²²²⁸ Among the Republican presidential contenders,

²²²⁴ “EFE News Briefs for Wednesday, Sept. 30 (End of the day).” *EFE News Services*, October 1, 2015.

²²²⁵ Vasquez, Michael, and Jenny Luna. “Hillary Clinton in Miami: Lift the Embargo against Cuba.” *The Miami Herald*. July 31, 2015. <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/politics-government/election/article29656990.html>.

²²²⁶ Mazzei, Patricia. “Donald Trump says it's 'fine' for U.S. to pursue closer Cuba ties.” *The Miami Herald*, September 8, 2015.; Weinstein, Jamie. “Donald Trump on His Nuclear Doctrine, Democracy Promotion And Why He Refuses To Use Term ‘Supreme Leader’ | The Daily Caller.” *The Daily Caller*, September 7, 2015. <https://dailycaller.com/2015/09/07/donald-trump-on-his-nuclear-doctrine-democracy-promotion-and-why-he-refuses-to-use-term-supreme-leader/>.

²²²⁷ Mazzei. “Donald Trump says it's 'fine' for U.S. to pursue closer Cuba ties.”; Weinstein, Jamie. “Donald Trump on His Nuclear Doctrine, Democracy Promotion And Why He Refuses To Use Term ‘Supreme Leader’ | The Daily Caller.” *The Daily Caller*, September 7, 2015. <https://dailycaller.com/2015/09/07/donald-trump-on-his-nuclear-doctrine-democracy-promotion-and-why-he-refuses-to-use-term-supreme-leader/>.

²²²⁸ Mazzei. “Donald Trump says it's 'fine' for U.S. to pursue closer Cuba ties.”

only Trump and Rand Paul supported it.²²²⁹ Trump ran on an anti-establishment message and dominated the polls early, so he had little to lose with his controversial position.²²³⁰

Cuban-American and Miami native Senator Marco Rubio ran for President, but most prominent Florida Republican politicians endorsed Jeb.²²³¹ Ted Cruz, another Cuban-American Senator, also ran for President, but his Texan allegiances made him less consequential for Cuban-American voters. Jeb Bush withdrew before the Florida primary, and many of his supporters switched to Rubio.²²³² By the time the Republican presidential candidates took the debate stage in Coral Gables before the Florida primaries, Trump led the race.²²³³ Trump prevailed, earning 46% of Florida Republican primary votes.²²³⁴ Rubio came in second place with 27% and subsequently dropped out of the race.²²³⁵ Trump carried every county except Miami-Dade.²²³⁶ The field thinned, and by April, only Ted Cruz

²²²⁹ Mazzei. "Donald Trump says it's 'fine' for U.S. to pursue closer Cuba ties."

²²³⁰ Mazzei. "Donald Trump says it's 'fine' for U.S. to pursue closer Cuba ties."

²²³¹ "Florida GOP members of Congress make it official: They're backing Rubio." *The Miami Herald*, July 12, 2016.

²²³² "Florida GOP members of Congress make it official: They're backing Rubio."

²²³³ "AP Top News at 12:55 p.m. EST." *Associated Press: Governmental News Report*, March 11, 2016.

²²³⁴ Politico. "Florida Primary Election Results 2016: President Live Map by County, Real-Time Voting Updates - POLITICO," December 13, 2016. <https://www.politico.com/2016-election/primary/results/map/president/florida/>.

²²³⁵ Politico. "Florida Primary Election Results 2016: President Live Map by County, Real-Time Voting Updates - POLITICO," December 13, 2016. <https://www.politico.com/2016-election/primary/results/map/president/florida/>; Mazzei. "Marco Rubio's campaign collapsed after never really taking off."

²²³⁶ Oppenheimer. "Donald Trump's Hispanic delusion."; Politico. "Florida Primary Election Results 2016: President Live Map by County, Real-Time Voting Updates - POLITICO," December 13, 2016. <https://www.politico.com/2016-election/primary/results/map/president/florida/>.

espoused a hardline Cuba policy among the remaining Republican presidential candidates.²²³⁷

By May 2016, Jeb Bush, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, and Carlos Curbelo refused to support Trump.²²³⁸ Cuban exile and Miami mayor Tomas Regalado condemned him.²²³⁹ An April 2016 poll found that 87% of Hispanics nationwide viewed Trump unfavorably, and other polls that spring suggested that nearly 90% of Latino Floridians disfavored Trump.²²⁴⁰

While Trump struggled with Latinos, their political influence in Florida grew. Organizations like New Latino registered over 1000 Florida voters per week.²²⁴¹ Hispanics made up 24% of the Florida population in 2016, and Cuban-American polls showed the Republican grasp on the voting bloc weakening.²²⁴² Young Cuban-American voters increasingly registered as Democrats.²²⁴³ Even more registered as no party affiliation, reflecting an overall trend among Millennial voters to shy away from the established political parties.²²⁴⁴

²²³⁷ Mazzei. "Once mighty, Miami's political guard left out of conversation on Cuba."

²²³⁸ Putney, Michael. "A cure for Trump/Hillary blues: Go with other races." *The Miami Herald*, May 10, 2016.

²²³⁹ Richard Luscombe. "Will Latino loathing of Trump drive a voter movement to swing the election?" *Guardian, The: Web Edition Articles (London, England)*, May 18, 2016.

²²⁴⁰ Luscombe. "Will Latino loathing of Trump drive a voter movement to swing the election?"

²²⁴¹ Luscombe. "Will Latino loathing of Trump drive a voter movement to swing the election?"

²²⁴² Luscombe. "Will Latino loathing of Trump drive a voter movement to swing the election?"

²²⁴³ FIU Cuba Poll; Klas, Mary Ellen. "There's no fun these days in Florida's political parties." *The Miami Herald*, May 27, 2016.

²²⁴⁴ FIU Cuba Poll; Klas. "There's no fun these days in Florida's political parties."

Florida Lieutenant Governor Carlos Lopez-Cantera dropped out of the U.S. Senate race in June so that Marco Rubio could run again.²²⁴⁵ Prominent Florida Republican politicians soon endorsed Rubio.²²⁴⁶ Although Rubio supported Trump's presidential run and campaigned for him, his public comments belied unenthusiastic support. When asked about Trump's presidential campaign, Rubio emphasized, "The Senate is not a subsidiary position to the Presidency," and that he was campaigning for the Senate vote.²²⁴⁷ He stumped around Florida with Pence to support Republican candidates but never accompanied Trump.²²⁴⁸ In Tampa, he stressed the importance of Republican control of the Senate more than the presidential race.²²⁴⁹ In a debate against Senate challenger Patrick Murphy (D), Rubio said:

It's pretty clear Donald Trump is not my first choice or even my 10th choice to be nominee of the Republican Party; 14 million voters in the Republican primaries chose differently. One of the reasons why I changed my mind and ran for reelection is because I know that no matter who wins this election, you are going to need people in the United States Senate willing to stand up to the next President.²²⁵⁰

Nevertheless, Trump clinched the Republican nomination at the July 2016 Republican Party Convention in Cleveland. Florida Governor Rick Scott, an open supporter of Trump

²²⁴⁵ Mazzei, Patricia. "Rubio says yes to another Senate run after all." *The Miami Herald*, June 22, 2016.; "Miami Herald's recommendations for U.S. Senate, House." *The Miami Herald*, October 19, 2016: 16A.

²²⁴⁶ "Florida GOP members of Congress make it official: They're backing Rubio."

²²⁴⁷ Mazzei, Patricia. "Rubio stands by calling Trump 'con man,' but still backs him." *The Miami Herald*, August 15, 2016.

²²⁴⁸ "In Tampa, Rubio steers clear of Trump. So does Lopez-Cantera." *The Miami Herald*, October 16, 2016.

²²⁴⁹ "In Tampa, Rubio steers clear of Trump. So does Lopez-Cantera."

²²⁵⁰ Kristen M. Clark and Jeremy Wallace. "What Rubio and Murphy said about each other in first Senate debate." *The Miami Herald*, October 17, 2016.

and 2018 Senate hopeful, delivered a prime-time speech for Trump one night and led the convention's Florida delegation, reinforcing Florida's prominence on the national scene.²²⁵¹

Election of 2016

Few South Florida Cuban-American elites embraced Trump. Billionaire former GOP megadonor Mike Fernandez called Trump a “demagogue” and an “egomaniac” and spent \$3.5 million on anti-Trump ads.²²⁵² Lt. Gov. Lopez-Cantera stated that he would not vote for Hilary but did not commit to voting for Trump.²²⁵³ Curbelo and Ros-Lehtinen refused to back Trump.²²⁵⁴ Cuban-American Republicans Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez and his challenger, Raquel Regalado, the daughter of former Miami Mayor Tomas Regalado, refused to support Trump.²²⁵⁵ Out of the South Florida U.S. Congress members, only Rubio and Diaz-Balart endorsed Trump.²²⁵⁶

²²⁵¹ Bousquet, Steve. "Rick Scott rides Trump's coattails onto center stage — but at what cost?" *The Miami Herald*, July 17, 2016.

²²⁵² Dixon, Matt. "Billionaire Florida Donor Rails against Trump." Politico, July 20, 2017. <https://www.politico.com/states/florida/story/2017/07/20/billionaire-gop-donor-out-of-politics-calls-trump-abortion-of-a-human-113528>; Fox News. "Exclusive: Miami Billionaire Spearheads Anti-Trump Newspaper Ads | Fox News," December 6, 2015. <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/exclusive-miami-billionaire-spearheads-anti-trump-newspaper-ads>.

²²⁵³ "In Tampa, Rubio steers clear of Trump. So does Lopez-Cantera."

²²⁵⁴ Mazzei. "Trump broke Cuban embargo, report says, roiling Miami politics."

²²⁵⁵ Hanks, Douglas. "Now both candidates for Miami-Dade mayor say they won't vote for Trump." *The Miami Herald*, August 31, 2016.

²²⁵⁶ Mazzei, Patricia. "Trump to reveal Cuba policy in Miami next Friday." *The Miami Herald*, June 9, 2017.

Beginning around September 2016, though, Trump started to harden his stance on Cuba, declaring at a Miami rally that he would reverse Obama's policies.²²⁵⁷ In September 2016, *Newsweek* created an uproar when they exposed Trump's Cuba dealings. The piece claimed that Trump violated the embargo by pay the American consulting firm Seven Arrows \$68,000 in 1999 to travel to Cuba and investigate potential investments.²²⁵⁸ The Trump organization allegedly hid the trip under a charitable organization.²²⁵⁹ Other news outlets confirmed with other sources that Trump looked to invest in Cuba starting at least as early as the mid- to late-90s to as recently as 2012 or 2013.²²⁶⁰ News that Trump broke the Cuban embargo outraged many in Miami. Local Republican politicians declined to say much about it.²²⁶¹ Cuban-American policymakers appeared apprehensive but reticent to criticize the confirmed Republican nominee for the presidential race.

²²⁵⁷ Mazzei, Patricia. "Trump broke Cuban embargo, report says, roiling Miami politics." *The Miami Herald*, September 29, 2016.; Nora Gámez Torres and Patricia Mazzei. "'The Cubans are sh----- themselves' over Trump." *The Miami Herald*, December 3, 2016.; Ordoñez, Franco. "White House to Trump: 'Don't play the bad guy' on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, December 14, 2016: 6A.

²²⁵⁸ Eichenwald, Kurt. "How Donald Trump's Company Violated the United States Embargo Against Cuba." *Newsweek*, September 29, 2016. <https://www.newsweek.com/2016/10/14/donald-trump-cuban-embargo-castro-violated-florida-504059.html>.

²²⁵⁹ Eichenwald, Kurt. "How Donald Trump's Company Violated the United States Embargo Against Cuba." *Newsweek*, September 29, 2016. <https://www.newsweek.com/2016/10/14/donald-trump-cuban-embargo-castro-violated-florida-504059.html>.

²²⁶⁰ Mazzei. "Trump broke Cuban embargo, report says, roiling Miami politics."

²²⁶¹ Mazzei. "Trump broke Cuban embargo, report says, roiling Miami politics."; "Rick Scott on Trump's Cuba troubles: It's a Clinton 'distraction'; Rubio says it's troubling." *The Miami Herald*, September 29, 2016.

On September 30, 2016, *The Miami Herald* re-published Trump's June 25, 1999 statement. Trump admitted that he considered joint real estate partnerships with European companies. However, he decided against it. He concluded:

Yes, the embargo is costly. If I formed a joint venture with European partners, I would make millions of dollars. But I'd rather lose those millions than lose my self-respect. I would rather take a financial hit than become a financial backer of one of the world's most-brutal dictators, a man who was once willing to aid in the destruction of my country. To me the embargo question is no question at all. Of course, we should keep the embargo in place. We should keep it until Castro is gone.²²⁶²

Mauricio Claver-Carone, a Cuban-American lobbyist in Washington who headed the pro-embargo U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC and later became a deputy National Security Advisor in the Trump administration, cited Trump's 1999 published statement when defending him against the accusations. He argued that Trump's money went directly to the consulting firm, so he "never transacted with the Castro regime" and that "perhaps he deserves some kudos" for refusing a potential money-making venture.²²⁶³

A little over a month before the election and right after the first presidential debate, Donald Trump held a rally in Little Havana.²²⁶⁴ He promised Miami Cubans that he would reverse Obama's Cuba thaw.²²⁶⁵ The fight for Republican votes in Florida's largest city necessitated enlisting Cubans, who accounted for 72% of registered

²²⁶² Trump, Donald J. "From the Herald archives: Donald Trump on the embargo and casinos." *The Miami Herald*, September 30, 2016.

²²⁶³ Mazzei. "Trump broke Cuban embargo, report says, roiling Miami politics."

²²⁶⁴ Pelley, Scott. "To Trump's possible advantage he proved last night he is no establishment politician in a race in which sixty-nine percent of voters tell us the country is on the wrong track." *CBS Evening News*, September 27, 2016.

²²⁶⁵ Mazzei. "Trump broke Cuban embargo, report says, roiling Miami politics."

Republicans in Miami-Dade.²²⁶⁶ The Latin Builders Association endorsed Hillary Clinton for President on October 11, 2016.²²⁶⁷ For the first time in the Bay of Pigs veterans' history, Brigade 2506 endorsed a presidential candidate.²²⁶⁸ On October 12, they voted to endorse Trump despite the recent controversies.²²⁶⁹

Joe Garcia again ran to unseat Carlos Curbelo in the 26th U.S. House Congressional District.²²⁷⁰ Both made names for themselves for being semi-moderates who voted against party lines more than most of their colleagues.²²⁷¹ Political ads attacked Garcia's and Curbelo's records.²²⁷² Curbelo criticized Garcia for supporting Obama's Cuba policies.²²⁷³ Answering criticisms of his CANF leadership, Garcia said that CANF split because some lost sight of Mas Canosa's bipartisan vision for political influence.²²⁷⁴ A scandal involving his former campaign staffers hurt his campaign as it

²²⁶⁶ Mazzei. "Trump broke Cuban embargo, report says, roiling Miami politics."

²²⁶⁷ "Cuban-exile brigade makes first-ever presidential endorsement -- for Trump." *The Miami Herald*, October 13, 2016.

²²⁶⁸ "Cuban-exile brigade makes first-ever presidential endorsement -- for Trump."; "Clinton Campaign Tried To Move Illinois Primary." *Tampa Bay Times (FL)*, October 14, 2016: 6.

²²⁶⁹ "Clinton Campaign Tried To Move Illinois Primary."

²²⁷⁰ "Miami Herald recommendations for U.S. House." *The Miami Herald*, October 18, 2016.; Rosen, James. "U.S. house race Joe Garcia broke ranks with his party more than most." *The Miami Herald*, October 23, 2016: 10A.; Vignucci, Andres. "Curbelo defeats Garcia in hard-fought congressional race." *The Miami Herald*, November 8, 2016.

²²⁷¹ "Miami Herald recommendations for U.S. House."; Rosen. "U.S. house race Joe Garcia broke ranks with his party more than most."; Vignucci. "Curbelo defeats Garcia in hard-fought congressional race."

²²⁷² Railey, Kimberly. "NRCC Launches Wave of Attack Ads." *National Journal: Hotline Latest Edition (USA)*, September 27, 2016.

²²⁷³ Vignucci. "Curbelo defeats Garcia in hard-fought congressional race."

²²⁷⁴ Mazzei. "Once mighty, Miami's political guard left out of conversation on Cuba."

had in 2014.²²⁷⁵ Curbelo fundraised three times the amount that his opponent did.²²⁷⁶

Garcia actively campaigned for Clinton and hoped to build on her popularity.²²⁷⁷ Despite being a member of the same party, Curbelo refused to endorse Trump and voted for a third party for the presidential ticket.²²⁷⁸

Cuban-American Democrat Alina Valdes challenged Mario Diaz-Balart for his House seat.²²⁷⁹ Valdes favored more engagement with Cuba.²²⁸⁰ Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, also known for certain less conservative stances and exemplary constituent service, dominated her opponent, Scott Fuhrman.²²⁸¹

Perhaps Obama and Clinton misread the difference between the opinions of the South Florida Cuban constituency and likely voters as they advocated more engagement with Cuba and made Cuba policy changes within weeks of the election.²²⁸² The September FIU poll showed that 54 percent of Cuban-Americans in Miami favored ending the embargo, but the more politically-active older Cuban-Americans were twice as likely as younger Cuban-Americans to oppose Obama's policies.²²⁸³ Some who

²²⁷⁵ "Miami Herald recommendations for U.S. House."; Rosen. "U.S. house race Joe Garcia broke ranks with his party more than most."; Viglucci. "Curbelo defeats Garcia in hard-fought congressional race."

²²⁷⁶ Viglucci. "Curbelo defeats Garcia in hard-fought congressional race."

²²⁷⁷ Viglucci. "Curbelo defeats Garcia in hard-fought congressional race."

²²⁷⁸ "After Criticizing Trump, Miami GOP Congressman Prepares To Work With Him." *All Things Considered [NPR] (USA)*, November 25, 2016.

²²⁷⁹ "Miami Herald recommendations for U.S. House."

²²⁸⁰ "Miami Herald recommendations for U.S. House."

²²⁸¹ "Miami Herald recommendations for U.S. House."

²²⁸² Oppenheimer, Andrés. "Trump could win Florida, thanks to Cuban Americans." *The Miami Herald*, November 2, 2016.

²²⁸³ Oppenheimer. "Trump could win Florida, thanks to Cuban Americans."

supported ending the embargo opposed Obama's unreciprocated concessions.²²⁸⁴ Regardless, commercial flights to Cuba resumed in September.²²⁸⁵ On October 14, Obama rolled back more embargo restrictions on Cuban rum and cigars.²²⁸⁶ Trump visited the Bay of Pigs veterans association on October 25.²²⁸⁷ On October 26, the Obama administration chose for the first time to abstain from the perennial United Nations vote condemning the embargo.²²⁸⁸ A late October New York Times Upshot/Siena University poll showed Trump rebounding and leading in Florida, with his Cuban-American support increasing from 33 percent in September to 52 percent in October.²²⁸⁹

A record turnout of Floridians voted in the 2016 election.²²⁹⁰ Curbelo maintained his seat in the November 2016 election by a large margin.²²⁹¹ Rubio, Diaz-Balart, and Ros-Lehtinen also returned to Congress.²²⁹² By 11 PM, Trump was the projected winner of Florida.²²⁹³ He won the electoral college 306-232.

²²⁸⁴ Oppenheimer. "Trump could win Florida, thanks to Cuban Americans."

²²⁸⁵ "How events in Cuba shaped and reshaped Miami." *The Miami Herald*, November 26, 2016.

²²⁸⁶ Oppenheimer. "Trump could win Florida, thanks to Cuban Americans."

²²⁸⁷ Oppenheimer. "Trump could win Florida, thanks to Cuban Americans."; Nora Gámez Torres and Patricia Mazzei. "The Cubans are sh----- themselves' over Trump." *The Miami Herald*, December 3, 2016.

²²⁸⁸ Oppenheimer. "Trump could win Florida, thanks to Cuban Americans."

²²⁸⁹ Oppenheimer. "Trump could win Florida, thanks to Cuban Americans."

²²⁹⁰ Smiley, David. "Election Night 2016: Here's what's happening now." *The Miami Herald*, November 8, 2016.

²²⁹¹ Viglucci. "Curbelo defeats Garcia in hard-fought congressional race."; Smiley. "Election Night 2016: Here's what's happening now."

²²⁹² Viglucci. "Curbelo defeats Garcia in hard-fought congressional race."; Smiley. "Election Night 2016: Here's what's happening now."

²²⁹³ Smiley. "Election Night 2016: Here's what's happening now."

The day after the election, Trump reportedly asked future Senior Advisor to the National Security Advisor Fernando Cutz how to reverse Obama's Cuba policies.²²⁹⁴ Trump added pro-embargo, Cuban-American lobbyist Mauricio Claver-Carone, executive director of the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC, to his transition team within weeks, which many viewed as repayment to his South Florida supporters.²²⁹⁵ Yleem Poblete, the former Chief of Staff for the House Foreign Affairs Committee, also joined the team.²²⁹⁶ Hardliners on the Trump team and advisors included: Mike Pence, James Jay Carafano of the Heritage Foundation, Mauricio Claver-Carone, Representative Devin Nunes, A.J. Delgado, Carlos Diaz Rosillo, and Yleem Poblete.²²⁹⁷ Mario Diaz-Balart became an important voice for Cuba, meeting regularly with members of the transition team.²²⁹⁸ They concerned themselves with Cuban entrepreneurs' future if the United States backed out and how to capitalize on a Cuban leadership transfer.²²⁹⁹ Moderates on Cuba policy—Jorge Mas Santos, Bertica Morris, and Mel Martinez—worked to ingratiate themselves with the incoming administration.²³⁰⁰

²²⁹⁴ Donati, Jessica; Vivian Salama and Ian Talley (30 January 2019). "U.S. push to oust Venezuela's Maduro marks first shot in plan to reshape Latin America". *Wall Street Journal*

²²⁹⁵ Torres, Nora Gámez. "Trump adds Cuba embargo supporter to transition team." *The Miami Herald*, November 21, 2016.

²²⁹⁶ Torres, Nora Gámez. "Rubio: 'Trump will treat Cuba like dictatorship it is.'" *The Miami Herald*, April 9, 2017: 5B.

²²⁹⁷ Gámez Torres and Mazzei. "'The Cubans are sh----- themselves' over Trump."

²²⁹⁸ Gámez Torres and Mazzei. "'The Cubans are sh----- themselves' over Trump."

²²⁹⁹ Gámez Torres and Mazzei. "'The Cubans are sh----- themselves' over Trump."; Ordoñez, Franco. "White House to Trump: 'Don't play the bad guy' on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, December 14, 2016: 6A.

²³⁰⁰ Gámez Torres and Mazzei. "'The Cubans are sh----- themselves' over Trump."

Miami's congressional delegation viewed Trump's winning Florida as evidence of a rejection of Obama's Cuba policies.²³⁰¹ However, Hillary outperformed Obama in an analysis of the Miami-Dade vote, where a third of residents are Cuban-American.²³⁰² Results also suggested that many voters in the area voted Democrat for President and Republican for Congress, making it less clear how much Cuba issues affected the results.²³⁰³ Dario Moreno surmised that Hillary likely won the majority of the Cuban-American vote and that Cuba became a less dominant issue for Cuban-American voters.²³⁰⁴ On the other hand, Bendixen and Amandi polls showed that Trump consistently had the majority of Cuban-American support during the campaign, and exit polls estimated she captured between 41 and 47 percent of the Cuban-American vote.²³⁰⁵ Disparate polling results that year make it difficult to draw final conclusions, but Hillary clearly outperformed expectations.

Reportedly, the Cuban government had not prepared for Donald Trump to win the presidency, and the election results caught them off guard, which may explain some of the gambles they made in their policy towards the United States near the end of Obama's presidency.²³⁰⁶ They had not fostered communication channels with the Trump team and

²³⁰¹ Mary Ellen Klas and Patricia Mazzei. "Was vote by Miami's Cuban community a referendum on Obama's policy?" *The Miami Herald*, December 16, 2016.

²³⁰² Klas and Mazzei. "Was vote by Miami's Cuban community a referendum on Obama's policy?"

²³⁰³ Klas and Mazzei. "Was vote by Miami's Cuban community a referendum on Obama's policy?"

²³⁰⁴ Klas and Mazzei. "Was vote by Miami's Cuban community a referendum on Obama's policy?"; Dario Moreno, interview by author, June 27, 2018.

²³⁰⁵ Klas and Mazzei. "Was vote by Miami's Cuban community a referendum on Obama's policy?"

²³⁰⁶ Gámez Torres and Mazzei. "'The Cubans are sh----- themselves' over Trump."

scrambled to find contacts.²³⁰⁷ The Trump team did not employ Cuban-Americans who favored engagement with Cuba.²³⁰⁸

Trump credited Cuban-Americans with his Florida electoral win, but evidence suggests that he did poorly with the Cuban-American community compared to other Republican presidential candidates, even among hardliners. The Bay of Pigs veterans' endorsement was one of a series of last-minute election developments (such as the FBI announcing an investigation into Hillary Clinton) that changed the course of a tight race. Trump's bigotry, bad relationships, and strongman tendencies repelled Cuban-American Republican elites. Many publicly expressed disgust and refused to vote for him. Hillary Clinton's long-term investment in the community, changing community dynamics, and Trump's effrontery helped her win around half of the Cuban-American vote. Yet, Trump garnered a core group of Cuban exile hardliners that helped nudge him to win Florida. Was the Cuban-American vote decisive for Trump's Florida victory? The margin of victory is often so small in Florida elections that any small changes in the heterogeneous state's voting blocs can make a big difference in an election outcome. Nonetheless, Trump's hardline allies viewed the win as a mandate to reverse Obama's Cuba policies. Trump prepared to repay the transaction.²³⁰⁹

²³⁰⁷ Gámez Torres and Mazzei. "The Cubans are sh----- themselves' over Trump."

²³⁰⁸ Gámez Torres and Mazzei. "The Cubans are sh----- themselves' over Trump."

²³⁰⁹ Anonymous, interview by author, March 12, 2018.; Lino Gutierrez, interview by author, May 10, 2018.; Anonymous, interview by author, March 12, 2018.

Fidel Castro's Death

Fidel died on November 26, 2016, almost exactly sixty years after the *Granma* yacht set sail from Mexico to begin the Cuban Revolution.²³¹⁰ Obituaries around the world painted very different pictures of him as either a murderer or champion of the "Third World." People in Miami celebrated in the streets, banging pots and pans. Trump tweeted, "Fidel Castro is dead!" He also released a statement:

Today, the world marks the passing of a brutal dictator who oppressed his own people for nearly six decades.

Fidel Castro's legacy is one of firing squads, theft, unimaginable suffering, poverty and the denial of fundamental human rights. While Cuba remains a totalitarian island, it is my hope that today marks a move away from the horrors endured for too long, and toward a future in which the wonderful Cuban people finally live in the freedom they so richly deserve.

Though the tragedies, deaths and pain caused by Fidel Castro cannot be erased, our administration will do all it can to ensure the Cuban people can finally begin their journey toward prosperity and liberty. I join the many Cuban-Americans who supported me so greatly in the presidential campaign, including the Brigade 2506 Veterans Association that endorsed me, with the hope of one day soon seeing a free Cuba.²³¹¹

A *Miami Herald* photo caption would later claim, "Fidel Castro's death did more to consolidate President-elect Donald Trump's support among Miami's Cuban-American Republican politicians than anything."²³¹²

²³¹⁰ "How events in Cuba shaped and reshaped Miami." *The Miami Herald*, November 26, 2016.; Whitefield, Mimi. "Castro lived to see renewal of diplomatic ties between U.S. and Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, November 26, 2016.; Whitefield, Mimi. "Slow change in Cuba after the death of Fidel Castro." *The Miami Herald*, November 27, 2016.

²³¹¹ Scott, Eugene. "Donald Trump: Fidel Castro Is Dead! - CNN Politics." CNN Politics, November 26, 2016. <https://www.cnn.com/2016/11/26/politics/trump-reacts-to-castro-death/index.html>.

²³¹²Smiley, David. "The Life and Times of Ileana Ros-Lehtinen." *The Miami Herald*, April 30, 2017.

As with every significant change, people wondered how this would affect Cuba's future and the relationship with the United States.²³¹³ Raul Castro had already announced that Miguel Diaz-Canel would be taking over as President in February 2018, but Raul said nothing of stepping down from his position as head of the party or the armed forces.²³¹⁴ Despite the substantive changes in U.S. policy towards Cuba, comparatively little appeared to be changing in Cuba's political system.²³¹⁵ Some hoped it would be an opportunity; Raul reformed the economy modestly after Fidel stepped down in 2006.²³¹⁶ Plus, Venezuela's patronage dwindled due to a struggling economy.²³¹⁷ Others predicted that the communist leaders would retrench.²³¹⁸ Some noted the irony that Fidel created today's Miami with his intolerant policies.²³¹⁹

Conclusion

Over the course of Obama's two terms, the regional situation dramatically changed. By the time that Obama took office, U.S. hegemony was already declining as China, Russia, and others gained prominence on the world stage and particularly in Cuba and the rest of Latin America. Socialist leaders became heads of state throughout the

²³¹³ Whitefield,. "Slow change in Cuba after the death of Fidel Castro."

²³¹⁴ Whitefield,. "Slow change in Cuba after the death of Fidel Castro."

²³¹⁵ Whitefield,. "Slow change in Cuba after the death of Fidel Castro."; Ordoñez, Franco. "White House to Trump: 'Don't play the bad guy' on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, December 14, 2016: 6A.

²³¹⁶ Whitefield,. "Slow change in Cuba after the death of Fidel Castro."

²³¹⁷ Whitefield,. "Slow change in Cuba after the death of Fidel Castro."

²³¹⁸ Whitefield,. "Slow change in Cuba after the death of Fidel Castro."

²³¹⁹ Whitefield,. "Slow change in Cuba after the death of Fidel Castro."

Americas, and they formed strong relationships with Cuba and Venezuela. These leaders put pressure on the United States to improve relations with Cuba if the United States wanted to have a positive working relationship with the region, but Latin America was still not the primary foreign policy or security focus of the United States at the time except for immigration. Cuba's economy had recovered from the Special Period. Venezuela was Cuba's primary political ally and economic benefactor, providing cheap oil in exchange for doctors. Raul Castro enabled more private enterprise on the island, and the government invested in its tourism sector. The Venezuelan economic collapse reverberated through much of the region, but it hit Cuba especially hard. China and Russia continued to invest in the region and fill power vacuums. More conservative leadership began to take over the "pink tide" countries. Migration from Cuba to the United States increased dramatically after Obama's 17D thaw, affecting the security of various countries in the region. These geopolitical security concerns encouraged Obama to improve relations with Cuba, but the changing domestic scene regarding Cuba policy made it possible.

Because the most prominent Cuban-Americans in Congress tend to be Republican, these politicians' influence on policy-making tended to be limited during the Obama administration. During the campaign, Obama reversed his stance opposing the embargo to a more moderate view of supporting the embargo but also favoring greater engagement with Cuba. He did not win the Cuban-American vote overall, but he did win a larger percentage of the Cuban-American vote than previous Democratic presidential candidates. Furthermore, he was the first Democrat to win Florida since the end of the Cold War, demonstrating that a candidate could still win without the powerful Cuban

voting bloc. It also demonstrated that the presumed Republican Cuban-American voting bloc was less monolithic than its reputation.

The FIU Cuba Poll and other polls further demonstrated the changing dynamic of the community. The original exiles were more likely to be hardliners and more likely to vote, but they were growing old. The younger generation that more recently immigrated from Cuba or grew up in the U.S. continue to show numbers more favorable to engagement each year. The community's evolution on Cuba policy decreased the influence of prominent hardline organizations and enabled a greater number and variety of exile interest groups and elites to influence Cuba policy. The Cuba Study Group and other more moderate organizations that endorsed engagement with Cuba had greater influence during the Obama administration because of his stated goals and the type of support he had from the community. Having promised to allow Cuban-Americans greater freedom to travel to Cuba, Barack Obama fulfilled his promise early and continued to make gradual changes to Cuba policy. After the midterm elections in his second term, when he no longer had to worry about campaigning, Obama made the most comprehensive changes to Cuba policy since the embargo's inception. The 17D "Cuban thaw" announcement (named for the day it was proclaimed: December 17, 2014) that the U.S. would begin the path toward normalization relations with Cuba, including full diplomatic recognition. He reopened the embassy in Havana; expanded travel, remittances, business, and financial opportunities; removed Cuba from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism; and ended "wet foot, dry foot."

Barack Obama started to forge that new path for the U.S. relationship with Cuba in 2013. He sought foreign policy advice from various sources, but regarding the Cuban-

American diaspora, he primarily sought advice from the Cuba Study Group, a collection of Cuban-American businesspeople, wonks, and scholars that favor more engagement with Cuba to promote development, democracy, and human rights on the island. Despite the changing demographics and more space for plurality in political opinion in Miami, the hardliners that tend to have more money and more established reputations in the Cuban community swiftly and continuously denounced Obama's actions. Expansions in campaign finance opportunities after the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* ruling enabled wealthy donors to gain even greater influence. In hardliners' opinions, Obama kowtowed to Castro's demands and received very little in return. Even though Hillary Clinton won Miami-Dade and did remarkably well with the Cuban-American vote, certain conservative elements in the Cuban-American community created a backlash against Obama in the 2016 election and positioned themselves well to influence incoming President Donald Trump. Most momentously, Fidel Castro died at the end of Obama's administration, merely two weeks after the 2016 elections. Cuba was vulnerable, and Cuban-American political support incentivized Trump to return to hardline approaches.

CHAPTER 9: DONALD TRUMP

Introduction

The U.S. Constitution gives the President the authority to set the country's foreign policy or delegate it. Trump's Cuba policy reversed some of Obama's changes but mostly maintained the status quo. The United States continued to espouse the classical realist notion originating with Thucydides, that the strong do what they can while the weak do what they must. The Obama administration strayed from the status quo with Cuba. The current administration has reverted to an antagonistic relationship centered around the embargo.

Cuba rarely ranks high on the policy-making agenda for any president. The U.S. Government and American corporations long ago severed most ties with the small country of 11 million people. After the Cold War, Cuba no longer presented a significant security threat, which allowed other voices to fill the leadership vacuum. Trump governed transactionally.²³²⁰ Because Cuban-American voters helped him win Florida in the 2016 presidential election, Trump cracked down on Cuba to repay the electorate. The election process gave Cuban Americans political clout and enabled Marco Rubio to emerge as a Latin American policy decision-maker. Rubio and his fellow Cuban-American capitalized on Republican control of the government to undo Obama's thaw. They reinforced the Cuban embargo just as Cuba lost its Venezuelan subsidies.

²³²⁰ Anonymous, interview by author, March 12, 2018.; Anonymous, interview by author, March 27, 2018.

Trump Takes Office

Trump took the presidential oath on January 20, 2017. Nationwide protests began the next day while Republicans came to terms with their new leader. The party structure compelled Cuban-American Republicans who opposed Trump or his policies to cooperate. Rubio retained his position as the chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee. He expressed eagerness to work with Trump on foreign policy objectives.²³²¹ However, he indicated reservations over Secretary of State nominee Rex Tillerson's ties to Putin.²³²²

Republican Miami Mayor Carlos Gimenez maintained that he still supported Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) despite Trump opposing the program.²³²³ However, Gimenez determined that Miami would no longer be a "sanctuary city" after Trump threatened to cut funding to sanctuary cities.²³²⁴ Miami-Dade Democratic Party chairman Juan Cuba and over 100 protestors demonstrated outside Miami's City Hall in late January to protest his decision.²³²⁵ Noting that Gimenez was a naturalized citizen himself in a city of immigrants, *Miami Herald* writer Fabiola Santiago

²³²¹ "'Building a wall is a phrase,' Rubio says." *The Miami Herald*, November 30, 2016.; Oppenheimer, Andrés. "Trump's Secretary of State nominee Rex Tillerson is bad news for human rights." *The Miami Herald*, December 14, 2016.

²³²² "'Building a wall is a phrase,' Rubio says."; Oppenheimer. "Trump's Secretary of State nominee Rex Tillerson is bad news for human rights."

²³²³ "After missing chance to sign letter to Trump, Miami-Dade mayor says he backs DACA." *The Miami Herald*, December 8, 2016.

²³²⁴ Douglas Hanks and Patricia Mazzei. "Anger erupts in Miami-Dade after mayor abandons 'sanctuary' policy." *The Miami Herald*, January 27, 2017.

²³²⁵ Hanks and Mazzei. "Anger erupts in Miami-Dade after mayor abandons 'sanctuary' policy."

penned a scathing rebuke of the mayor's decision.²³²⁶ Santiago asserted, "A city built on the hard work and dreams of immigrants doesn't collude to make them scapegoats for the nation's problems."²³²⁷ Real estate billionaire Jorge Perez refused Trump's invitation to help build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border.²³²⁸ The Miami-based Cuban-Argentinian called the plan "idiotic."²³²⁹

Rubio's relationship with the Trump administration changed in mid-February. Rubio became the administration's leader on Latin American policy, focusing on Venezuela and Cuba. Senators Rubio and Menendez introduced a Senate bill to amend the State Department's human rights report's ranking of Cuba; they argued Cuba did not earn its improved position.²³³⁰ Rubio introduced Trump to Venezuelan political prisoner Leopoldo Lopez's wife on February 15.²³³¹ The following day, Trump said that he agreed with Rubio's views on Cuba at a press conference.²³³² He nominated Alexander Acosta, the Cuban-American dean of Florida International University's law school and former federal judge, to be Secretary of Labor after Trump's first nominee did not clear

²³²⁶ Santiago, Fabiola. "Caving in to Trump, Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez sells out this city of immigrants." *The Miami Herald*, January 31, 2017.

²³²⁷ Santiago. "Caving in to Trump, Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez sells out this city of immigrants."

²³²⁸ "Political roundup." *Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)*, February 1, 2017: 7.

²³²⁹ "Political roundup."

²³³⁰ Gámez Torres, Nora. "Trump: Rubio and I have 'very similar views on Cuba'." *The Miami Herald*, February 16, 2017.

²³³¹ "Rubio's friendship with Trump blossoms as he investigates the president's associates." *Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC)*, June 16, 2017.

²³³² Gámez Torres, Nora. "Trump: Rubio and I have 'very similar views on Cuba'."

Congress.²³³³ Acosta became the only Hispanic member of Trump's Cabinet, which gratified Trump's South Florida supporters.²³³⁴ Rubio chaired a Senate hearing that day on U.S. leadership in democracy and human rights in the Americas.²³³⁵ He invited a former Cuban political prisoner to speak.²³³⁶ Cuban-American Congress members approved when Trump announced sanctions against Venezuela's Vice President days later.²³³⁷

Rubio met with Trump several times in the administration's early months, and Rubio confirmed that he broached Cuba.²³³⁸ Diaz-Balart also used discussions with the President to broach the subject.²³³⁹ Diaz-Balart and Ros-Lehtinen met privately with Mike Pence that month.²³⁴⁰ One Washington insider suggested that since Trump did not care about Cuba, Diaz-Balart and Rubio took the opportunity to push policies.²³⁴¹ Rumors swirled around Washington that spring about what Trump would do about Cuba. A months-long multi-agency review explored U.S.-Cuba policy and ultimately

²³³³ Gámez Torres, Nora. "Trump: Rubio and I have 'very similar views on Cuba!'"

²³³⁴ Santiago, Fabiola. "On his worst week in office, Trump gets a boost from Cuban Americans." *The Miami Herald*, February 19, 2017: B2.

²³³⁵ Santiago. "On his worst week in office, Trump gets a boost from Cuban Americans."

²³³⁶ Gámez Torres, Nora. "Trump: Rubio and I have 'very similar views on Cuba!'"

²³³⁷ Santiago. "On his worst week in office, Trump gets a boost from Cuban Americans."

²³³⁸ "Rubio: I've spoken to Trump three times about Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, March 31, 2017.; "Rubio, Rooney to dine with Trump on Tuesday." *The Miami Herald*, June 5, 2017.; Mazzei, Patricia. "Inside Oval Office, Rubio and Diaz-Balart pushed Trump to crack down on Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, June 15, 2017.

²³³⁹ "Rubio: I've spoken to Trump three times about Cuba."

²³⁴⁰ Mazzei. "Inside Oval Office, Rubio and Diaz-Balart pushed Trump to crack down on Cuba."

²³⁴¹ Mazzei, Patricia. "Cuba policy ensnares White House." *The Miami Herald*, June 2, 2017: A1.; Dario Moreno, interview by author, June 27, 2018.

recommended maintaining Obama's policies.²³⁴² Rubio and Diaz-Balart disputed the bureaucrats' conclusions and urged Trump to disregard them.²³⁴³ He obliged. Trump ignored the State Department anyway; he had yet to appoint dozens of ambassadorships and other key positions.²³⁴⁴ National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster, White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, and Florida Governor Rick Scott cosigned Trump's plan.²³⁴⁵ Only a select few knew about the secret project.²³⁴⁶ Several proposals circulated in Washington, but Rubio's plan never leaked.²³⁴⁷ Cuba's government cracked down on dissidents as its tourism sector grew faster than the rest of the Caribbean combined.²³⁴⁸ Republican power over the executive and legislative branches afforded Cuban-American legislators the opportunity to reverse Obama's legacy.²³⁴⁹ On May 20, Cuban Independence Day, the President issued a statement condemning the Cuban regime as

²³⁴² Gámez Torres, Nora. "Rubio: 'Trump will treat Cuba like dictatorship it is.'" *The Miami Herald*, April 9, 2017: B5.; Nora Gámez Torres and Patricia Mazzei. "Trump recasts Cuba policy, takes harder line than Obama on military, travel." *The Miami Herald*, June 15, 2017.; Mazzei. "Inside Oval Office, Rubio and Diaz-Balart pushed Trump to crack down on Cuba."

²³⁴³ Gámez Torres and Mazzei. "Trump recasts Cuba policy, takes harder line than Obama on military, travel."; Mazzei. "Inside Oval Office, Rubio and Diaz-Balart pushed Trump to crack down on Cuba."

²³⁴⁴ Gámez Torres and Mazzei. "Trump recasts Cuba policy, takes harder line than Obama on military, travel."; Daugherty, Alex. "The Trump whisperer: Marco Rubio has the president's ear on Latin America." *The Miami Herald*, June 26, 2017.

²³⁴⁵ Mazzei. "Inside Oval Office, Rubio and Diaz-Balart pushed Trump to crack down on Cuba."

²³⁴⁶ Mazzei. "Inside Oval Office, Rubio and Diaz-Balart pushed Trump to crack down on Cuba."

²³⁴⁷ Gámez Torres. "Rubio: 'Trump will treat Cuba like dictatorship it is.'"; Mazzei. "Inside Oval Office, Rubio and Diaz-Balart pushed Trump to crack down on Cuba."

²³⁴⁸ Whitefield, Mimi. "Is Cuba's potential tourism growth a threat to the rest of the Caribbean?" *The Miami Herald*, May 3, 2017.; Mazzei, Patricia. "Cuba policy ensnares White House." *The Miami Herald*, June 2, 2017: A1.

²³⁴⁹ Torres, Nora Gámez. "Trump will not announce highly anticipated changes in Cuba policy." *The Miami Herald*, May 18, 2017.

“cruel despotism.”²³⁵⁰ Trump took a strict approach to Cuba in return for the Cuban-American vote. Trump repeatedly spoke to Diaz-Balart and Rubio about repaying the Bay of Pigs Veterans for their endorsement.²³⁵¹ Furthermore, Cuban-American congressional votes and committee assignments proved useful.²³⁵² Bipartisan Florida legislators supported the initiatives.²³⁵³ Ros-Lehtinen and Rubio spearheaded Cuba initiatives in the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In contrast, most American citizens and businesses opposed the embargo.²³⁵⁴ Fifty Republican and Democratic senators and about forty companies made public declarations favoring engagement with Cuba.²³⁵⁵ Senators Jeff Flake, Patrick Leahy, and others had promoted engagement for years.²³⁵⁶ Before a momentous Cuba announcement in June, Rubio defended Trump regarding Russian interference in the 2016 election during former FBI director Comey’s congressional hearing with the Senate Select Intelligence Committee.²³⁵⁷

²³⁵⁰ Mazzei. "Cuba policy ensnares White House."

²³⁵¹ Mazzei. "Inside Oval Office, Rubio and Diaz-Balart pushed Trump to crack down on Cuba."

²³⁵² Mazzei. "Inside Oval Office, Rubio and Diaz-Balart pushed Trump to crack down on Cuba."

²³⁵³ "As Trump reviews Cuba policy, Rubio, Nelson want to address 'stolen property'." *The Miami Herald*, June 5, 2017.

²³⁵⁴ Whitefield, Mimi. "Trump's announcement on Cuba could clash with Central American summit." *The Miami Herald*, June 12, 2017.

²³⁵⁵ Gámez Torres, Nora. "50 U.S. senators propose eliminating all restrictions on travel to Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, May 27, 2017: A17.

²³⁵⁶ Gámez Torres. "50 U.S. senators propose eliminating all restrictions on travel to Cuba."

²³⁵⁷ "Rubio's friendship with Trump blossoms as he investigates the president's associates."; Daugherty, Alex. "Rubio challenges Comey over not telling public Trump wasn't target of investigation." *The Miami Herald*, June 8, 2017.; Oppenheimer, Andrés. "Trump's policy changes will give new ammunition to Cuba's dictatorship." *The Miami Herald*, June 14, 2017.

Nationwide public opinion and Cuban-American polls showed more support for engagement. A 2015 Pew Research Poll showed that 73% of Americans favored ending the Cuban embargo, including 59% of Republicans and 82% of Democrats.²³⁵⁸ Even though Trump credited Cuban-Americans for his Florida win, Trump lost Miami-Dade county by 29 percentage points.²³⁵⁹ The 2016 FIU Cuba Poll showed that support for unrestricted travel and ending the embargo increased over time within the Cuban-American community (See Figures 9.1 and 9.2).²³⁶⁰ The increased support primarily came from younger generations born in the United States and newer migration waves from Cuba (See Figures 9.4 – 9.7).²³⁶¹ Seventy-four percent of respondents favored unrestricted travel.²³⁶² Sixty-three percent of respondents opposed continuing in the embargo.²³⁶³ Sixty-four percent of Miami-Dade Cuban-Americans supported Obama’s policies.²³⁶⁴ Younger Cuban-Americans were far more likely to support Obama’s policies than older generations.²³⁶⁵ Most Cuban-Americans approved of greater normalization with Cuba, but senior exiles, who had established the most influence and success in

²³⁵⁸ Pew Research Center. “Growing Public Support for U.S. Ties With Cuba – And an End to the Trade Embargo | Pew Research Center,” July 21, 2015. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2015/07/21/growing-public-support-for-u-s-ties-with-cuba-and-an-end-to-the-trade-embargo/>.

²³⁵⁹ Mazzei, Patricia. "Trump to reveal Cuba policy in Miami next Friday." *The Miami Herald*, June 9, 2017.

²³⁶⁰ 2016 FIU Cuba Poll, p. 26-27

²³⁶¹ 2016 FIU Cuba Poll, p. 26-27

²³⁶² 2016 FIU Cuba Poll, p. 17

²³⁶³ 2016 FIU Cuba Poll, p. 10

²³⁶⁴ 2016 FIU Cuba Poll, p. 12

²³⁶⁵ 2016 FIU Cuba Poll, p. 12

politics and business, favored isolationism. The stereotypical Cuban-American hardline position that Rubio and Diaz-Balart championed with Trump primarily catered to older Cuban voters because of personal convictions and political expediency.²³⁶⁶

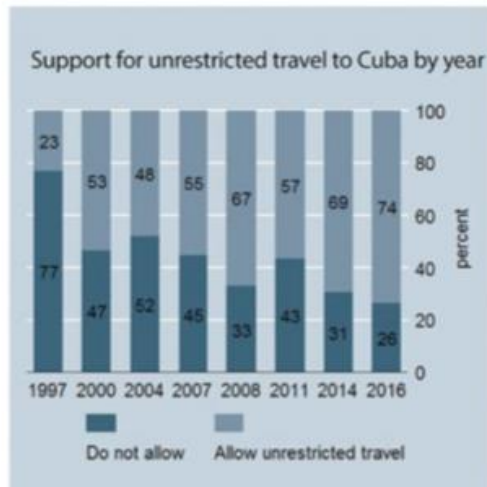


Figure 9.1: Support for unrestricted travel to Cuba by year

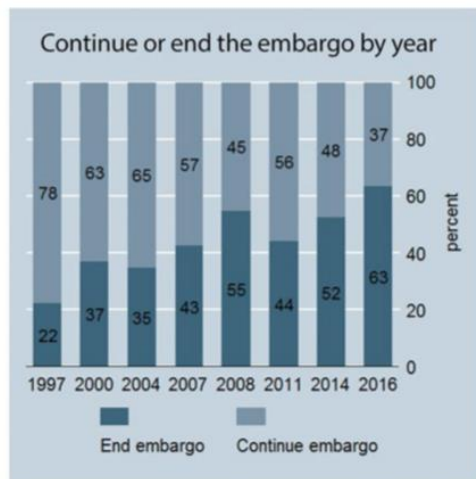


Figure 9.2: Continue or end the embargo by year

²³⁶⁶ Garcia, Vanessa. "Cuba, U.S. better off if their doors stay open." *The Miami Herald*, June 14, 2017.

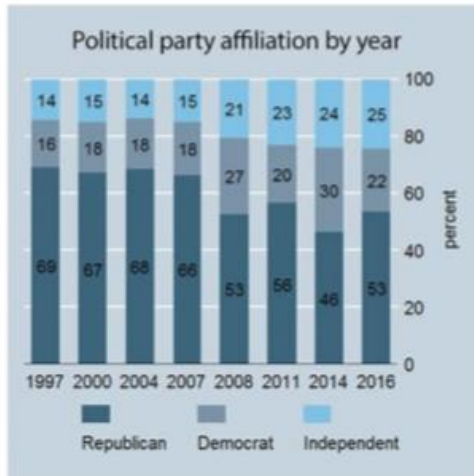


Figure 9.3: Political party affiliation by year

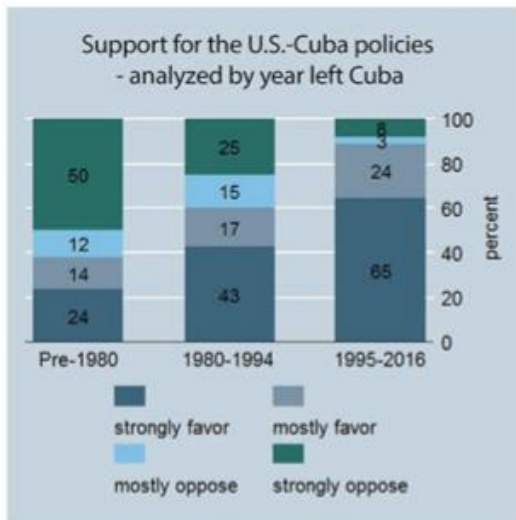


Figure 9.4: Support for the U.S.-Cuba policies by year left Cuba

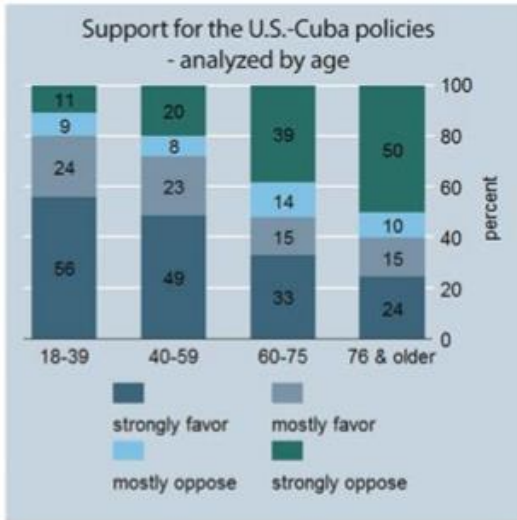


Figure 9.5: Support for the U.S.-Cuba policies by age

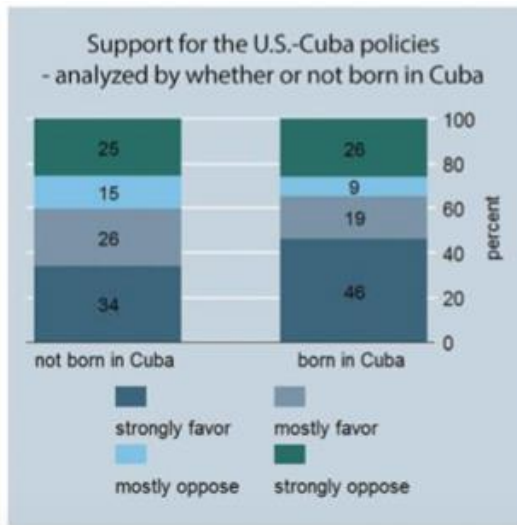


Figure 9.6: Support for the U.S.-Cuba policies by whether born in Cuba

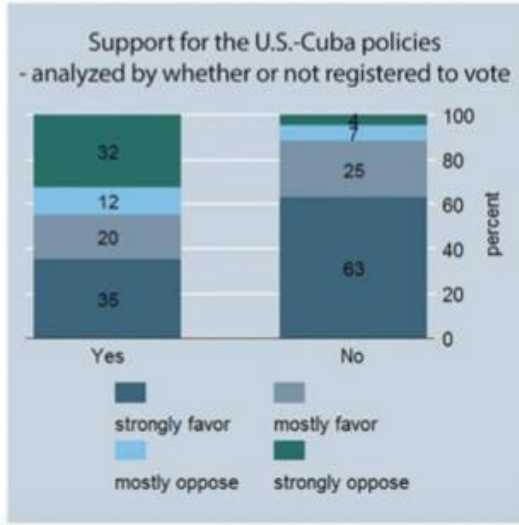


Figure 9.7: Support for the U.S.-Cuba policies by whether registered to vote

The new Cuba plan elicited various responses as details emerged; many made a last-ditch effort to affect policy. Pro-engagement legislators petitioned Trump and his National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster to maintain Obama’s policies.²³⁶⁷ Cuban dissidents on the island, even ones that had supported Obama’s policies, like the Patriotic Union of Cuba’s (UNPACU) Jose Daniel Ferrer, now requested more U.S. pressure on the Castro regime.²³⁶⁸ Cuban-American billionaire Mike Fernandez wrote an op-ed for *The Miami Herald* enumerating the benefits of Obama’s policies with Cuba and emphasizing Trump’s “con man” reputation.²³⁶⁹ Rubio, Tillerson, and others affirmed

²³⁶⁷ Mazzei. "Trump to reveal Cuba policy in Miami next Friday."

²³⁶⁸ Gámez Torres, Nora. "Amidst imminent Cuba policy announcement, dissidents express support for some change." *The Miami Herald*, June 13, 2017.

²³⁶⁹ Fernández, Mike. "U.S.-Cuba policy must now move forward, not back." *The Miami Herald*, June 13, 2017.

that they cut off funding to Cuban government entities to promote free enterprise and human rights.²³⁷⁰

June Announcement

On June 16, 2017, at Little Havana's Manuel Artime Theater, Trump announced that he would roll back Obama's policies. He wanted to repay Cuban-Americans for helping him win Florida.²³⁷¹ His plan prohibited transactions with businesses associated with "Cuba's military-backed tourism conglomerate GAESA."²³⁷² The National Security Presidential Memorandum limited the scope of Treasury-authorized travel.²³⁷³ Numerous distinguished members of the Cuban-American community in Miami attended: Senator Marco Rubio, Representative Diaz-Balart, Vice President Mike Pence, Representative Carlos Curbelo, Secretary of Labor Alex Acosta, Miami-Dade representatives, Bay of Pigs veterans, and Cuban dissidents.²³⁷⁴ Rubio, Diaz-Balart, Curbelo, Acosta, and Trump tweeted selfies aboard Air Force One en route to the event.²³⁷⁵ Ros-Lehtinen, Menendez,

²³⁷⁰ "Rex Tillerson doesn't get into Cuba policy review specifics during Senate hearing." *The Miami Herald*, June 13, 2017.; Gámez Torres and Mazzei. "Trump recasts Cuba policy, takes harder line than Obama on military, travel."

²³⁷¹ "Trump's tough Cuba line scores big in Little Havana." *Agence France-Presse*, June 17, 2017.

²³⁷² "Trump to clamp down on Cuba travel, business ties." *Agence France-Presse*, June 16, 2017.

²³⁷³ "Trump to clamp down on Cuba travel, business ties."

²³⁷⁴ "Ros-Lehtinen backs Trump Cuba policy but won't attend Miami announcement." *The Miami Herald*, June 15, 2017.

²³⁷⁵ Harris, Alex. "Trump, Curbelo and Rubio tweet about Cuba on Air Force One ride to Miami." *The Miami Herald*, June 16, 2017.

and Mayor Carlos Gimenez supported the policy but could not attend.²³⁷⁶ Rubio, Menendez, and Diaz-Balart wrote a *Miami Herald* op-ed to promote the new agenda.²³⁷⁷ Trump proclaimed, “I am canceling the last administration’s completely one-sided deal with Cuba.”²³⁷⁸ Rubio assured the guayabera-attired audience, “You mark my words. Whether it’s in six months or six years, Cuba will be free!”²³⁷⁹ “Viva Cuba libre!” they shouted in response.²³⁸⁰

The rhetoric oversold the actual changes. Trump maintained diplomatic relations, commercial flights, cruises, and most travel categories.²³⁸¹ Americans could still participate in group people-to-people educational travel with detailed itineraries.²³⁸² However, the plan eliminated individual people-to-people educational trips, which Obama’s critics claimed Americans abused to vacation.²³⁸³ The United States would permit fewer Cuban government officials to enter the country.²³⁸⁴ The State Department

²³⁷⁶ "Ros-Lehtinen backs Trump Cuba policy but won't attend Miami announcement."; Daugherty, Alex. "Trump defies congressional Republicans who want closer relations with Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, June 16, 2017.

²³⁷⁷ Marco Rubio. "We welcome President Trump's new Cuba policy." *The Miami Herald*, June 16, 2017.

²³⁷⁸ Mazzei, Patricia. "In Miami, Trump toughens Obama Cuba policy 'like I promised'." *The Miami Herald*, June 16, 2017.

²³⁷⁹ Mazzei. "In Miami, Trump toughens Obama Cuba policy 'like I promised.'"

²³⁸⁰ Mazzei. "In Miami, Trump toughens Obama Cuba policy 'like I promised.'"

²³⁸¹ Gámez Torres and Mazzei. "Trump recasts Cuba policy, takes harder line than Obama on military, travel."

²³⁸² Gámez Torres and Mazzei. "Trump recasts Cuba policy, takes harder line than Obama on military, travel."

²³⁸³ Gámez Torres and Mazzei. "Trump recasts Cuba policy, takes harder line than Obama on military, travel."

²³⁸⁴ Gámez Torres and Mazzei. "Trump recasts Cuba policy, takes harder line than Obama on military, travel."

had to create a list of businesses that Americans could not patronize due to their military-controlled GAESA organization ties.²³⁸⁵ The administration sought to cut off funding to the repressive Cuban government, which benefited from a surge in tourism in recent years.²³⁸⁶ Critics feared the restrictions would significantly stifle the burgeoning private sector in Cuba.²³⁸⁷ They also feared that the absence of U.S. influence would leave more room for China and Russia to fill the void.²³⁸⁸ The statement disappointed some hardliners who thought the policy did not go far enough.²³⁸⁹ To offset some of the new U.S. policies and improve relations with the Cuban-American community, Cuba changed some of its rules to make it easier for Cuban-Americans to return to the island.²³⁹⁰

Rubio functionally took control of Latin America policy during the Trump administration. Trump preferred to make decisions individually or with his closest advisors rather than hear federal agencies' recommendations. (Ironically, Obama's

²³⁸⁵ Gámez Torres and Mazzei. "Trump recasts Cuba policy, takes harder line than Obama on military, travel."

²³⁸⁶ "Rubio: 'Tomorrow is going to be a good day for the Cuban people'." *The Miami Herald*, June 15, 2017.

²³⁸⁷ Santiago, Fabiola. "President Trump's ballyhooed Cuba travel policy is topsy-turvy." *The Miami Herald*, June 15, 2017.; Oppenheimer, Andrés. "The Oppenheimer Report Trump's policy changes will give new ammunition to Cuba's dictatorship." *The Miami Herald*, June 15, 2017: A11. Whitefield, Mimi. "Trump's new Cuba policy is too much for some, not enough for others." *The Miami Herald*, June 16, 2017.; Putney, Michael. "Trump's Cuba policy looks a lot like President Obama's." *The Miami Herald*, June 20, 2017.; Hiaasen, Carl. "Trump new policy shows he doesn't really care about the Cuban people." *The Miami Herald*, June 23, 2017.; Daugherty, Alex. "As Trump writes new Cuba rules, anti-embargo politicians present a compromise." *The Miami Herald*, July 18, 2017.; Mazzei, Patricia. "What Trump's Cuba crackdown will look like." *The Miami Herald*, November 8, 2017.

²³⁸⁸ Santiago. "President Trump's ballyhooed Cuba travel policy is topsy-turvy."; Oppenheimer. "The Oppenheimer Report Trump's policy changes will give new ammunition to Cuba's dictatorship."; Whitefield. "Trump's new Cuba policy is too much for some, not enough for others."

²³⁸⁹ Whitefield. "Trump's new Cuba policy is too much for some, not enough for others."

²³⁹⁰ Whitefield, Mimi. "Cuba announces new measures to make travel to the island easier for Cuban Americans." *The Miami Herald*, October 28, 2017.

undemocratic manner of secretly consulting with a few close advisors was among the chief complaints Cuban-Americans had about Obama's Cuba policy.²³⁹¹) Trump prioritized other matters but seized opportunities to undo Obama's legacy whenever possible. Trump threatened to cut the State Department's budget and foreign aid and often feuded with Rex Tillerson.²³⁹² Important leadership positions in the State Department remained empty, hampering the civil service's ability to carry out administration policies. As with other presidents, the NSA and Defense Departments continued to gain more influence vis-a-vis the State Department, putting a premium on force over diplomacy.

Rubio's prominent positions on the Senate's Foreign Relations and Intelligence committees contributed to his authority over Latin American and Caribbean affairs.²³⁹³ Trump eagerly appeased Rubio's Florida constituency to prepare for the 2020 election. Rubio boasted:

They've asked for my input on basically every issue in Latin America and the Western Hemisphere and... we've been engaged with them and they've been very open. In some ways the fact that they didn't come in with preconceived ideas of what to do has created the space for that debate to occur.²³⁹⁴

At another interview, he explained:

I have disagreements with the White House and I have been able to address some of them privately and a couple of them more publicly, whether it was the initial response in Puerto Rico or some of the foreign policy issues in different parts of the world.... But my view is this: 95 percent of what is going to happen to me

²³⁹¹ Daugherty. "The Trump whisperer: Marco Rubio has the president's ear on Latin America."

²³⁹² Daugherty. "The Trump whisperer: Marco Rubio has the president's ear on Latin America."

²³⁹³ Oppenheimer, Andrés. "The Trump administration has outsourced its Venezuela policy to Marco Rubio." *The Miami Herald*, July 28, 2017.

²³⁹⁴ Daugherty. "The Trump whisperer: Marco Rubio has the president's ear on Latin America."

today, I cannot control. What I can control is how I react to what happens. And what I've chosen to do more than ever is focus like a laser on the things I can control and get done.²³⁹⁵

He and his fellow Cuban-American legislators dominated the Cuba and Venezuela discussions.²³⁹⁶ Ros-Lehtinen commended him for advocating for Cuba, Venezuela, and Puerto Rican hurricane aid.²³⁹⁷ She said, "Marco Rubio is the conduit we have to get to President Trump. He's got the president's ear on Cuba and Venezuela."²³⁹⁸

Comparing his foreign policy style to Trump's, Rubio said:

The president's approach to foreign policy has largely been to not publicly antagonize leaders he's trying to reach accommodation or agreement with," Rubio said. "I've long said that human rights and respect for democracy should be at the forefront of everything we do and I have a different style about that."²³⁹⁹

Various government agencies implemented Trump's presidential directive on Cuba, and the policies finally took effect in November. Rubio and Diaz-Balart blamed State Department bureaucrats for creating policies that did not fulfill their intentions. (Note: the absence of direction from senior leadership may have had a more significant impact given the turnover of foreign service officers on State Department assignments.) For example, the restricted list did not include Gran Caribe and Cubacan, which were part of the Cuban tourism ministry, over which the Cuban army colonel Manuel Marrero Cruz

²³⁹⁵ Daugherty, Alex. "He's not up for reelection in 2018, but here's why Marco Rubio is campaigning hard." *The Miami Herald*, November 7, 2017.

²³⁹⁶ Wyss, Jim. "Threat of U.S. oil sanctions on Venezuela sparks fears of economic 'collapse'." *The Miami Herald*, July 18, 2017.

²³⁹⁷ Daugherty. "He's not up for reelection in 2018, but here's why Marco Rubio is campaigning hard."

²³⁹⁸ Daugherty. "He's not up for reelection in 2018, but here's why Marco Rubio is campaigning hard."

²³⁹⁹ Daugherty, Alex. "Enes Kanter can't play basketball due to death threats, so he met with Marco Rubio." *The Miami Herald*, January 16, 2019.

presided.²⁴⁰⁰ Yet, the military itself did not directly control them.²⁴⁰¹ Ros-Lehtinen added, “The “carve-outs” in the regulations and the acceptance of this false narrative of a Cuban private sector are disappointing. Let me be clear: There is no truly independent private sector under a communist dictatorial regime because the regime controls all aspects of society.”²⁴⁰² Others, defending emerging free enterprise in Cuba, noted that the private sector is not truly independent, so it would be impossible to encourage entrepreneurship on the island without enriching the government.²⁴⁰³ Still, others claimed that Trump’s inconsistent approaches to Cuba belied disinterest.²⁴⁰⁴

Venezuela

The situation in Venezuela had rapidly deteriorated since Maduro took office in 2013. Hyperinflation, a tanking economy, violence, massive protests, corruption, and more overtook the once-prosperous, oil-producing nation. Maduro armed private paramilitary groups under the Zamora Plan in April 2017.²⁴⁰⁵ Sources indicated that Cuba provided many of the weapons in their arsenal.²⁴⁰⁶ South Florida Cuban-American

²⁴⁰⁰ Mazzei, Patricia. "Rubio: 'Bureaucrats' to blame for softening Trump Cuba policy." *The Miami Herald*, November 8, 2017.

²⁴⁰¹ Mazzei. "Rubio: 'Bureaucrats' to blame for softening Trump Cuba policy."

²⁴⁰² Mazzei. "Rubio: 'Bureaucrats' to blame for softening Trump Cuba policy."

²⁴⁰³ Santiago, Fabiola. "It's your Cuba policy, Miami Republicans. You can't blame Obama now." *The Miami Herald*, November 10, 2017.

²⁴⁰⁴ Gámez Torres, Nora. "Trump is willing to negotiate with North Korea — but not Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, June 14, 2018.

²⁴⁰⁵ Delgado, Antonio María. "Venezuela Military weapons could fall to criminals." *The Miami Herald*, April 25, 2017: A1.

²⁴⁰⁶ Delgado. "Venezuela Military weapons could fall to criminals."

politicians became markedly invested in Venezuela due to a kinship with the 100,000 Venezuelan immigrants in Florida and the Maduro regime's relationship with Cuba.²⁴⁰⁷ Ros-Lehtinen's position on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Rubio's prominence on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee helped them spearhead Venezuela and Cuba initiatives.

With Rubio at the helm, Florida legislators continued to work with the administration to tighten sanctions against Venezuela that began under Obama.²⁴⁰⁸ In May, they sanctioned eight Venezuelan Supreme Court Justices.²⁴⁰⁹ Congress quarreled about Cuba, but legislators unanimously, if not officially, condemned Maduro's dictatorship.²⁴¹⁰ Some questioned sanctions.²⁴¹¹ The White House and the Treasury froze assets and banned travel visas for thirteen Venezuelan officials.²⁴¹² The ongoing register

²⁴⁰⁷ Mazzei, Patricia, and Alex Daugherty. "Cuban-American Lawmakers Adopt Venezuela Cause as Their Own." McClatchy, July 22, 12017BC. <https://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/politics-government/article163068893.html>.; Alex Daugherty and Patricia Mazzei. "As Venezuela teeters on constitutional crisis, Miami lawmakers warn of a new Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, July 21, 2017.; William LeoGrande, interview by author. May 11, 2018.; Anonymous, interview by author. March 12, 2018.; Jaime Suchlicki, interview by author, July 30, 2018.; Lino Gutierrez, interview by author, May 10, 2018.; James Cason, interview by the author, June 26, 2018.; Anonymous, interview by the author, May 9, 2018.; Pedro Roig, interview by the author, July 23, 2018.

²⁴⁰⁸ Oppenheimer. "The Trump administration has outsourced its Venezuela policy to Marco Rubio."

²⁴⁰⁹ Daugherty. "The Trump whisperer: Marco Rubio has the president's ear on Latin America."

²⁴¹⁰ Daugherty and Mazzei. "As Venezuela teeters on constitutional crisis, Miami lawmakers warn of a new Cuba."

²⁴¹¹ Daugherty, Alex. "Lawmakers divided over a ban on Venezuelan oil amid fears of a Russian takeover." *The Miami Herald*, July 21, 2017.

²⁴¹² Mazzei, Patricia. "U.S. sanctions 13 more Venezuelans ahead of showdown vote." *The Miami Herald*, July 26, 2017.; Oppenheimer. "The Trump administration has outsourced its Venezuela policy to Marco Rubio."

of targeted sanctions mostly matched Senators Rubio and Menendez's suggestions.²⁴¹³ Pence visited Doral in August, listening to Venezuelan victims' stories and promising more sanctions in the company of Scott, Rubio, and Diaz-Balart.²⁴¹⁴ Diaz-Balart and Rubio praised the sanctions that the administration instituted.²⁴¹⁵ Rubio became a Venezuelan-American favorite.²⁴¹⁶

Immigration

White House aide Stephen Miller took a keen interest in immigration policy. That summer 2017, the White House proposed an immigration plan called the Raise Act that prioritized immigrants proficient in English, limited the number of visas for unskilled jobs, limited green cards, halved the number of refugees allowed, and eliminated the green card lottery.²⁴¹⁷ Ros-Lehtinen and Curbelo opposed it.²⁴¹⁸ Ros-Lehtinen denounced White House advisor Stephen Miller citing the Mariel boatlift as justification for

²⁴¹³ Mazzei. "U.S. sanctions 13 more Venezuelans ahead of showdown vote."; Franco Ordoñez and Patricia Mazzei. "U.S. sanctions 10 more Venezuelan government leaders." *The Miami Herald*, November 9, 2017.

²⁴¹⁴ Mazzei, Patricia. "Pence hints at economic sanctions against Venezuela: 'Our resolve is unwavering'." *The Miami Herald*, August 23, 2017.

²⁴¹⁵ Mazzei. "Pence hints at economic sanctions against Venezuela: 'Our resolve is unwavering'."

²⁴¹⁶ Santiago, Fabiola. "As Republicans earn their stripes on Venezuela, Democrats let an opportunity slip by." *The Miami Herald*, August 25, 2017.

²⁴¹⁷ Daugherty, Alex. "Rubio still considering Trump-sponsored immigration plan introduced in February." *The Miami Herald*, August 3, 2017.

²⁴¹⁸ Daugherty. "Rubio still considering Trump-sponsored immigration plan introduced in February."

restricting low-skilled workers with little English proficiency.²⁴¹⁹ Rubio did not support reducing the number of green cards.²⁴²⁰

Consistent with Trump's crackdown on immigration, the administration allowed Temporary Protected Status for Salvadorans and Haitians to expire in January. The revelation that Trump allegedly referred to Haiti and El Salvador as "shithole" countries caused a stir in Miami. Miami-Dade County and the City of Miami issued statements condemning the President's rhetoric about immigrants.²⁴²¹ Ros-Lehtinen called Trump's comments "completely unacceptable" and racist.²⁴²² All Miami area Democrats and Republicans in the House co-sponsored Carlos Curbelo's Fall 2017 bill to extend Temporary Protected Status for Haitian and Salvadoran immigrants fleeing dangerous situations in their countries to be allowed into the United States.²⁴²³ The Trump administration deported Venezuelans and Cubans and resisted petitions to provide Temporary Protected Status for Venezuelans despite Trump's tough stance on the Venezuelan government.²⁴²⁴

²⁴¹⁹ Daugherty. "Rubio still considering Trump-sponsored immigration plan introduced in February."

²⁴²⁰ Daugherty, Alex. "As Dems play catch-up on Venezuela, immigration attack could fall short." *The Miami Herald*, September 1, 2017.

²⁴²¹ Smiley, David. "First it was the county. Now the city of Miami is slamming Trump over Haiti comments." *The Miami Herald*, January 25, 2018.

²⁴²² Taylor, Andrew. "GOP Moderates Furious, Leaders Muted on Trump Furor." Associated Press, January 12, 2018. <https://apnews.com/article/c72e985b91744625921518438bac68a6>.

²⁴²³ "Cosponsors - H.R.4184 - 115th Congress (2017-2018): ESPERER Act of 2017 | Congress.Gov | Library of Congress." Accessed February 17, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/4184/cosponsors?searchResultViewType=expanded>.

²⁴²⁴ Santiago, Fabiola. "Trump is deporting Venezuelans to dictator Nicolás Maduro's hell. This is why." *The Miami Herald*, June 14, 2018.

Health Attacks

The U.S. diplomatic mission to Havana fluctuated. In July, Scott Hamilton became the interim chief at the U.S. Embassy in Havana.²⁴²⁵ Lawrence Gumbiner replaced him in October, and Philip Goldberg took over for him in February. Each only lasted a few months before Mara Tekach became the Charge d’Affaires ad interim in July 2018. The U.S.-Cuba relationship deteriorated as U.S. diplomats and their families fell ill in Havana.

In August 2017, reports emerged that American diplomats in Havana experienced health issues.²⁴²⁶ Washington withdrew diplomats and expelled two Cuban diplomats from the United States.²⁴²⁷ What happened, how it happened, and who did it remained unclear. The Cubans breached Vienna Convention obligations if they deliberately harmed the diplomats or failed to protect them. According to Otto Reich, Cuban officials monitor the diplomats so closely that they would undoubtedly know if third parties interfered, and Cubans had a pattern of harassing diplomats for decades.²⁴²⁸ South Florida Cuban lawmakers blamed Obama for being soft on Cuba and urged Trump to castigate Cuba. Canadian diplomats experienced similar symptoms.²⁴²⁹ By August, twenty-one members of the American mission attested to experiencing hearing strange, deafening sounds

²⁴²⁵ Gámez Torres, Nora. "U.S. names a new interim charge d'affaires at embassy in Havana." *The Miami Herald*, July 11, 2017.

²⁴²⁶ Daugherty, Alex. "Anti-Castro politicians talk tough on Cuba after suspected attack on U.S. diplomats." *The Miami Herald*, August 10, 2017.

²⁴²⁷ Daugherty. "Anti-Castro politicians talk tough on Cuba after suspected attack on U.S. diplomats."

²⁴²⁸ Daugherty. "Anti-Castro politicians talk tough on Cuba after suspected attack on U.S. diplomats."

²⁴²⁹ Daugherty. "Anti-Castro politicians talk tough on Cuba after suspected attack on U.S. diplomats."

resulting in hearing loss, concussions, memory loss, nausea, migraines, and tinnitus.²⁴³⁰ Rubio and other senators urged Tillerson to close the embassy to protect the diplomats, even though Cuba denied any involvement.²⁴³¹ Despite ongoing investigations, the United States withdrew most of its embassy and consular staff.²⁴³² It suspended Cuban visas indefinitely at the end of September after Tillerson and Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez met.²⁴³³ Rubio and Curbelo aimed to ban more Cuban diplomats from the United States. Days later, fifteen Cuban diplomats received notice that the United States demanded their removal.²⁴³⁴ Rubio commended this move then suggested downgrading the mission from an embassy back to a special interests section.²⁴³⁵ The State Department did not downgrade the mission, even though only about 40% of the U.S. embassy workers remained in Havana. The State Department had not officially

²⁴³⁰ Santiago, Fabiola. "Trump threat to close U.S. Embassy in Havana is setback to diplomacy gains." *The Miami Herald*, September 19, 2017.; "Cuba puts renewed U.S. ties at risk." *The Miami Herald*, September 19, 2017: A12.; Zengerle, Patricia, and Marc Frank. "U.S. Lawmakers Want Retaliation for Sonic Attacks in Cuba | Reuters." Reuters, September 15, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-cuba-diplomacy/u-s-lawmakers-want-retaliation-for-sonic-attacks-in-cuba-idUSKCN1BQ29A>.

²⁴³¹ Santiago. "Trump threat to close U.S. Embassy in Havana is setback to diplomacy gains."

²⁴³² Gámez Torres, Nora. "U.S. suspends visas for Cubans, withdraws most staffers from embassy Action follows apparent unexplained 'sonic' attack on American diplomats in Havana." *The Miami Herald*, September 30, 2017: A1.

²⁴³³ Gámez Torres. "U.S. suspends visas for Cubans, withdraws most staffers from embassy Action follows apparent unexplained 'sonic' attack on American diplomats in Havana."

²⁴³⁴ Gámez Torres, Nora. "U.S. orders 15 Cuban diplomats to leave; Cuba blames Washington for deteriorating relations." *The Miami Herald*, October 3, 2017.

²⁴³⁵ Gámez Torres. "U.S. orders 15 Cuban diplomats to leave; Cuba blames Washington for deteriorating relations."

accused Cuba of instigating the attacks, but it did not permit the Cuban government to examine the victims.²⁴³⁶

International Institutions

As the feud with Cuba escalated, Trump appointed Miami Republican Carlos Trujillo to be a U.S. representative to the United Nations General Assembly in August.²⁴³⁷ Trump promoted him to U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States in October.²⁴³⁸ This put him in a position to be a leading voice on Venezuela and Cuba. Both he and Rubio attended the 2018 Summit of the Americas in Peru with the U.S. delegation.²⁴³⁹

Since 1991, the United Nations General Assembly has annually condemned the U.S. embargo.²⁴⁴⁰ Under Obama, the United States abstained rather than voting no for the

²⁴³⁶ Ordoñez, Franco. "Cuba says U.S. is lying about sonic attacks." *The Miami Herald*, November 3, 2017: A10.

²⁴³⁷ Mary Ellen Klas and Patricia Mazzei. "Miami lawmaker tapped as U.S. ambassador to OAS." *The Miami Herald*, October 26, 2017.

²⁴³⁸ Klas and Mazzei. "Miami lawmaker tapped as U.S. ambassador to OAS."

²⁴³⁹ Trujillo, Carlos. "The Summit of the Americas Advances U.S Leadership in the Western Hemisphere - United States Department of State." U.S. Department of State, April 19, 2018. <https://2017-2021.state.gov/the-summit-of-the-americas-advances-u-s-leadership-in-the-western-hemisphere//index.html>.

²⁴⁴⁰ Whitefield, Mimi. "The U.S. plans to oppose U.N. resolution condemning embargo against Cuba." *Miami Herald, The (FL)*, October 31, 2017.

first time in 2016.²⁴⁴¹ U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley voted against the resolution in fall 2017 per Rubio's insistence and despite resistance from ten U.S. Senators.²⁴⁴²

Domestic Leverage

Trump fired previous Cabinet members and installed foreign policy hawks John Bolton and Mike Pompeo as National Security Advisor and Secretary of State in spring 2018. Bolton notoriously wrongly accused Cuba of having biological weapons in 2002, when he was Under-secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs.²⁴⁴³ Pompeo, a conservative former army officer, previously served as Trump's Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Under new leadership, Rubio effortlessly enacted his anti-communist efforts in Cuba and Venezuela. Rubio helped Trump find a new director for Radio/TV Marti in 2018.²⁴⁴⁴ Tomas Regalado, the former Mayor of Miami, became the new director in June.²⁴⁴⁵ The State Department canceled a seminar titled "Cuba under Diaz-Canel" in May after Rubio called the White House.²⁴⁴⁶ Anti-Castro activists and U.S. government officials complained that the expert panel shared

²⁴⁴¹ Whitefield. "The U.S. plans to oppose U.N. resolution condemning embargo against Cuba."

²⁴⁴² Whitefield. "Cuba announces new measures to make travel to the island easier for Cuban Americans.;" Whitefield. "The U.S. plans to oppose U.N. resolution condemning embargo against Cuba."

²⁴⁴³ Rotella, Sebastian. "John Bolton Skewed Intelligence, Say People Who Worked With Him — ProPublica." ProPublica, March 30, 2018. <https://www.propublica.org/article/john-bolton-national-security-adviser-intelligence>.

²⁴⁴⁴ Gámez Torres, Nora. "Radio and TV Martí sneaked in same forbidden technology that landed Alan Gross in Cuban jail." *The Miami Herald*, March 30, 2018.

²⁴⁴⁵ <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/cuba/article212652489.html>

²⁴⁴⁶ Gámez Torres, Nora. "State Department postpones event on Cuba after Sen. Rubio protests." *The Miami Herald*, May 17, 2018.

pro-engagement biases.²⁴⁴⁷ The panel included Carlos Saladrigas (president of the Cuba Study Group), Marguerite Jimenez (Washington Office on Latin America), William LeoGrande (American University), and Philip Peters (Cuba Research Center).²⁴⁴⁸

As Trump attended meetings with dictators of countries like North Korea, critics accused him of hypocrisy regarding Cuba. An NSC spokesperson enumerated Trump's preconditions for meeting with the Cuban government: greater freedom of speech, worship, and assembly; returning U.S. fugitives; and human rights improvements.²⁴⁴⁹ They also encouraged more access to the Internet and resolving the problem of the health attacks. Curiously, there was no mention of confiscated property claims.²⁴⁵⁰

In Miami, local Republican leadership that had not initially embraced Trump fell in line or faced political consequences. The White House did not invite Miami Mayor Carlos Gimenez to greet Trump as he descended Air Force One in Miami in April 2018.²⁴⁵¹ Present were Rubio, Diaz-Balart, Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce President Julio Fuentes, and Hialeah Mayor Carlos Hernandez.²⁴⁵² When the President-elect called Gimenez after Fidel Castro died, Trump was displeased that Gimenez had not endorsed him and bragged about carrying Florida.²⁴⁵³ Gimenez replied that Trump lost

²⁴⁴⁷ Gámez Torres. "State Department postpones event on Cuba after Sen. Rubio protests."

²⁴⁴⁸ Gámez Torres. "State Department postpones event on Cuba after Sen. Rubio protests."

²⁴⁴⁹ Gámez Torres. "State Department postpones event on Cuba after Sen. Rubio protests."

²⁴⁵⁰ Gámez Torres. "State Department postpones event on Cuba after Sen. Rubio protests."

²⁴⁵¹ Hanks, Douglas. "Presidential snub? Miami-Dade mayor doesn't make the cut to greet Trump at airport." *The Miami Herald*, April 16, 2018.

²⁴⁵² Hanks. "Presidential snub? Miami-Dade mayor doesn't make the cut to greet Trump at airport."

²⁴⁵³ Hanks. "Presidential snub? Miami-Dade mayor doesn't make the cut to greet Trump at airport."

Miami-Dade county.²⁴⁵⁴ Gimenez was invited to the main event, a business roundtable in Hialeah, but he did not attend.²⁴⁵⁵

2018 Midterm Elections

Even though Cuban-Americans legislators had significant clout in the Trump administration, the 2018 election produced their first-ever Congressional representation decrease. Moderate Democrats won swing districts nationwide and Democrats regained the House. The U.S. House Districts covering Miami-Dade County grew increasingly competitive, and Cuban-American candidates lost Curbelo and Ros-Lehtinen's districts. The remaining incumbents who returned retained their prestige, but Ileana Ros-Lehtinen's retirement marked the end of an era for her groundbreaking leadership in the community.

More Cuban-Americans ran in the 2018 elections than ever before. Until the midterm elections of 2018, no Cuban-American had ever lost a House seat to a non-Cuban.²⁴⁵⁶ In the spring, Ros-Lehtinen announced her retirement at the end of her term after nearly two decades in Congress.²⁴⁵⁷ Democratic and Republican candidates

²⁴⁵⁴ Hanks. "Presidential snub? Miami-Dade mayor doesn't make the cut to greet Trump at airport."

²⁴⁵⁵ Hanks. "Presidential snub? Miami-Dade mayor doesn't make the cut to greet Trump at airport."

²⁴⁵⁶ Daugherty, Alex. "A Miami Cuban American has never lost a House seat to a non-Cuban. It could happen in November." *The Miami Herald*, August 31, 2018.

²⁴⁵⁷ Ros-Lehtinen, Ileana. "Why I'm Retiring from Congress. A Message from Ileana Ros-Lehtinen." *The Miami Herald*. Accessed April 19, 2021. <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/politics-government/article147724204.html>.

scrambled to join the race to fill her vacancy.²⁴⁵⁸ Cuban-Americans lost a community voice on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Ros-Lehtinen, who had been a powerful voice for Cuba policy for decades, passed the torch to younger members of Congress. Republican Maria Elvira Salazar, a Cuban-American T.V. journalist, and Democrat Donna Shalala, a Clinton administration official and former president of the University of Miami, competed for her seat.²⁴⁵⁹ Democrat Debbie Murcarsel-Powell, an Ecuadorian-American nonprofit and university administrator, challenged Curbelo for his House seat. U.S. Representative Ron DeSantis ran for Florida Governor, and Florida Governor Rick Scott challenged Senator Bill Nelson. Both DeSantis and Scott catered to Cuban-Americans in their campaigns and their previous elected offices.²⁴⁶⁰ As Governor, Scott threatened to deny funding to ports that expanded trade with Cuba. In the U.S. House of Representatives, DeSantis, as the representative from Volusia County, had joined other members in signing a letter to Trump to investigate Raul Castro for his role in the 1996 shutdown of Brothers to the Rescue planes over international waters.²⁴⁶¹

The U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC continued to provide large donations to pro-embargo candidates even if they were not up for reelection. Rep. Debbie Wasserman-Schultz, Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, Maria Elvira Salazar, Cuban-American Rep. Albio

²⁴⁵⁸ Jerry Iannelli. "Top Democrat for Miami Seat Leans on Goldman Sachs, Citibank, Tech Investors." November 2, 2018.

²⁴⁵⁹ Christina Hoag and Oscar Corral. "End of Show Is A Loss for Hispanic Community." *The Miami Herald*, December 28, 2005: B1.

²⁴⁶⁰ Whitefield, Mimi. "Makeup of new Congress could create a different dynamic on Cuba policy." *The Miami Herald*, November 8, 2018.

²⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

Sires (D-NJ), Sen. Bob Menendez, and Sen. Marco Rubio received considerable contributions.²⁴⁶² Many faced competitive races.²⁴⁶³ Prominent Miamians donated to the US-Cuba Democracy PAC, including the Munillas, Benjamin Leon, and the Diaz-Olivers.²⁴⁶⁴ The week of the election, John Bolton gave a speech at the historic Freedom Tower in Miami, in which he dubbed Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua the “troika of tyranny.”²⁴⁶⁵ His goal was to mobilize exile communities from these countries to vote for anti-communist Republicans.

Republicans increased their majority in the Senate, thanks in part to Rick Scott beating incumbent Bill Nelson in a close race. Senator Bill Nelson was the only statewide elected Democrat when Florida Governor Rick Scott ran against him for the Senate.²⁴⁶⁶ Republican Ron DeSantis became governor in an even tighter election victory. Key constituencies like Cuban-Americans made a critical difference in Florida’s perennial razor-thin margins. Rubio was not up for reelection, but Menendez and Cruz maintained their seats, and all served on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Albio Sires

²⁴⁶² Center for Responsive Politics. “US-Cuba Democracy PAC PAC Contributions to Federal Candidates 2018.” OpenSecrets. Accessed February 17, 2021. <https://www.opensecrets.org/political-action-committees-pacs/C00387720/candidate-recipients/2018>.

²⁴⁶³ Center for Responsive Politics. “US-Cuba Democracy PAC PAC Contributions to Federal Candidates 2018.” OpenSecrets. Accessed February 17, 2021. <https://www.opensecrets.org/political-action-committees-pacs/C00387720/candidate-recipients/2018>.

²⁴⁶⁴ Center for Responsive Politics. “US-Cuba Democracy PAC PAC Donors 2018.” OpenSecrets. Accessed February 17, 2021. <https://www.opensecrets.org/political-action-committees-pacs/C00387720/donors/2018>.

²⁴⁶⁵ Bolton, John. “National Security Advisor Ambassador John R. Bolton Delivers Remarks | U.S. Embassy in Nicaragua.” U.S. Embassy in Nicaragua, November 1, 2018. <https://ni.usembassy.gov/national-security-advisor-ambassador-john-r-bolton-delivers-remarks/>.

²⁴⁶⁶ Mower, Lawrence. “Florida’s Senate showdown is on. Can a 2-term governor unseat a 3-term senator?” *The Miami Herald*, April 9, 2018.

remained on the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee.²⁴⁶⁷ Both Salazar and Curbelo lost, and Democrats gained the majority in the U.S. House of Representatives. Diaz-Balart maintained his seat. American University professor LeoGrande said that having fewer Cuban-American legislators might put them at a disadvantage for their Cuba bills.²⁴⁶⁸ Conversely, Center for a Free Cuba's Frank Calzon, a longtime Cuban activist, argued that America's Cuba policy would be the same regardless of Cuban-Americans.²⁴⁶⁹

Post-Midterms Cubazuela

Rubio co-sponsored Menendez's December 2018 bill proposing extending Temporary Protected Status to Venezuelans.²⁴⁷⁰ Representative Darren Soto, with the support of Democratic and Republican lawmakers across Florida, introduced a similar proposal in the House in January 2019.²⁴⁷¹ Both failed to gain traction. Trump's U.S. Customs and Immigration Services Director Ken Cuccinelli reiterated that the administration would not provide TPS to Venezuelans.²⁴⁷²

²⁴⁶⁷ Daugherty, Alex. "How Congress will tackle Latin America policy with fewer Cuban Americans in office." *The Miami Herald*, December 14, 2018.

²⁴⁶⁸ Whitefield. "Makeup of new Congress could create a different dynamic on Cuba policy."

²⁴⁶⁹ Whitefield. "Makeup of new Congress could create a different dynamic on Cuba policy."

²⁴⁷⁰ Menendez, Robert. "All Info - S.3759 - 115th Congress (2017-2018): Venezuela TPS Act of 2018," 2018. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/3759/all-info>.

²⁴⁷¹ Soto, Darren. "Cosponsors - H.R.549 - 116th Congress (2019-2020): Venezuela TPS Act of 2019," 2019. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/549/cosponsors>.

²⁴⁷² Davis, Charles. "Trump Administration to Continue Deporting Venezuelans despite Crisis." *The Guardian*, July 16, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/16/trump-administration-venezuelans-temporary-protected-status-tps-deport>.

The U.S. embassy's consular section in Havana closed in December 2018.²⁴⁷³ The State Department withdrew all embassy personnel and locked up the U.S. embassy in Caracas, Venezuela, in January 2019 after Juan Guaido declared himself the constitutional president of Venezuela. Evidence suggested that Cuba contributed to intelligence and counterintelligence, *colectivos*, misuse of medical assistance, and the military in Venezuela.²⁴⁷⁴ Several Trump administration officials and Congress members viewed Cuba and Venezuela as inextricable.²⁴⁷⁵ Bolton displayed this worldview in his “troika of tyranny” speech in Miami in November and his continuing references to the triad of Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua. With the help of his Senior Director for the Western Hemisphere Mauricio Claver-Carone, Bolton escalated the pressure in 2019. “[W]e began devising steps to take immediately against Maduro’s regime, and also Cuba, its protector and likely controller, and Nicaragua. Why not go after all three at once?”²⁴⁷⁶ They adopted similar strategies to undermine Venezuela and Cuba’s regimes: provocative tweets toward political and military leadership, sanctions, attempts to designate them as state sponsors of terrorism, opposition support, multilateral coordination, travel-advisory warnings, and diplomatic personnel withdrawal.²⁴⁷⁷

The administration reversed years of negotiations with Cuba. The Treasury granted fewer licenses to U.S. businesses working with Cuba. In March, Google and

²⁴⁷³ U.S. Embassy in Cuba. “U.S. Embassy Havana on USCIS Announcement | U.S. Embassy in Cuba,” December 12, 2018. <https://cu.usembassy.gov/please-note-that-u-s-embassy-havana-remains-open/>.

²⁴⁷⁴ Bolton, John. *The Room Where It Happened*.

²⁴⁷⁵ Bolton, John. *The Room Where It Happened*.

²⁴⁷⁶ Bolton, John. *The Room Where It Happened*.

²⁴⁷⁷ Bolton, John. *The Room Where It Happened*.

Cuba agreed to provide greater internet access to the island.²⁴⁷⁸ Rubio was instrumental in blocking the Treasury from issuing an OFAC license for a deal between Major League Baseball and the Cuban Baseball Federation.²⁴⁷⁹ The arrangement collapsed in April 2019.²⁴⁸⁰ Diaz-Balart and others tried to return Cuba to the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism.²⁴⁸¹ Obama removed Cuba in 2015, which removed the accompanying sanctions.

One of the biggest policy reversals concerned 20-year-old legislation. Clinton signed the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act of 1996 (also known as the Helms-Burton Act) after members of the Cuban military shot down civilian humanitarian aircraft over international waters. The Act codified the Cuban embargo and gave Congress alone the power to repeal the law, thus ensuring that no president could single-handedly reverse it. It instituted prerequisites on Cuba for the United States to repeal the embargo: a representative democratic government, holding free and fair elections, organizing an independent judiciary, respecting human rights, freeing political prisoners, and removing the Castros from the government. The most controversial

²⁴⁷⁸ Rathbone, John Paul. "Google strikes deal to bring faster web content to Cuba standfirst: US tech giant's partnership with state telecoms group Etecsa causes dilemma for Washington." *Financial Times (London, England)*, March 28, 2019.

²⁴⁷⁹ Ordoñez, Franco. "White House targets MLB deal with Cuba." *The Miami Herald*, December 30, 2018: A1.

²⁴⁸⁰ Gonzales, Richard. "Trump Administration Blocks Major League Baseball Deal For Cuban Players." NPR, April 8, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/2019/04/08/711234347/trump-administration-kills-baseball-deal-with-cuba>.

²⁴⁸¹ Derby, Kevin. "Return Cuba to 'State Sponsors of Terrorism' List, Urge Florida Congressmen | Sunshine State News | Florida Political News." Sunshine State News, July 11, 2019. <http://www.sunshinestatenews.com/story/mario-diaz-balart-francis-rooney-want-cuba-listed-state-sponsor-terrorism.>; <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/cuba/article225086505.html>

sections of the law, Titles III and IV, concerned claims to expropriated property. Title IV denies U.S. visas to executives of companies that traffic in confiscated property and their immediate family members. It applied to any non-U.S. citizen, and administrations enforced it unevenly but never waived it. Title III allows American citizens to file suit in U.S. courts against companies that traffic in their confiscated property claims. It discouraged companies in third countries from investing in Cuba. Every president deferred Title III implementation every six months until 2019, because it strained relationships with U.S. allies.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo deferred implementing the clause for the first time, pending further review.²⁴⁸² After a review period, Pompeo partially implemented Title III on March 4.²⁴⁸³ The decision came on April 17, the anniversary of the Bay of Pigs invasion.²⁴⁸⁴ Bolton gave a speech in front of the Bay of Pigs veterans' association in Miami, denouncing the "troika of tyranny" and declaring Title III in full effect starting May 2.²⁴⁸⁵ Additionally, the State Department added five more entities to the Cuba restricted list, limited the remittances that Cuban-Americans could send back to their families on the island, and sought to end "U-turn transactions" intended for Cuba through

²⁴⁸² Nora Gamez Torres and Franco Ordoñez. "White House inches toward allowing Cuban Americans to sue for island properties left behind." *The Miami Herald*, January 17, 2019: A7.

²⁴⁸³ JennyLee Molina and Claire O'Hanlon. "We understand our parents' pain, but the Cuba embargo continues to hurt our 'hermanos' on the island." *The Miami Herald*, March 15, 2019.

²⁴⁸⁴ Torres, Nora Gámez. "U.S. swats Cuba for role in Venezuela by moving closer to fully implementing Helms-Burton." *The Miami Herald*, April 3, 2019.

²⁴⁸⁵ <https://cu.usembassy.gov/ambassador-bolton-bay-of-pigs-veterans-association-brigade-2506/>

third parties.²⁴⁸⁶ Mexico, Canada, Russia, China, other countries, and the European Union denounced the end of Title III waivers.

Even though Cuban-American hardliners still had conservative allies in top leadership, they lost two of their most prominent advocates in 2019. Acosta faced public scrutiny after *The Miami Herald* released investigative articles revealing his role as the presiding judge in Jeffrey Epstein's sexual assault case a decade earlier.²⁴⁸⁷ Epstein's lenient sentence culminated in Acosta's resignation from the Cabinet. John Bolton left the National Security Council in September 2019. Even after he departed the administration, Bolton continued to stress the need for a forceful approach that targeted Cuba and Venezuela. He wrote:

What now stands primarily in the way of freeing Venezuela is the Cuban presence, critically supported by Russian financial resources. If Cuba's military and intelligence networks left the country, the Maduro regime would be in serious, probably terminal, trouble. Everyone understands this reality, especially Maduro, who many believe owes his position as President to the Cuban intervention in the struggle for control after Chavez's death. Looking back, it's clear to me that Havana saw Maduro as the more malleable of the leading contenders, and time has proven this thesis accurate.²⁴⁸⁸

Cuba and the 2020 Election

Trump spent much of the remainder of his term preparing for the 2020 presidential election. In the process, he and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo continued to increase pressure on Cuba and cater their messaging to hardline Cuban-Americans. The

²⁴⁸⁶ <https://cu.usembassy.gov/ambassador-bolton-bay-of-pigs-veterans-association-brigade-2506/>

²⁴⁸⁷ Kumar, Anita. "Trump labor secretary out of running for attorney general after Miami Herald report." *McClatchy Washington Bureau (DC)*, November 29, 2018.

²⁴⁸⁸ Bolton, John. *The Room Where It Happened*.

administration further restricted travel and financial services to Cuba. The pandering appeared to work, because the 2020 FIU Cuba Poll showed the largest increases in support for Republicans and hardline policies in years. Furthermore, his actions and campaign messaging that portrayed candidate Joe Biden and other Democrats as socialists helped Trump pull an upset in South Florida and win Florida's electoral votes. The rhetoric about Cuban-Americans determining Florida's presidential electors continued strong. Even though Biden won the national election, Pompeo returned Cuba to the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism in his final week as Secretary of State, possibly preparing for Pompeo's 2024 presidential campaign.

Conclusion

The United States' role in the international system fundamentally changed under Donald Trump, but the United States and Cuba's relationship returned to the status quo. The United States reversed its neoliberal policies of promoting democracy, capitalism, and individual rights worldwide in favor of a more isolationist, unilateral approach. However, he was still aggressive, and there was little ideological consistency in how the administration interacted with foreign governments, as the differences between Trump's embrace of North Korea and punishment of Cuba exemplify. Instead, Trump took a transactional approach to domestic and foreign politics. Cuba and Venezuela entrenched their relationship while their leaders repressed opposition in the midst of economic depression. Meanwhile, Russia and China's influence continued to spread in Cuba and throughout the world.

Consistent with his transactional approach, Trump rewarded Cuban-Americans' political support with a return to hardline Cuba policies and political appointments. Cuban-Americans had created power structures over several decades that gave them significant influence in the Republican Party regardless of the Electoral College, their more conservative ideologies often align with the Republican Party, and they were only one of many impactful demographics in Florida that could swing votes, so their influence on any particular election or administration may be exaggerated. Regardless, Trump credited Cuban-Americans with his Florida win. Republican Cuban-American legislators like Senator Marco Rubio and Representative Mario Diaz-Balart had a greater say in foreign policy except when it came to immigration. The Trump administration reversed many of Obama's diplomatic and policy gains. He repealed many of the 17D policies; limited travel, remittances, and financial services; ended Helms-Burton Act waivers; withdrew diplomatic personnel from the embassy; and returned Cuba to the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism. However, Cuban-American lawmakers and interest groups had little impact in advocating for Cuban who entered the visa lottery, applied for refugee or asylum status, were stuck outside a port of entry, were detained indefinitely, or faced deportation.

Joe Biden, Trump's successor, has pledged to undo Trump's policies on a wide array of issues. He campaigned on the most progressive Democratic platform in decades, and he was Obama's Vice President throughout the Cuban thaw. In the early days of Biden's presidency, it is unclear what his Cuba strategy will be as there are many other higher priority items on his agenda. Judging from decades of presidential actions toward

Cuba, he will be more likely to take larger strides toward normalization when there is no prospect of reelection and if domestic politics provides favorable incentives.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

Even though the original organizational architecture that empowered Cuban-American politics has declined, Cuban-Americans are not necessarily losing political capital so much as shifting their strategy for influencing policymaking. Indeed, with several prominent Cuban-Americans in the Trump administration and the U.S. Congress, this small community maintains deep connections in Washington thanks to the foundation that the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) built in the 1980s and 1990s. At that time, the predominant power engine for Cuban-Americans to gain and exert their influence on Cuba policy had been the Cuban American National Foundation. CANF's importance began declining with the death of Jorge Mas Canosa in 1997. However, rather than losing power with the foundation's decline, the Cuban-American community evolved their strategy and successfully leveraged their influence by other means.

Strategies

Cuban-Americans have used three main strategies to influence U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba and Latin America: special interest groups, donations, and the rise of Cuban-American politicians and high-level advisors. The first strategy is special interest groups. The Cuban-American National Foundation was one of the most powerful ethnic lobbies in the 1980s and 1990s. It influenced the creation of Radio and TV Marti, the Cuba Democracy Act, the Libertad Act, and even appointments for leadership that would oversee Cuba policy. However, the strength of Cuban lobbies diminished in the leadership vacuum left after Jorge Mas Canosa's death. While several organizations

advocate various approaches to Cuba, such as the Cuba Study Group, none are quite as dominant as CANF, and there is greater pluralism in the approaches that the Cuban-American-led organizations take towards Cuba.

The second major strategy has been donations, especially through direct donations to candidates and political action committees.²⁴⁸⁹ Campaign finance had been an important aspect of the strategy during the height of CANF and remains so today, primarily through the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC and major donors in the state of Florida. In a sense, Cuban-Americans are voting with their purse in addition to affecting the coveted Florida electoral vote. During the heyday of the Cuban American National Foundation, its associated Free Cuba PAC raised significant funds for like-minded Democrats and Republicans. Since the turn of the century, the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC has become one of the largest foreign policy-related PACs, helping preserve the embargo. The *Citizens United* Supreme Court ruling further empowered the legitimized PACs, making them a major force in U.S. politics. Because PACs can also obscure the path that financial donations take, it is a quieter but effective strategy of influencing politics.

Lastly, the rise of Cuban-American politicians and high-level advisors in Washington has taken on the mantle of championing the Cuban-American cause. One of the greatest means of influence that Cuban-Americans now have is their success in attaining elected office. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen has been a trailblazer at the federal level. The GOP is the primary political engine through which they have been successful, being

²⁴⁸⁹ Modesto Maidique, interview with the author, March 26, 2018.; Jaime Suchlicki, interview by the author, July 30, 2018.; Daniel Pedreira, interview by the author, May 3, 2018.

the most predominant Hispanic voices in the party, particularly in Florida, but they also have important representation in the Democratic party, such as the Cuban-American representatives from New Jersey. Although people typically associated Cuban-Americans with the Republican party, part of what made CANF so successful and what enables Cuban-Americans to influence Democratic administrations still is bipartisan support.

Though they earned their positions as the result of popular elections, these politicians and administration officials are increasingly less representative of the various voices within the Cuban-American community. Instead, they tend to maintain the old hardline approach because the hardliners are more reliable voters, are often well-established in the community, contribute large donations to their campaigns, and often mentored these politicians.

Ingenuity, Adaptability, and Evolution

The original hardline Cuban interest group organizational structures have had a decreasingly significant impact over time in framing U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba and Latin America. Instead, the strategic focus now relies more on federal government representation and campaign finance. Until the conservative resurgence during the Trump administration, hardline Cuban Americans' political power had been waning in relation to newer generations and newer arrivals of Cuban-Americans, who were less conservative, more in favor of engagement, less politically active, and decreasing its proportional size in the South Florida electorate.

Cuban-American hardliners have maintained power by adjusting to the political circumstances, but the zeitgeist of the Cuban-American popular will is changing. The

community has proven itself to be very capable of meeting the current political challenges of the time, but their ability to adapt to changing circumstances may be one of their greatest qualities – from establishing new lives after exile from their homes and their uncanny ability to create something from nothing to the founding of the Cuban lobby to forging new directions in its aftermath. As younger Cuban-American leaders rise in prominence in the community while new leaders emerge on the island itself, it will be interesting to see if they continue to the punitive political legacies they have inherited or forge a new direction.

It is important to recognize that the shifts in political organization and strategy are directly related to other important trends in the Cuban-American community: changing demographics and the evolution of public opinion. Various waves of immigration from Cuba to the United States have brought major changes to the composition of the Cuban-American community and the demographics of the areas in which they reside. The biggest migration waves: the early exiles, including those in the first couple years, Pedro Pan, Camarioca, and the Freedom Flights, the Marielitos, the rafters, and more recent migrants, have impacted the racial, socioeconomic, and ideological composition of the Cuban-American community. More recent waves of immigrants have tended to be poorer, less white, less educated, and motivated more economically than politically.²⁴⁹⁰ Perhaps as a vestige of their experiences in Cuba or a desire not to rock the boat, they have tended to be less politically active, less ideological, and more politically

²⁴⁹⁰ Anonymous, interview by the author, March 27, 2018.

apathetic.²⁴⁹¹ Because they have more current contacts, family, and friends on the island, they tend to favor travel and economic opening.

The migration of newer Cuban arrivals and immigrants from other countries, such as Venezuela and Nicaragua, is dramatically changing the political landscape of South Florida as well, even though Cuban-American politics are still dominant.²⁴⁹² The political structures that Cubans have built in Miami continue to enable them to access political power and ensure their representation. Yet, Cubans are becoming a smaller proportion of the Hispanic community in South Florida and Florida at large, which affects their voting power. Statewide elections in Florida are still so close that any number of factors with any voting bloc can have a decisive impact on the results of the election, so politicians still cater to Cuban-Americans during elections because every percentage point makes a difference, but there are far more competing interests in Florida elections and even local Miami elections. Overall, South Florida is becoming bluer, at least in national elections.

Second and third-generation Cuban-Americans have markedly different opinions from their elders as well. As with all migrant communities, each successive generation tends to approximate average American political opinions and general behaviors. While the Cuban-American community is still predominantly conservative, younger generations increasingly identify as independent or liberal. Their significantly different life experiences compared to earlier generations results in greater approval for normalization efforts.

²⁴⁹¹ Sebastian Arcos, interview by author, July 2018.

²⁴⁹² Modesto Maidique, interview with the author. March 26, 2018.

Additionally, several prominent Cuban-American elites have publicly shifted their opinions on the embargo. All of these trends have tended to shift Cuban-American public opinion toward greater normalization of relations with Cuba. Nevertheless, the most politically active and politically influential Cuban-Americans, particularly older ones from the first wave, continue to entrench pro-embargo policies.²⁴⁹³

Interest Groups and Foreign Policy

It is important not to single out or villainize Cuban-Americans for their impact on Cuba policy. Indeed, diasporic communities in the United States often have a much greater say on policies' towards their countries of origin than the average American because they have greater personal interest and knowledge of the situation.

Understanding the success of Cuban-American political influence provides a greater understanding of how domestic foreign policy formulation influences international relations, in contrast to theories that predominantly treat states as black boxes. Migrants and diasporic communities significantly impact foreign policy, whether through direct political organization and activism or due to politicians' concerns of the impact of migration on security. Furthermore, studying the rise of successful political interest groups enables other citizens to more successfully leverage their capabilities for political action.

Many of the early exiles had no intention of remaining in the United States; it was a temporary residence until Fidel Castro was gone and they could return to Cuba. They

²⁴⁹³ Jaime Suchlicki, interview by author, July 30, 2018.

were prepared to use violent insurgency to achieve the goal of removing Castro if necessary. This mentality lingered long after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion. However, the longer Cuban-Americans remained in the United States, the more rooted they became, and more became citizens. Reagan vigorously courted the community, and CANF emerged to provide an alternative avenue to achieve their goals of promoting freedom for Cuba and garnering political influence. The non-profit, lobbying, and PAC functions of CANF and its associated entities successfully advanced policy proposals for Cuba, with Radio Marti being one of its first major victories. It also helped pave the way for increasing Cuban-American representation in elected office, from local Miami positions to the U.S. Congress, starting with Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. Since 1989, there have been at least a dozen Cuban-Americans in the U.S. Congress. The combined effort of CANF and increasing representation on the Hill helped secure the passage of the Helms-Burton Act, which had the effect of consolidating the embargo so that no U.S. President could undo it without either meeting the stipulations or passing another bill through Congress. Cuba was a major part of local and national politics for Cuban-Americans throughout the 1980s and 1990s. They gained even more control over Cuba policy with the national security reassessments in changing international system at the end of the Cold War.

However, there was a major shift in the late 1990s after the passage of the Helms-Burton Act. Second generation Cuban-Americans who were born in the United States and often had never traveled to Cuba began to fill leadership positions and tended to have a more moderate, pragmatic attitude toward U.S.-Cuba relations compared to the hardline politics of the first generation. The Mariel and post-Mariel migrants, many of whom had

grown up under the revolution by virtue of being born in Cuba, also changed the community's political dynamics.

The rift between the generations became even more palpable after the Elian Gonzalez affair. The Clinton administration's poor handling of the Elian case inevitably hurt Al Gore in the 2000 presidential election. Florida became the deciding factor, and Cuban-Americans took credit for his loss. However, the community did not emerge unscathed. News coverage of Elian tarnished the reputation of Cuban-Americans for the American public. The embargo had also become increasingly unpopular with the American public and U.S. business interests. Anti-embargo organizations and politicians on both sides of the aisle gained steam on dismantling certain parts of the embargo until the 2004 presidential campaign in which Bush sought reelection. The more conservative members of CANF broke off to form the Cuban Liberty Council, which had a significant amount of influence during the George W. Bush administration and with Cuban-American lawmakers but declined with the election of Obama. The U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC was also formed during the Bush years and continues to exert a significant degree of influence through lobbying and campaign donations. Additionally, national-level Cuban-American political representation flourished in the new millennium. Cuban-American legislators have become the national face of the hardline strategy towards Cuba.

Obama tried to normalize relations with Cuba as much as he could within the bounds of the law. Conservative Cuban-American elites expressed much chagrin for the Obama administration not consulting with them, but even the Obama administration made a point of seeking advice from more moderate and liberal voices within the Cuban

community, including wealthy business leaders who had previously promoted the embargo, such as Carlos Saladrigas and his Cuba Study Group. Notably, Obama waited until right after the midterm elections in his second term to make the 17D announcement because Florida had a disproportionate amount of influence in elections, even when the Electoral College was not in play, due to the importance of congressional majorities. The comparatively positive reception to Obama's announcement among the community, despite some of the very vocal conservative voices, demonstrated the changes that had become apparent in long-term demographic trends among the community and public opinion polling. Some older elites were changing their minds, but second and third-generation Cuban-Americans displayed more mainstream American views, and recent arrivals wanted to maintain their contacts with family and friends back in Cuba. At large, the American public viewed the embargo as a policy that had failed to achieve its goals for over half a century. The Cuban-American community had always had disagreements over policy, even though the dominant voices tended to win out. The impression of the Cuban-American community being a Republican monolith was politically advantageous for the hardliners, who had unquestionably been the majority for several decades. Miami became a requisite campaign stop for politicians, where they would cater to the stereotypes of the community and pledge fidelity to the embargo. The dissenting voices within the community were more numerous and had gained greater political clout with Obama.

Trump credited his 2016 presidential election win in Florida in part to the late surge of support in the Cuban-American community after the Bay of Pigs veterans association endorsed him, despite many prominent Cuban-American GOP politicians

refusing to back him or offering tepid support. Trump's ascendance marked a reversal of policies that promoted more positive engagement with Cuba as hardline Cuban-American legislators and appointees took the reins of Latin American foreign policy. The one exception is immigration policy, upon which Trump had campaigned, particularly regarding the border with Mexico.

So, what has Cuban-American influence meant for foreign policy? They have largely framed the issue, policies, and rationale based on their own experiences and knowledge of the regime. Because they are so invested in Cuba, because Florida politics is important to national policies, and because Cuba itself is a priority due to its lack of threat or international influence, the federal government has largely deferred or acquiesced to the diaspora.

The Arguments

The arguments in favor of the embargo have remained largely the same over the decades. Proponents of the embargo can take advantage of the United States' leverage over Cuba due to the power differential. They argue that even if the embargo has not resulted in a democratic transition, it gives the United States negotiating power with Cuba and is one tool in the toolbox.²⁴⁹⁴ Democratization is not the only purpose of the embargo. Repression on the island continues, and arbitrary detentions increased after Obama's policy change, so the embargo theoretically provides an incentive for the Cuban

²⁴⁹⁴ Dario Moreno, interview by author, June 27, 2018.; Jaime Suchlicki, interview by author, July 30, 2018.; James Cason, interview by the author, June 26, 2018.; Jason Poblete, interview by the author, May 17, 2018.

government to improve human rights and democratize its political system.²⁴⁹⁵ However, the Cuban regime has demonstrated that it cannot be trusted as a good-faith actor.²⁴⁹⁶ They have done little to reciprocate the United States' concessions, so the United States has historically decided to play hardball with them. Opponents of the embargo could offer no proof that Cuba would respond in kind if the United States ended the embargo. It is argued that official relationships with the Cuban regime provide legitimacy and tacit approval to an illegitimate government.²⁴⁹⁷ The Helms-Burton Act is U.S. law, and Cuba has not met the requirements for easing the embargo.²⁴⁹⁸ The majority of the money that makes its way into Cuba ultimately ends up in the hands of the government, whether through fees, direct payments government-owned entities, or purchases made on an island with a government-controlled, centrally-planned economy.²⁴⁹⁹ Reagan's tough approach to communism resulted in the fall of the Iron Curtain but did not lead to the ouster of the Castros. Cuban involvement in other countries continues to destabilize the region.²⁵⁰⁰ The embargo also does not prohibit dissident support or even necessarily support of entrepreneurs.

²⁴⁹⁵ Lino Gutierrez, interview by author, May 10, 2018.; James Cason, interview by the author, June 26, 2018.; Daniel Pedreira, interview by the author, May 3, 2018.

²⁴⁹⁶ Dario Moreno, interview by author, June 27, 2018.; Jaime Suchlicki, interview by author, July 30, 2018.; Sebastian Arcos, interview by author, July 2018.; Frank Calzon, interview with the author, May 11, 2018.; James Cason, interview by the author, June 26, 2018.

²⁴⁹⁷ James Cason, interview by the author, June 26, 2018.; Pedro Roig, interview by the author, July 23, 2018.

²⁴⁹⁸ Jason Poblete, interview by the author, May 17, 2018.; Anonymous, interview by the author, May 9, 2018.

²⁴⁹⁹ Sebastian Arcos, interview by author, July 2018.; James Cason, interview by the author, June 26, 2018.

²⁵⁰⁰ Frank Calzon, interview with the author, May 11, 2018.; Jason Poblete, interview by the author, May 17, 2018.

Despite the relative failure of the embargo, several aspects of U.S. Cuba policy have successfully demonstrated the U.S. position on the Cuban regime to Cuba and the world. The United States has not capitulated to a nation that continues to abuse human rights and has, at times, curtailed Cuba's international influence. The United States has been one of the most consistent voices in opposing human rights violations in Cuba.²⁵⁰¹ It has given a political voice to those who have experienced genuine trauma. It has limited Cuban government officials' access to money and thus power. It supports dissidents, free enterprise, freedom of speech, democracy, and freedom of the press. It listens to exiles' and dissidents' concerns and recommendations. Their experiences have provided more truth in the conversation that is often dominated by the arguments of Cuban propaganda. The process of allowing more voices to input their opinion in government agencies promotes better, more fine-tuned policy and allows more concerns to be considered. U.S. government support and investment in Cuban immigrants have enabled Cuban-Americans to flourish as an example of immigrant success in politics and business.²⁵⁰² It dissuades other countries from following Cuba's example.²⁵⁰³

Cuba's responses to U.S. policy have been rather consistent as well. The regime has leveraged international rebuke against the United States and developed anti-hegemonic partnerships with other countries and international movements in other countries that attempt to counter U.S. influence. They had consolidated totalitarian power

²⁵⁰¹ Frank Calzon, interview with the author, May 11, 2018.; Jason Poblete, interview by the author, May 17, 2018.

²⁵⁰² Jason Poblete, interview by the author, May 17, 2018.

²⁵⁰³ Lino Gutierrez, interview by author, May 10, 2018.; Jason Poblete, interview by the author, May 17, 2018.

domestically and gained legitimization throughout most of the world over the years before any intraparty transfer of power. They have successfully blamed the embargo for both problems that the embargo caused and that the regime inflicted on itself while attaining international sympathy for their claims of victimization.²⁵⁰⁴ Small economic openings had emerged when the economy was weak, and the government lacked funding from an international benefactor. They then reverse policy and create economic openings again to secure patronage or when the situation becomes too unmanageable. Another strategy for managing opposition on the island and attempting to force the United States to the table is that they have frequently enabled mass exodus as a release valve for internal pressure.²⁵⁰⁵ They have recognized and partnered with domestic factions in other countries to achieve their ends, whether they be potential business partners, insurgent groups, ideological allies, or government advocates. In the United States, they have catered to business interests, farm states, Black activists, leftists, interest groups, and sympathetic politicians. At the same time, they have made concerted efforts to undermine exile opponents' reputations within the United States. The regime still largely maintains control over access to information on the island and disseminating information from the island. Furthermore, it has some of the most effective intelligence and counterintelligence gatherers domestically and abroad, enabling greater control at home and providing invaluable information on the targets of spying to its own government, its partners, and other nations to whom it sells the information. Ironically, despite this intelligence

²⁵⁰⁴ James Cason, interview by the author, June 26, 2018.

²⁵⁰⁵ Sebastian Arcos, interview by author, July 2018.

gathering, it still frequently misreads the domestic situation in democratic countries where there are multiple competing interests and avenues of power. Each time it promises democratic countries that it begins to make progress or promises that it will make progress on opening the economy or human rights, it tends to reverse course as soon as it achieves its objectives. Lastly, its predominantly white male gerontocracy suffers from a lack of diversity and younger leadership to inherit the revolution.

Those sympathetic to the Cuban regime and many who condemn the regime also note multiple arguments against the embargo and hardline policies. There has been little change in Cuba's political and economic system in the past six decades, so there is no definitive evidence that the embargo has improved human rights. Because there have been so few changes, the United States must work with the current reality of the situation rather than rely on outdated policies that are inconsistent with the policies that the United States employs toward other communist countries or U.S. allies that violate human rights. The end goal of U.S. policy towards Cuba is democracy and respect for human rights, but the embargo itself has a human cost. The strategy has not achieved the goals outlined in the Helms-Burton Act. Some argue that it is because it has not been fully implemented; others argue that the embargo is irrelevant now. Cuban families are often reliant on remittances from relatives abroad, but Cuba is no longer as reliant on U.S. business or government largesse as they were before the revolution because, over time, they have rebuilt their economic and political ties. Most other countries that cut ties with Cuba reestablished them decades ago, so Cuba can acquire what it needs elsewhere, making the embargo less impactful. Ultimately, multilateral sanctions have a better track record of success than bilateral sanctions for that reason.

The embargo and travel restrictions have also hurt families and the economic wellbeing of average Cubans.²⁵⁰⁶ The poor quality of life led many to emigrate from Cuba, often to the United States, where they received preferential migration status. Those push-and-pull factors make it harder to control migration. Those who favor more trade with Cuba argue that economic openings improve conditions for average Cubans, empower them with greater access to information, and support private enterprise while benefiting American businesses, including farmers, as well.²⁵⁰⁷ The inability or difficulty of accessing certain goods from the United States may drive up costs for small enterprises or make them unattainable for many Cubans, whether due to cost or burdensome regulations.²⁵⁰⁸ The issue becomes particularly stark when there is a shortage of items associated with humanitarian aid, food, or medicine. Even when U.S. law does not prevent those items, the bureaucratic hurdles often dissuade organizations from bothering. Contrary to the image of *realpolitik* bringing down the Castro regime and the Cuban people welcoming Americans as liberators, the majority of accounts from the island suggest that most average Cubans welcomed Obama's policies and that they made a material difference in their lives, particularly through travel and remittances. Cutting off the financial and travel lifelines has made it harder to support dissidents, private enterprise, and families. Cutting back on embassy staff and immigration processing also

²⁵⁰⁶ Joaquin Pedroso, interview by the author, March 12, 2018.; Andrew Otazo, interview by the author, July 16, 2018.

²⁵⁰⁷ Anonymous, interview by the author, March 12, 2018.; Andrew Otazo, interview by the author, July 16, 2018.

²⁵⁰⁸ Anonymous, interview by the author, March 27, 2018.; Joaquin Pedroso, interview by the author, March 12, 2018.

makes it so that the United States does not fulfill its minimum obligations for the visa lottery, according to the 1994/1995 Migration Accords.²⁵⁰⁹ Instead, many Cubans who attempt other means to travel to the United States and claim asylum at the U.S.-Mexican border are currently housed in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centers.

The embargo damages U.S. foreign policy interests in Cuba and beyond. The primary law that codified and governs the embargo, the Helms-Burton Act of 1996, severely restricted the President's role to determine foreign policy, even though U.S. law assigns the function of foreign policy to the President. It perpetuates the distrust between the United States and Cuba and arguably violates their sovereignty with its regime change mission for those who consider the "responsibility to protect" doctrine irrelevant or neocolonial. Removing the embargo could improve good faith negotiation with Cuba *if* Cuba responds in kind. Cuba continuously claims that the embargo, what they call a "blockade," is a paternalistic relic of the Monroe Doctrine. However, the embargo has also benefited the Cuban regime because it provides them with a scapegoat for their policy failures and legitimizes their anti-imperial narrative.²⁵¹⁰ Removing the embargo could expose the deficiencies in their policies and force accountability. The U.S. approach is often internally inconsistent, alternating between prioritizing the Cuban people's right to self-determination free of the Cuban regime's mandates and Washington

²⁵⁰⁹ Anonymous, interview by the author, March 27, 2018.; Jorge Duany, interview by the author, March 12, 2018.

²⁵¹⁰ Zenel Garcia, interview by author, July 13, 2018.; Sebastian Arcos, interview by author, July 2018.; Andrew Otazo, interview by the author, July 16, 2018.

imposing its preferences. Moreover, the continued antagonistic relationship between the United States and Cuba harms the United States' image in Latin America and much of the rest of the world, who view the United States as an imperial aggressor and who condemn the embargo regularly through intergovernmental institutions.²⁵¹¹ The Helms-Burton Act's stipulations strained relations with third countries from the start because Titles III and IV arguably violated international laws and norms. Third countries have expressed concern with extra-territoriality, violations of sovereignty, and human impact to the point that it has the potential to damage cooperation on other foreign policy matters. Severed U.S.-Cuban relations push Cuba closer to hostile countries like Russia and China, create greater geopolitical risk, and give them a greater stake in the future of Cuba.²⁵¹²

Cuba shows that unequal relationships between countries do not necessitate dependence or control. Cuba has done a remarkable job of engaging the U.S. on its own terms despite its size and public accusations. Not recognizing this denies smaller states their agency. While the power discrepancy is real, Realism and neo-Marxism are often overly simplistic in their analyses of the power differential that perpetuate hegemonic dominance narratives.

²⁵¹¹ Zenel Garcia, interview by author. July 13, 2018.; Andrew Otazo, interview by the author, July 16, 2018.

²⁵¹² Zenel Garcia, interview by author. July 13, 2018.

A Broken Process

The United States' Cuba policymaking process presents many challenges itself. The asymmetrical relationship and high level of distrust and doubt between the nations complicate diplomacy and limit their options. Policymakers must somehow strike a balance between promoting the private sector and preserving human rights. Ultimately, domestic factors influence policies just as much or more than the international systemic dynamics. Even though most people involved agree on the goal of bringing democracy and ensuring human rights in Cuba, their opinions differ on how to achieve these goals. Unlike in Cuba's centralized system, the decentralized, democratic policymaking process in the United States involves many people and is therefore slow and cumbersome. The security clearance process requires applicants to list all foreign entanglements for consideration to prevent security breaches, but as a result, it can limit the opportunities for Cuban-Americans to work on Cuban affairs within federal agencies. Their proximity to the issue can simultaneously be an advantage and a risk. The strongest advocates of hardline policies often come from Cuban-Americans who have not traveled to Cuba in decades, if ever, out of protest and because of the emotional strain. As a result, their understanding of the situation is not grounded in recent experiences of Cuba's situation but prior experiences and current accounts from the sources they trust. More established members of the Cuban community tend to be in positions of leadership, so they often come from the earlier waves of Cuban migrants who overall have more money and status, have the most to gain in settling outstanding claims for expropriated properties, and are more likely to be hardliners. The elected leaders often do not reflect changing and diverse opinions of the community at large. Likewise, the Cuban government's leadership often

comes from the more rigid, early defenders of the revolution. It leaves little room for compromise between the two poles. Younger generations of Cuban-Americans and more so non-Cubans struggle to fully comprehend the lasting trauma that many Cuban exiles have experienced, and non-Cubans can be especially dismissive. Decades of division within the Cuban-American community over a policy that resulted in coercion and violence still inhibit the free exchange of opinions regarding the matter but to a lesser degree now. For Cuban-Americans, Cuba's fate is deeply personal and sometimes traumatic, which can be a double-edged sword for their involvement. Like civil war, the revolution and the events since have caused rifts in families due to geographic separation, policies, and ideologies. The trauma from their experiences has contributed to a sympathetic alliance between Cubans and other diasporas in Florida for whom trauma has uniquely shaped their communities and political activism: European Jews, Nicaraguans, Venezuelans, and more. Their presence reminds other non-Cuban policymakers of how policies directly impact people's lives. They bring personal experience, knowledge of the situation, and connections that can provide more information rather than relying on information filtered through the government. However, the personal aspect of the issue can also unintentionally result in personalizing differences of opinion over policy, making Cuba policy a "third rail" for decades.

Other issues with the Cuba policymaking process are inherent in the process itself and not exclusive to Cuba. When policymakers sense a lack of other options, there tends to be a reliance on sanctions, which can be tricky and requires many considerations. A chasm exists between academic researchers and practitioners, so each lacks the other's insights to analyze better and formulate policy. Much of the data that proponents of

certain policies use are faulty due to logical fallacies, not accurately reading the data, bad methodology, and so on.

The current state of U.S. politics inhibits informed bipartisan compromise. Campaign finance concerns cause politicians to overvalue money compared to constituent concerns because elected officials must constantly court donors to fund their reelection campaigns sufficiently and remain relevant. Lobbies can inform lawmakers and express citizens' opinions, but the most powerful are often beholden to a small percentage of wealthy Americans. Partisan polarization has had an extremely damaging effect on Washington, D.C., down to local communities. Compromise has become much more difficult, and some actors exclude opposing parties or viewpoints from negotiations. For example, Obama excluded pro-embargo hardliners from discussions, and Trump has excluded moderate and liberal voices from the room. A tendency toward all-or-nothing, binary rhetoric leaves little room for nuance in the public discussion. Elected officials increasingly close themselves off from feedback from constituents and the press and are therefore less responsive to public opinion.

Foreign policy is spread out across several federal agencies by virtue of the many issue areas it encompasses. The National Security Council coordinates the Departments of State, the Treasury, Defense, Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the Central Intelligence Agency, and any other pertinent actors. Their conflicting agendas and bureaucratic red tape slow down the process. However, the trend in U.S. foreign policy has been to increasingly defer to the Defense Department, even on matters for which the State Department is better equipped to address. In contrast, authoritarian governments speak with one voice instead of many and can galvanize their responses faster. Although

the executive branch has primary authority over foreign policy, all three branches contribute to the body of law that regulates it and disseminates the information to the citizenry. Each agency and institution has different processes that govern its functions, resulting in a lack of understanding between the various intragovernmental actors. Certain actors across the political spectrum and within various agencies arrogantly think they know best, are less willing to consider opposing views, clash with others, and throw a wrench into the process.

Several issues that became apparent during the Reagan administration still plague U.S.-Cuban policy today. For one, U.S. policies toward Cuba have adapted little since the Cold War despite changing circumstances in the countries and the international system. Another surprising and consistent aspect of Cuban-American policy interests is how comparatively little influence they have on immigration issues, even when debating Cuba-specific immigration. They have maintained their preferred status instituted with the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act, but they appear to have less input in migration negotiations than other matters relating to Cuba. They are rarely at the forefront of national immigration debates that do not center Cuba. Regarding intracommunity disputes, conservatives still have the greatest say in politics, despite attitudes evolving with time, migration, and generational divides.

Future Research

Suggested future research could quantify political participation and government action to analyze the causal relationship statistically. It employs other independent variables, including campaign donations, election results, representation in elected

offices, publications endorsing exile views, and the formation of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), political action committees (PACs), and other pressure groups. It could compare the data on elites' policy preferences versus the general community with the policies ultimately enacted to determine the extent of correlation. Other questionnaires could focus on collecting the policy opinions of elites within the Cuban community, scholars, and policymakers to compare the results to the opinions Cuban-American community at large and the policies ultimately enacted.

Conclusion

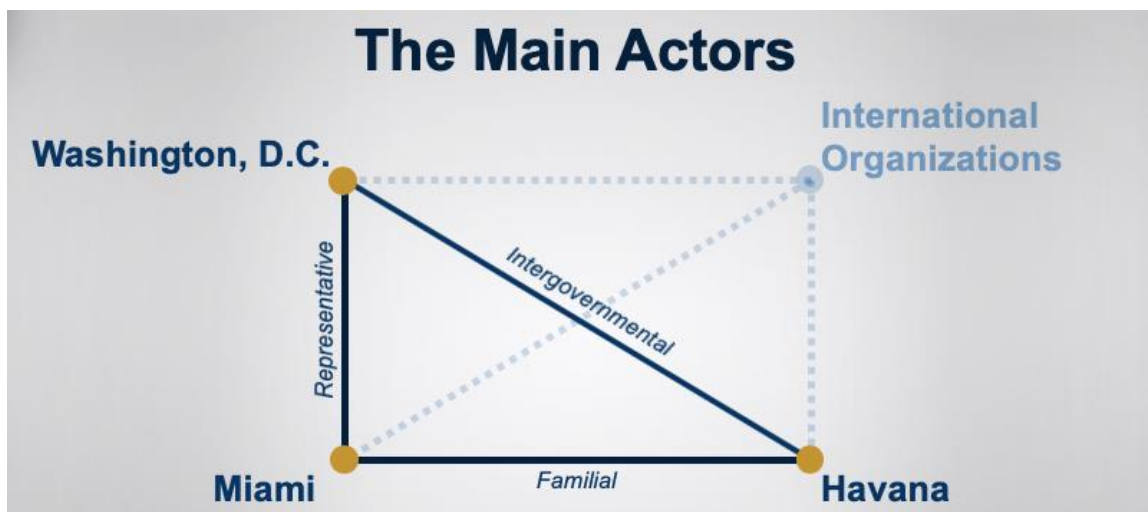


Figure 10.1: Foreign Policy Analysis Model

The above model (Figure 10.1) introduced in the first chapter simplifies the interactions relevant to Cuba policymaking, but it is not a static or all-encompassing model. Rather, the nature of the relationships adapt according to the domestic and international political environments. International organizations and third countries can provide added pressure on issues but have less comparative influence than the other poles. Interest groups, campaign finance, and legislators represent Miami in Washington,

D.C., and mediate between citizens and decision-makers. A power imbalance, distrust, competing interests, nationalism, and ideology destabilize the intergovernmental relationship between the United States and Cuba. However, politicians in Washington and Havana both capitalize on the inimical relationship to appear strong against communism or imperialism. The troubled familial relationship between Miami and Havana is the most complicated, and U.S. Cuba policy affects this relationship more than any other in the triangular model. The Cuban regime has condemned Cuban exiles as “gusanos” (worms, or traitors) for generations because of the threat they perceive that exiles present. Indeed, exiles’ continued relationship causes them to be the most ardent activists in the United States regarding Cuba and also a source of first-hand information and experience.

Cuban-Americans still have a significant impact on Cuba policy but there are limits to their influence. Through the aforementioned channels, they help to set the agenda, set boundaries for policy discussion and implementation, provide feedback and testimony, influence the campaign platforms of candidates for elected office, and inform the timing of policy announcements and implementation. Each presidential administration actively consults Cuban-Americans on Cuba policy, but the increased diversity of interest groups and elite opinions enables presidents to prioritize actors’ sympathetic to their goals. The issues on which they continue to have the most impact are aid, trade, targeted sanctions, and maintaining the existing legal framework of the embargo and Cuba-specific immigration. The times at which they have the least say in the outcome of policy negotiations are in areas that federal officials view as high security

risks.²⁵¹³ These include broad-based immigration and the Guantanamo naval base. Espionage and moments of crisis can be a double-edged sword for Cuban exile influence, as the Clinton years demonstrated. Factors that will continue to determine to what degree they have influence are elections, changing demographics within the Cuban-American population, increasing non-Cuban diversity in South Florida, the international system, and political leadership. It is important for Cuban-Americans to remain a part of the foreign policy conversation because of their intimate knowledge and experience. Understanding how they affect policymaking can help to put their expertise into the proper context when analyzing the situation and formulating solutions.

²⁵¹³ Jorge Dominguez, interview by the author, May 8, 2018.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

ENGLISH

15. What is your personal relationship with the Cuban exile community and its homeland?
16. When did you arrive in the US?
17. Are you a member of an exile organization? If yes, which?
18. Are you a member of a political party? If so which?
19. Why did you choose that party?
20. What is your opinion of Obama's policies towards Cuba and Latin America and the Caribbean?
21. What is your opinion of Trump's policies towards Cuba and Latin America and the Caribbean?
22. Has your opinion of how the US should engage with Cuba changed over time? How so?
23. Have you engaged in direct lobbying through your party or organization?
24. What kinds of lobbying activities?
25. How has your activity influenced policy toward Cuba?
26. Has the exile community changed the direction of what US foreign policy would otherwise be? If so, how and to what extent?
27. Which organizations have been most effective at influencing policy? How so?
28. Do you have any recommendations for other people I should interview and/or other sources of information?

SPANISH

1. ¿Cual es su relación personal con el exilio cubano y su tierra natal?
2. ¿Cuando llego a los Estados Unidos?
3. ¿Es miembro de alguna comunidad u organización de exilados? Si la respuesta es sí, cual?
4. ¿Es miembro de algún partido político? Si la respuesta es sí, cual?
5. ¿Por qué decidió afiliarse a ese específico partido político?
6. ¿Cual es su opinión sobre la política exterior del Presidente Obama concerniente a Cuba, Latino América, y el Caribe?
7. ¿Cual es su opinión sobre la política exterior del Presidente Trump concerniente a Cuba, Latino América, y el Caribe?
8. ¿En el transcurso del tiempo, ha cambiado su opinión acerca de como los Estados Unidos debería de relacionarse con Cuba? Si la respuesta es sí, explica como ha cambiado tu opinión.
9. ¿Esta usted involucrado con su partido político u organización en actividades de cabildeo?
10. Si su respuesta a la pregunta anterior es positiva, ¿qué tipo de actividades?
11. Explique como sus actividades han influenciado la política exterior de los Estados Unidos hacia Cuba.

12. ¿Crees tu que el exilio cubano ha influenciado un cambio en la política exterior de los Estados Unidos hacia Cuba? Si la respuesta es sí, como y en qué magnitud?
13. ¿Cuales organizaciones crees tu que han tenido mas influencia en este cambio de política exterior? Explica como.
14. ¿Tiene algunas recomendaciones sobre personas que debería de entrevistar o alguna otra fuente de información que debería de consultar?

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP SCRIPT

Introductory statement:

Hello! My name is Caroline McCulloch and I am a PhD candidate with the Department of Politics and International Relations at Florida International University. My dissertation research is on the Cuban-American community and US foreign policy towards Cuba and Latin America.

Thank you all for being willing to participate in today's focus group aimed at determining the Cuban-American community's degree of influence in the US foreign policy-making process. Each one of you has different experiences within the community and therefore has unique and valuable insights into our topic of discussion. The purpose of this focus group is not to debate issues, solve problems, instruct, or otherwise promote any agenda. Our purpose is to have a discussion to generate ideas and opinions that provide insight into the community. Please listen respectfully to your fellow participants and allow everyone an opportunity to answer. As the moderator, I will primarily serve to keep the conversation on task, on time, and orderly as I listen to and note your responses. All reports of the information you share will be scholarly in nature and will conceal your name and any identifying information to protect your anonymity. If at any time during the discussion, you feel uncomfortable, please let me know, and I will make accommodations as appropriate. I look forward to hearing from you all.

Let's start with a simple icebreaker question.

- If you had a limitless budget, where would you vacation?
- What is a fictional film or TV show you've recently seen that you would recommend?
- Etc.

Focus group questions:

Engagement question:

12. What is your opinion of US foreign policy towards Cuba and Latin America?

Exploration questions:

13. What is your opinion of President Trump's policies towards Cuba and Latin America?
14. What is your opinion of President Obama's policies towards Cuba and Latin America?
15. What should US policy towards Cuba be?
16. How has the Cuban-American community influenced US foreign policy towards Cuba and Latin America?
17. When has the Cuban-American community had the most influence on US foreign policy?
18. What are the most effective methods that the Cuban-American community has used to influence US foreign policy?
19. How well do the elected Cuban-American members of Congress represent the Cuban-American community's foreign policy interests?
20. How well do Cuban-American special interest organizations represent the Cuban-American community's foreign policy interests?
21. How well do major US political parties represent the Cuban-American community's foreign policy interests?

Exit question:

22. Is there anything else you would like to say about the role of the Cuban-American community on US foreign policy towards Cuba and Latin America?

Focus group participant demographic data

Información demográfica:

Participant number:

Número del participante:

Age:

Edad:

Gender:

Género:

Birthplace:

Lugar de nacimiento:

Year you or your family left Cuba:

Año de salida de Cuba:

Race:

Etnia:

Are you registered to vote? Y/N

¿Se encuentra registrado para votar? Sí/No

Educational attainment:

Educación:

Income bracket:

Ingresos:

0 - \$25,000 \$25,001 - \$50,000 \$50,001 - \$100,000 > \$100,000

VITA

CAROLINE MCCULLOCH

2004-2008 B.A., Studio Art
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, California

2006 Intern
UNESCO Center of Florence
Florence, Italy

2007-2008 Development Assistant
Constitutional Rights Foundation
Los Angeles, California

2009-2010 Language and Culture Assistant
Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sports
Manzanares el Real, Spain

2010-2011 English Lecturer
Ezkaba Public School
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2013 Study Abroad
University of Buenos Aires
Buenos Aires, Argentina

2015 M.A., International Studies
Florida International University
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2016 Intern
Bassiouni Group

2019 Intern
Office of the Coordinator for Cuban Affairs
U.S. Department of State
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2011-2021 Doctoral Candidate
Florida International University
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PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

McCulloch, Caroline, et al. 2021. "Going "Back" to Normal or Creating a New Normal: Pedagogical Lessons from the Pandemic." Panel at Florida Political Science Association, 2021.

McCulloch, Caroline. 2021. "The Collateral Damage of Crippling Castro: the Libertad Act's Effect on US Partnerships." Paper presentation. International Studies Association Conference, Las Vegas, 2021.

McCulloch, Caroline. 2021. "The Helms-Burton Act: Then and Now." Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy. Presentation.

McCulloch, Caroline. 2019. "Reagan's Cuban-American Courtship: A Case Study in Hispanic Campaign Strategy." Paper presented at Harvard Cuba Studies Program's New Voices in Cuba Studies, Boston, 2019.

McCulloch, Caroline. 2019. "The Cuban-American Policymakers in the Trump Administration and the Evolution of the Embargo." Paper presented at International Studies Association – South Conference, Memphis, October 2019.

McCulloch, Caroline. 2019. "A New Strategy: Re-assessing Cuban-American Diasporic Foreign Policy Interest Groups After Mas Canosa, Castro, and Citizens United." Paper presented at International Studies Association Conference, Toronto, 2019.

McCulloch, Caroline. 2019. "Ebbs and Tides in the Florida Straits: Cuban Migration Trends and U.S. Foreign Policy Under Obama and Trump." Paper presented at Florida International University's Cuban Research Institute's Twelfth Conference on Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, Miami, 2019.

McCulloch, Caroline. 2018. "The Role of the Catholic Church as Intermediator in U.S.-Cuban Relations After the Cuban Revolution." Paper presented at International Studies Association – South Conference, Richmond, 2018.

McCulloch, Caroline. 2014. "Opting Out: Argentina's Nonparticipation in the Latin American 'Arms Race.'" Paper presented at Midwestern Political Science Association Annual Conference, Chicago, 2014.