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CUBA

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A STAFF REPORT

PREPARED FOR THE USE OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE



AUGUST 2, 1974

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FOREWORD

Mr. Pat M. Holt, chief of staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, spent the period from June 29 to July 8 in Cuba. On July 26, the Committee considered his report in executive session and ordered it printed for the information of the Senate and of the public generally.

The reasons for Mr. Holt's trip to Cuba are fully set forth in the correspondence, which is also published herein, between the Committee and the Department of State with reference to validation of his passport.

I wish to take this opportunity to express the Committee's appreciation to the Government of Cuba for giving Mr. Holt a visa and to the many officials of that Government, especially President Dorticós and Prime Minister Castro, for receiving him so cordially while he was in Cuba.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Committee or any member thereof.

J. W. FULBRIGHT,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations.

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NOVEMBER 16, 1973.

Hon. HENRY A. KISSINGER,
Secretary of State,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: From time to time in the past, I have raised with your two predecessors the matter of validating for travel to Cuba the passport of Mr. Pat M. Holt, professional staff member of the Committee on Foreign Relations. I now renew the request in the hope of eliciting an affirmative response.

Assuming that the Cuban Government would be willing to issue a visa to Mr. Holt, it is my thought now, as it has been in the past, that he would spend perhaps two or three weeks in Cuba and report his findings in confidence to the Committee on Foreign Relations. He would, of course, take care to make clear that his mission was purely one of fact-finding on behalf of the legislative branch and that he in no way represented the executive branch. If you prefer, he would gladly use a regular, instead of an official, passport.

The Committee regularly finds the reports of its staff of great value. Such a report from Cuba would meet a particular need, because there is so little other reporting from that country.

Sincerely yours,

J. W. FULBRIGHT, *Chairman.*

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
Washington, December 7, 1973.

Hon. J. W. FULBRIGHT,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter of November 16 concerning the validation of Pat Holt's passport for travel to Cuba.

Our general opposition to travel by Americans to Cuba, with certain exceptions as set forth by regulation (22 CFR 51.73), reflects our continuing assessment that it is important to our national interest and the security of the hemisphere to seek the isolation of Cuba in cooperation with other American Republics.

Nonetheless, while there has been no change in the Department's policy to discourage travel to Cuba, we recognize the importance which you place upon Pat's trip and reluctantly agree to validate his passport for this travel.

I appreciate your statement of Mr. Holt's intention to make clear that the trip would in no way represent the Executive Branch. We would appreciate his making appropriate public statements to that effect if his travel were to become publicly known. If asked, the Department will reiterate our policy with regard to Cuba.

Best regards,

HENRY A. KISSINGER.

November 18, 1905

Mr. Henry A. Kissel

Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th inst. in relation to the proposed amendment to the National Bank Act, and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours very truly,
[Signature]

Very truly yours,
[Signature]

Enclosed for you are two copies of the proposed amendment to the National Bank Act, as amended by the Senate on the 14th inst. The same is also published in the Senate Report No. 100, 56th Congress, 2d Session, and in the Senate Report No. 100, 57th Congress, 1st Session. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours very truly,
[Signature]

Very truly yours,
[Signature]

CUBA

SUMMARY

Assuming the continuation of massive assistance from the Soviet Union and of high world commodity prices, the Cubans are on the verge of making their system work.

According to Cuban figures, they already have the highest per capita gross national product in Latin America, with the possible exception of Venezuela.

Shortages in Cuba are more an inconvenience than a hardship, reminiscent of the situation in the United States during World War II. Such goods as are available are rationed strictly and to all appearances equitably, at least as far as necessities are concerned.

The Cuban Government is devoting more attention to political organization—Cubans generally are incredibly organized—and has started a process looking to the election of a pyramidal structure of local, provincial, and national popular assemblies.

This is probably a measure of the growing self-confidence of the Revolution. The politics and economy of Cuba are controlled by a curious mixture of carrot stick and exhortation. The policy of no material incentives for workers has been abandoned, and a system of productivity norms has been substituted for it.

Although their economic prospects are improving, Cubans take a modest view of their development future. They shun a consumer-oriented society, but they take great pride in their accomplishments in the field of social services, particularly health and education.

One senses in Cuba a growing self-confidence, in part because of the Revolution's accomplishments, in part because of its growing acceptance in Latin America and the world generally.

Trade with Latin America, Europe, and Japan is increasing.

Cubans will make no move to improve their relations with the United States until the economic boycott, which they call a blockade, is lifted. My impression is that they would nonetheless welcome initiatives from the United States.

Recommendations are made for a re-examination of U.S. policy toward Cuba and especially of sundry statutory provisions relating to Cuba and to third countries trading with Cuba.

* * * * *

I

With the help of massive assistance from the Soviet Union and high world commodity prices, the Cubans are on the verge of making their system work—that is to say, of constructing a socialist show case in the Western Hemisphere.

(1)

The base for this is still fragile and could be shattered at any time by a Russian decision to cut off the flow of rubles or by a drop in commodity (especially sugar) prices. Neither appears likely in the near future. It must be as difficult for the Russians to see light at the end of the tunnel in Cuba as it is for the Americans in Vietnam, but after something on the order of 3 billion rubles down the drain, they are at last beginning to get results from their current investment. Further, although the course of Russian-Cuban relations has not always run smoothly, there do not appear to be any large outstanding current issues. The Russian presence in Cuba is unobtrusive.

Cubans are extraordinarily close-mouthed about their economic relations with the Soviet Union and, for that matter, about economic statistics in general.

They put their gross national product in 1973 at 10,380,000,000 pesos in 1965 prices. This works out to 15,088,000,000 U.S. dollars in 1973 terms—or approximately \$1,587 per capita, by far the highest in Latin America with the possible exception of Venezuela where everything is distorted by oil.

A good deal is distorted in Cuba by the peculiarities of socialist accounting, but even if these figures are exaggerated by a factor of two or three, they are still impressive. And, indeed, when divided by two, they are supported by impressionistic observations of the Cuban standard of living over a period of 10 days of travel in both urban and rural parts of the island.

The big change, as related both by Cubans and by foreign observers, began in 1970 which by general agreement represents the low point of revolutionary Cuba. Prior to that time, there had been a good deal of floundering around and a good many false starts with respect both to economics and politics. There had been the romanticism of Ché Guevara which came to a bloody end in the jungles of Bolivia in 1967 and which in its hey day not only envisaged guerrilla warfare throughout Latin America but also preached the elimination of material incentives for the labor force at home. There had been vacillations between whether to concentrate on the production of sugar, or on industrialization, or on a balanced economy somewhere in between.

In the late 1960's, the sugar school of thought was ascendant, and a goal was set for the production of 10 million tons of sugar in the crop year 1969-70—an unheard of figure—and of 20 million tons in 1980. The 1970 crop amounted to 8.5 million tons, a record though short of the goal. But the effort which went into the 1970 harvest diverted enormous resources from other sectors of the economy and left the country in a shambles. There was a serious drop in non-sugar production, in part because investment in sugar—to rehabilitate old mills and to import machinery—had been increased at the expense of other sectors, and in part because labor had been diverted to sugar. The Cuban Government at this time was also confronted with a worsening problem of discipline in the labor force, characterized by growing absenteeism and attributable in major part to the policy of eliminating material incentives. As one Cuban put it, the Government had relied too much on patriotism and revolutionary ardor to motivate workers. The workers, he said, had been willing to die for their country at the time of the Bay of Pigs and the missile crisis, "but it's hard to be a hero every day."

All of this provided the basis for what was apparently a profound re-examination of both economic and political policies by the Cuban Government. The result has been a series of steps. More attention has been given to political organization. Pay is being tied to production through the introduction of a system roughly equivalent to piece work. At the end of 1972 the Soviet Union agreed to postpone repayment of the Cuban debt to the period 1986–2000 and to furnish new credits of 300 million rubles to cover the deficit in the Cuban balance of payments in 1973–75. With the return of Peronistas to power in Argentina in 1973, important new credits (\$600 million) were forthcoming from that source. Trade with Western Europe and Japan has expanded.

According to Cuban figures, total exports in 1973 amounted to 2,193,000,000 pesos and total imports were 2,080,000,000 pesos. Cubans say their trade with non-socialist countries shows a favorable balance; with socialist countries other than the Soviet Union, it is in equilibrium; only with the Soviet Union is it in deficit.

There are still shortages in Cuba, but they are more an inconvenience than a hardship, and are somewhat reminiscent of the situation in the United States during World War II. People generally look dowdy. In part, this is the result of a fierce tropical climate, but in part it is the result of an inadequate supply of rather shoddy clothing. The chorus girls at the Tropicana Night Club all wear mended stockings, but they still put on a lavish show. Havana is a shabby city, in part because the Government has followed a deliberate policy of making most of its investment in the hitherto neglected countryside.

There is no good basis on which to compare prices, but they seem roughly the same as in the United States, perhaps somewhat less, though generally for lower quality goods. Wages are lower than in the United States, but so are rents (a good many people live rent-free), and health care, except for drugs, is free. The norm for cane-cutters yields them 4.50 pesos a day; longshoremen in the port of Santiago make 163 pesos a month; workers in a prefabricated housing factory make 127 pesos. (One pesos equals roughly US\$1.20.)

With the exception of some luxury items such as perfume and cosmetics, such goods as are available are rationed strictly and to all appearances equitably, at least so far as necessities are concerned.

Durable consumer goods are arriving from the Soviet Union—the television set in my hotel room (with all the instructions in Russian except for the two English words “off” and “on”); a washing machine (also with the dials lettered in Russian) which I saw in a department store; refrigerators; sewing machines. The refrigerator was priced at 660 pesos. To buy it, or other hard goods, one has to be referred by his union—or, if not a member of a union, by some other mass organization such as the Committees for Defense of the Revolution—on the basis, so it is said, of need. One can imagine, however, that a union’s perception of need is influenced by a worker’s productivity and revolutionary zeal.

This illustrates the curious blend of carrot, stick and exhortation, with emphasis on the first and last, by which the politics of Cuba is controlled and the economy driven forward. It is not so much that bad things happen to you if you are a bad revolutionary (though if you are a counter-revolutionary, very bad things happen) as it is that

good things happen if you are a good revolutionary. Some of these good things are psychological analogues taken from the Boy Scouts. Take the matter of work incentives, for example. Some of these are economic—if you produce more than the norm established for your job, you get a bonus; if you produce less, your pay is docked. But some are psychological. If you consistently exceed the norm and also meet a list of other requirements mainly having to do with community or revolutionary activities but also including such things as getting an annual physical exam, you get the *Bandera de Moncada* (the Moncada Flag, named for the barracks in Santiago against which Castro made an unsuccessful attack in 1953) and become an *Héroe Nacional de Trabajo* (National Labor Hero).

Similar awards—somewhat analogous to Boy Scout merit badges—are given for accomplishments as members of the Committees for Defense of the Revolution. These Committees are the most pervasive organization in Cuba; nearly everybody is a member. The CDRs were organized in 1960 literally to defend the Revolution at a time when it felt insecure and threatened by counter-revolutionaries at home and militant exiles abroad, not to mention the United States. The principal function of the CDRs in their early days was to spy on people and to combat counter-revolutionary activities. There is still a certain amount of this, but as the Revolution has consolidated its position, the CDRs have taken on a variety of other functions, many of them socially useful. They act as a kind of ombudsman or intermediary between the people and the mammoth Cuban bureaucracy. They see to it that children are vaccinated. They collect waste materials for recycling—to a value last year of 100 million pesos. They organize the parents of school children (parents of good children get diplomas, too) and act as truant officers. They are responsible for contingency plans in the case of natural disasters, such as hurricanes. Thus in some respects, they are the kind of community development organization which the Peace Corps and AID have tried to stimulate, with very modest success, in other parts of Latin America.

All of this is accompanied by a heavy, unrelenting propaganda and pressure for ideological and social conformity. To paraphrase Sam Rayburn, if you go along, you get along.

The CDRs, along with other mass organizations such as labor unions, also serve to give people generally a sense of participation in the government and in the decision-making process. The government currently has underway, for example, a project to revise the *Código de la Familia*, or the law covering marriage, divorce, and domestic relations generally. Millions of copies of the government's proposed draft were circulated. Local CDRs, local units of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC, after its Spanish initials), and other groups have been meeting to discuss it article by article.

I attended a meeting of a neighborhood CDR which was going through this process for the third night in a row. There were about 30 or 35 people, more women than men, in the courtyard of an apartment house. They concluded by approving the draft with three suggested amendments. These had to do principally with related provisions in the draft to the effect that if a woman gave birth within 300 days after a divorce, her former husband would be presumed to be the father of the child. The women particularly did not like this, and a

secretary duly noted their objections. The chairman then called for a show of hands on approving the draft as a whole, with amendments. He declared it approved unanimously. The secretary reminded him he had not counted; so he took the vote again and declared it approved 28 to 0.

Leaders of the CDRs invest a great deal of time and effort in these activities; several of them said they worked 28 to 30 hours a week in these extracurricular endeavors. This has to be measured, in both social and human terms, against what they would be doing otherwise. Judged by the standards of Latin America generally, they would probably not be doing very much and they would probably be bored. The CDRs and the other mass organizations of Cuba—which is by far the most organized country this observer has ever seen—provide a use for leisure time. A part of this use is constructive by anybody's definition. A part of it is dreary ideological indoctrination. But most of it is more personally fulfilling to the people who do it than having a vacuum of empty time to fill.

One of the results of the greater attention to political organization is an electoral process, still in its very early stages. This is planned to result eventually in a pyramidal structure of *Organos del Poder Popular* (Organs of Popular Power). The Province of Matanzas, just to the east of Havana, was the scene of a dry run the last Sunday in June and the first Sunday in July. Earlier, in May, the process had started with *Asambleas de Vecinos* (literally, Assemblies of Neighbors) corresponding roughly to precinct meetings in the United States. The first thing these Assemblies did was to elect a chairman. They then recessed while the chairmen received a crash course in how the electoral process was supposed to work. Upon reconvening, each Assembly nominated candidates to be delegates from their *circunscripción*. (The *circunscripción* is the smallest political subdivision in Cuba with an average voting age population in Matanzas of not quite 4,000.) There had to be at least two candidates, and in most instances there were more. In one polling place I visited there were 13. Province-wide, 43 per cent of the candidates nominated were members of the Communist Party. The proportion elected was unknown as of the time I left Cuba. Few candidates received a majority in the first election, and run-offs were held between the top two candidates the following Sunday.

The elections of June 30 and July 7 were to choose one delegate from each *circunscripción*. These will form 11 Municipal Assemblies. Each of these will elect delegates to Regional Assemblies which in turn will elect delegates to a Provincial Assembly. It is contemplated that eventually the Provincial Assemblies will elect delegates to a National Assembly. At each successive level, the members of the executive committee (chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, and two members) will be ex officio members of the Assembly at the next higher level, and the chairman and vice-chairman will be paid, full-time delegates.

It is contemplated that elections in the other provinces will be held at the end of 1975 or the beginning of 1976.

The functions of these assemblies will be two-fold. First, they will take over many local or provincial administrative functions. As things now stand in Cuba, *everything* is run from Havana; and since there is only negligible private enterprise in Cuba, "everything" is to be taken

in its literal meaning—the corner cigarette shop, the barber shop, the movie theater, local bus service, etc. In this sense, the Assemblies will function somewhat like a Cabinet in a parliamentary system; certain members will be in charge of various activities. The Assemblies are thus an important move toward decentralization.

Second, the Assemblies will have a policy-making, or legislative, function. As explained by high-ranking Cubans, at the national level the Cabinet itself will be responsible to the National Assembly; it will be elected by the Assembly and can be fired by the Assembly, though its members will not necessarily be members of the Assembly. The Assemblies are thus also an important move toward institutionalization of the Revolution.

The Cuban Government seems to have become increasingly preoccupied with this problem of institutionalization and with the absence of a solid constitutional base. Theoretically the Constitution of 1940, heavily amended, is in effect, but it is regarded as inadequate and a new document can be expected in a few years, though its shape cannot now be foreseen.

The creation of these Assemblies is the most striking of several manifestations of growing self-confidence on the part of Cubans generally. The Government would hardly embark on this course if it were not reasonably sure of the direction the Assemblies would take and of its ability to keep the Assemblies within the bounds of Revolutionary doctrine.

In the thinking of Cubans who are planning the process, control not only of the Assemblies but of public policy generally is to be exercised by the Communist Party. The relationship of the Party to the Government and to the evolving political process generally is one of the most interesting and puzzling aspects of the Cuban scene.

As explained by several Cubans intimately involved in the question, the Party is—or will be, when the process is finished—the ultimate authority in the country, though it will apparently be extralegal, a kind of “brooding omnipresence in the sky,” as someone said of the English common law. The Party will exercise this authority through the moral force and militancy of its members rather than through its numbers. The Party now has less than 200,000 members, and its leaders do not want it to grow beyond that figure.

It is not easy to become a member. One has to be proposed by his mass organization—his labor union, or his CDR, for example—and then be accepted by the Party itself after a searching background investigation and review of the candidate's revolutionary works and doctrinal soundness. Once you are a member, and particularly if you become a party official, you acquire instant prestige and perquisites.

The Party's function, it is emphasized, is not to involve itself in administrative matters but to set broad lines of policy. The Spanish word which is used most often to describe this function is *dirigir*—to direct. And the emphasis which is placed on the Party's duty to abstain from involving itself in administrative matters leads one to suspect that the Party occasionally has some difficulty in resisting the temptation to do so.

At the upper levels, of course, the same individuals are likely to be officials of the Party and officials of the Government. It is not

always easy for an outsider to tell which hat a given individual is wearing at a given time, but the distinction seems clear enough to the Cubans and probably is not very important anyway.

One hears a great deal in Cuba about "democracy" and "democratic processes." The Cubans make a point of the fact that every program or policy is thoroughly discussed and approved by the people concerned before it is put into effect. The example of the *Código de la Familia* has been cited.

Another example is the establishment of productivity norms for the labor force. These are fixed by technicians in the Ministry of Labor on the basis of a detailed study of each work position and are then discussed and approved by the workers concerned. In case of disagreement, which rarely happens, there is a complicated system of appeals ending in the highest level of the government. The system of norms, like piece rates in the United States, has the potential of becoming an instrument for exploitation of labor in that the norm can be constantly raised to hold down wages. However, one imagines its being sold to workers on the basis of the argument that "so-and-so is goofing off and getting the same wage you are, and that's not fair to you." There is also a problem, as yet not totally resolved, of measuring productivity in the professions and service trades. One can establish a norm for musicians, for example, on the basis of how many concerts they play, but this does not deal with the question of whether they play well or poorly. The Cubans meet this question, at least in part, by taking into consideration the number of requests for the appearance of a given artist, and they have in any case put an upper limit of 600 pesos a month on the earnings of an individual artist.

Cubans present all of the public discussion of these matters as evidence that public policy is made by the masses and flows from the bottom up. This contradicts what is said about the role of the Communist Party, but the contradiction is a good deal more apparent to foreigners than to Cubans.

In any event, as one highly placed Cuban put it, until a decision is made, there can be totally free discussion; once a decision is made, everybody has to support it, whether he agrees or not. And the "totally free" discussion always has to be within the bounds of revolutionary doctrine.

II

Cubans take a modest view of their economic prospects and a particular pride in what has been accomplished in Cuba by Cubans in the provision of social services, especially in health and education, and in the redistribution of wealth and income.

With respect to economic development, they emphasize, perhaps in exaggerated form and perhaps as a means of concealing or rationalizing their dependence on the Russians, that Cuba is basically a poor island. They do not anticipate—on the contrary, they want to avoid—a consumer-oriented society. "It is not necessary," one of them said, "that everybody has 18 shirts." What is necessary is that everybody has enough shirts, and this is on the verge of being achieved. Nor is it necessary or desirable, in the Cuban view, that Havana develop a traffic problem. It is the only capital I know, other than Brasilia, without such a problem. The Cubans are now in a position to import

more cars—mainly Fiats—but they are going to limit the number and see that they go only to people who need them in their work.

With respect to social services, there are still poor people in Cuba, and there are not any really rich ones. Upper level Communist Party functionaries and government officials live well, but that is a consequence of the perquisites of office and not of income or wealth. Housing is a particular problem, and there are bad slums; but one does not see in Cuba the extent of poverty and malnutrition which one sees elsewhere in Latin America.

Great attention is given to children; Cubans generally shower even more tender loving care on children than other Latin Americans—which is a great deal. One is repeatedly told that the infant mortality rate has been reduced to 27 per 1,000 and in the city of Havana to 20 per thousand, levels comparable to the United States.

Children, like everybody else in Cuba, are organized for almost all of their waking hours. From the moment of their birth, those of them fortunate enough to live near a new polyclinic have meticulous health records kept of their various inoculations, growth in weight and height, and childhood illnesses. For those whose mothers work, there are a growing number (not yet enough) of day care centers. Beginning at the pre-school age of about four, there are kindergarten programs and the little ones can, if their parents are good revolutionaries, become members of the *Pioneros*, the youngest of the various youth movements in Cuba. During their elementary school days, summer recreation (and indoctrination) programs are organized. One of the records kept by elementary schools is how well they sing revolutionary songs. When they reach high school, there is a combined work-study program, and the good ones can then go on to a university and the Union of Communist Youth (UJC, after the Spanish initials). The dropouts go into the National Labor Army (ENT, after the Spanish initials) where presumably they are impressed by the advantages of collaborating with the Revolutionary establishment.

I visited two new rural schools (one primary and one secondary) and one old one. The new ones were quite impressive—lacking in some laboratory equipment, but with youngsters who were well-scrubbed, well-dressed, well-fed, and well-spoken, not in the least self-conscious. The old one was as grim a place as one can find in Latin America—20 students ranging in age from 6 to 16 in a single room. The teacher lived in three filthy rooms at one end of the building, with his wife and three children, two dogs, a television set, and a million flies.

I also visited a rural polyclinic, a *posto medico* (the smallest health care unit), and a *guardia de ancianos* (or old folks' home). The polyclinic had five doctors, a dentist and a dental technician, 14 nurses, and 104 workers—groundkeepers, cleaning people, cooks, etc. It had 16 beds, of which half were for maternity cases. Fifteen babies are born there a month—out of a population of 9,600—and no babies are delivered at home. The staff sees 1,200 patients a month, many of them pregnant women or well babies for routine checkups and shots.

The *posto medico* was more primitive, consisting of three small rooms—an examining room, a modestly stocked pharmacy, and a modestly equipped laboratory. But it had a doctor in attendance on Saturday morning (my visit was unexpected), and by noon he had seen 17 patients.

The *guardia de ancianos* had an average resident population of about 100—pitiful cases, as are all cases of helplessness and advanced senility. They lived dormitory style in surroundings which would have been clean if anybody had bothered to put up screens to keep out the flies. Residents were furnished food, clothing, and health care, and there was a communal television set.

The doctors to staff these operations are recent medical school graduates who are obligated to serve two years in the country, as a substitute for internship, before they return to Havana to take up a postgraduate specialty. The doctor in charge was a most attractive young woman who could not have been much more than 25 and who exuded an air of calm efficiency and self-confidence. When she is through running the polyclinic she intends to specialize in pediatrics.

Judging from the Cuban birthrate (200,000 a year out of a population of 9.5 million, up from 6 million at the time of the Revolution), pediatrics is a field with a great future. Cubans generally seem uncertain as to whether or not they should be worried about their population growth. Questions about this to different Cubans get different answers—no doubt an indication that the party line has not yet been established. But whatever the party line, the polyclinic dispenses IUDs and general birth control advice (though not the Pill). Top government officials deny that Cuba's population growth is a current problem, though they recognize that it is going to become one because of the social costs of providing food, clothing, housing, education, and medical care for 200,000 additional non-productive people a year. They seem not yet quite sure what to do about it. A good guess would seem to be, when they decide that time has come, a massive campaign of public discussion kicked off by a three-hour speech by Fidel inundating everybody with a flood of statistics and improvised rationalization of Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

In all of my being shown schools, health centers, factories (one which was a gift of the Russians to make prefabricated housing), I was struck with a disturbing sense of *deja vu*. Finally, it dawned on me that these tours and briefings were not so much different from countless others I have received from American Embassy country teams, AID missions, and Milgroups. The pattern was the same: about four times as many people as necessary assembled to conduct the briefing or to escort me through a project. If the Cubans were trying to brainwash me, their efforts were no greater (and hopefully no more successful) than those of sundry officials of the U.S. Government in other times and places. The principal difference was that in this instance I was escorted by Cubans who said the Revolution did this, or the Russians did this for us, and not by foreigners who said we are trying to persuade these people to do thus-and-so.

III

Mention was made earlier of the growing self-confidence in Cuba. There seems to be a feeling that the worst is past. Times are better, and promise to get better yet. Cubans have survived the efforts of the United States and of anti-revolutionary exiles to overthrow the Revolution. There is a feeling of greater security.

There is also a feeling that Revolutionary Cuba's place in the Hemisphere and in the world is steadily becoming more firmly established. Cuba's relations with the rest of Latin America, both diplomatic and commercial, are expanding. The expansion of diplomatic relations received a setback with the overthrow of the Allende Government in Chile last year, but this is viewed as temporary. Furthermore, relations are good with a number of countries where formal diplomatic ties do not exist, though such ties are expected. Ecuador, Venezuela, Colombia, and even Costa Rica are mentioned in this category. President Echeverria of Mexico has now taken up the cry to lift the U.S. economic boycott, which Cubans call the blockade.

Trade with Latin America, Europe, and Japan is increasing. An impressive Argentine industrial fair opened in Havana the first week in July, and 300 Argentine businessmen were expected in Cuba selling a wide range of products from farm machinery to electronics to consumer durables—and including Argentine-made General Motors cars and trucks. The Economic Planning Board is acquiring a computerized data system from Olivetti in Italy.

In discussing relations with the United States, Cubans emphasize what they call the blockade in much the same way that the North Vietnamese once emphasized the bombing. This is a matter of principle with them, and lifting the blockade is the *sine qua non* of a change in Cuban policy toward the United States. In this connection, it should be noted that Cuban policy toward Latin America—one of the aspects of U.S.-Cuban relations that is always mentioned by the State Department—has changed long since. Cuban support of revolutionary or insurgency movements elsewhere in Latin America has been at a minimal—one might even say trivial—level for years in other than an ideological sense. Cuban policy now recognizes that there is more than one road—or in some cases trail, as one Cuban put it—to economic development. The Cubans have been particularly impressed by the military government in Peru.

Cubans recognize that their Revolution is changing, but they caution a visitor against expecting changes in two fundamental respects. Cuba is not going to become a Yugoslavia, they say—and the visitor makes a mental note of certainly not while Cuba is dependent on the Soviet Union to the tune of \$550 to \$600 million a year. Nor is Cuba going to abandon what Cubans call international solidarity with the masses. As an example, they cite Cuban support of the 200-mile limit at the Caracas Conference on the Law of the Sea because this is the position of their underdeveloped brothers in Ecuador and Peru and despite the fact that this puts them on the same side as what they call the fascist government of Chile—currently the number one Cuban *bête noire*—and even though it is against Cuba's own narrow self-interests as a fishing nation. (Most of Cuba's fishing is done not in waters nearby but off the coasts of South America and Africa.)

Prior to going to Cuba, I had thought that the U.S. economic boycott was more symbolic than practical. It seemed to me that even if all U.S. trade restrictions were lifted, very little trade with Cuba would result; because: (1) Cuban trade had been so completely re-oriented to the Soviet Union; (2) with the development of new sources of

U.S. sugar imports, there was very little in Cuba that the U.S. would want to buy other than perhaps a little rum and some cigars; and (3) Cuba could not afford to buy very much in the United States.

I was not in Cuba very long before I changed my mind. The Western Europeans and the other Latin Americans are sufficiently in evidence in Cuba to make it worthwhile for American firms to compete directly for some of this business. (Cubans whom I met casually in the hotel elevators or in the street frequently asked if I were Canadian or German; revelation of my true nationality produced surprise but no hostility.)

Further, although the boycott is symbolic to Cubans, it is more than that. They frankly admit that it has hurt them, particularly with respect to spare parts. They are proud of the fact that they have been able to circumvent it by developing other sources of supply, but this has not been done without some difficulty, a difficulty compounded by the fact that countries trading with Cuba are ineligible for American aid and that ships and aircraft calling at Cuba cannot call at the United States.

Although no Cuban said so explicitly, I have the clear impression that Cubans would welcome better relations with the United States. They were obviously very pleased by my visit and went out of their way to be helpful. Any initiative in improving relations, however, will have to come from the United States, and no substantial change can be expected without lifting the boycott.

It is my conclusion that the Cubans are correct when they say, as one did, that the U.S. policy of isolating Cuba has been a failure. If this is so, then it follows that a new policy should be devised.

A reexamination of existing policy with this end in view is called for by Section 14 of the State Department-USIA Authorization Bill as passed by the Senate May 20, 1974. Such a reexamination should include a review of sundry statutory provisions relating to Cuba, not only the so-called Cuba resolution of 1962 but also the provisions of the Foreign Assistance Act, mainly found in Section 620, relating to Cuba and to third countries trading with Cuba. (This by no means implies that there should be a United States aid program in Cuba; quite the contrary.)

Pending the formulation of a new policy, there are some modest steps which might be recommended to the Executive Branch. One would be the relaxation of travel restrictions on Americans desiring to go to Cuba. Another would be relaxation of restrictions on the movement within the United States of Cuban diplomats at the United Nations. These people are now confined to the City of New York, which is certainly a form of cruel and unusual punishment. It is hard to see how national security would be jeopardized if they were permitted to visit Philadelphia, Washington, or Kansas City.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that Cubans are extraordinarily proud and sensitive. It is my impression that they will respond to United States initiatives, but only if those initiatives respect Cuban dignity and sovereignty.

