

Maritza is amused by my honeymoon tales. First stop on our 1996 tour is the Ambos Mundos. The hotel was closed for many years and has been in the process of renovation for many more. The place is entirely gutted and a man on the ground is sending a small bucket of plaster up to the fifth floor on a pulley-and-rope contraption. A pamphlet I've picked up says that you can learn about the life of Ernest Hemingway by staying there. "Ambos Mundos Hotel will open up in summer 1996 with 53 rooms of which 4 suites," it promises, but it is now fall, and it still looks like it's going to be a while.

Nearby, in the palace occupied by Batista way back then, is the Museo de la Revolución. There are photographs of the rebels in the mountains, bloody shirts and pants, canteens, rifles, the engine of an American plane shot down over the Bay of Pigs, and other mementos of turbulent times. One display titled in English "The Hall of Cretins," features huge, cartoonish figures of Batista in military garb, Ronald Reagan dressed as a cowboy and George Bush dressed as a Roman senator. Above the figure of Reagan, the caption says, "Thank you cretin for strengthening the Revolution." Bush's caption is, "Thank you cretin for consolidating the Revolution."

In the nearby Plaza de la Catedral, craftspeople hawk costume jewelry, maracas, woodcarvings and other knick-knack. Che Guevara's face appears on key rings, ashtrays and T-shirts. Why doesn't Castro's face appear on T-shirts and key rings? I ask Maritza. "It wouldn't be respectful," she says and it's impossible to determine whether her inflection is dead serious or mocking.

I am trying hard to recapture the city I remember. One afternoon Norman and I journey uptown to peek furtively into the splendidly titled lobby of the Hotel Nacional, fearful of being accosted and asked whether we are paying guests. (Reopened and refurbished after years of being shut down, the hotel is as handsome and crowded as ever.) We gape at the splendid Spanish colonial mansions on the tree-lined avenues of the Vedado and Miramar districts. And then we retreat to the colorful narrow streets and shady squares of Old Havana, where we remember Cubans strolling, singing aloud. Our memories of this are so vivid, it must have been true, although there is no evidence of such today.

West of Old Havana is the Vedado neighborhood and our hotel, the Victoria, which is across the street from a row of picturesquely decaying Spanish colonial mansions, now occupied by many poor families. Up close, things aren't quite so picturesque. Laundry hangs from the windows, balusters are missing from the galleried rooftops, stairs are broken, garden statues are headless, yards are littered with trash. Nothing has been painted or repaired in decades. And venturing out at night onto the darkened, crumbling sidewalks and streets—where hordes of bikes without lights scoot by—is dangerous whether or not you encounter the street crime everyone warns about (we didn't).

Tourism has been revived in Havana, and crowds of Europeans, Asians, South Americans, Canadians and a much smaller number of Americans can be seen in the more celebrated restaurants. There is the luxurious new Melia Cohiba hotel, a joint venture between Cuba and Spain; much talk of further foreign investment in tourism; and work is going on around the clock on a new airport. Baseball games and performances by the excellent national ballet company provide stimulating entertainment, yet information about schedules is difficult to glean.

Restaurant food ranges from so-so to bad. The Cubans we invited to dine with us all

chose paladares—the small, often-excellent restaurants families are now permitted to run in their own apartments. Families licensed to establish a paladar may set up no more than 12 chairs, arranged in whatever grouping of tables they prefer. Some paladares have signs, but most are known only through word of mouth. You ring a doorbell and enter a lobby, push the button for the proper floor and walk into someone's living room, where tables are prettily set and family members graciously rush to serve you.

At one paladar, we are seated on a breezy balcony, overlooking the water. At another, a particularly pleasant three-course dinner with assorted tasty appetizers set up on a small buffet table, a roast lamb entree and dessert of a rich fig pudding costs \$12 a person, including beer and coffee.

These paladares, named for a family-run restaurant dubbed Paladar in a popular Brazilian TV sitcom, are one of the few forms of self-employment now permitted in Cuba. Since they accept payment only in U.S. dollars, paladar owners have the means to buy a wide range of foods at the hard currency stores.

The Hemingway shtick is still going strong here. Several restaurants and bars in the old city claim to have been his favorite. One of these, the tiny, crowded La Bodeguita del Medio, a block from the cathedral, still has ambiance aplenty. Since the 1920s, customers have carved their names on wood paneling, and there's no more space. Above the bar is a blow-up of a scrawled message by the great man himself. "The best mojitos are at the Bodeguita," it reads. "The best daiquiris at the Florida, Ernest Hemingway."

Squeezed into a corner, in full view of this snippet of immortal prose, we order a mojito. It arrives in a tall glass, jammed with what appears to be seaweed but is, in fact, very soggy mint, and filled with a watery rum, lemon and sugar mixture. An undistinguished meal is tossed at us irritably. It is almost heartening to find that there still are tourist traps in Havana.

Just about everything is in short supply in this underdeveloped island country. Everyone is short of soap, and I lift a few tiny bars from the hotel maid's cart and pass them along to my new friends. All food is rationed. Staples—rice and beans—are cheap and abundant, although milk is available only for children under 7. At the Hotel Victoria, the milk is made from powder and manages to be foamy and lumpy at the same time. Meat, chicken and fish are not generally available, and at the time of our visit, the egg ration was seven a month. Each person is permitted one piece of bread a day.

Cubans call this is a periodo especial, a special period that dates from the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the sudden cessation of what had been lavish subsidies. Gas, electricity, public transportation—all are in very short supply. When the periodic blackouts occur, not only the lights go out, but also the water, which is pumped by electricity.

The glittering and bustling tropical city I remember is a drab and quiet place today. For decades, there has been no money to maintain buildings and streets. Automotive traffic is light at all times. Gas, at \$4 a gallon, is too expensive for most Cubans, who earn on average \$12 to \$15 a month.

I ask a highly placed government official what he hopes, expects, fears the future will bring if Castro, now a fit-looking 70-year-old, retires? He laughs at the notion of retirement. "When Fidel dies," he says, "people won't be ready for raw capitalism. That's certain. They think they want more free enterprise, but they are too accustomed to free education and health care to ever give that up. It will be some sort of socialism."

"Don't misunderstand," he adds, when I ask about the one piece of bread a day. "Things here are difficult now, but there is absolutely no question that life under Batista was far worse for most Cubans. What you have to recognize is this: Cuba has always had one corrupt form of government or another."

While we are in Havana, everyone is talking about the International Trade Fair, an annual event that showcases products from countries worldwide (72 of them at this fair). Finally, I decide to go to the new exposition grounds outside the city with Roberto, a translator for the medical program that brought us to Cuba. The fair is jammed with people. Cuba is displaying pharmaceuticals, rum and cigars, and there are sparkling new cars from Japan and France, shoes from Italy, tablecloths from Mexico, furniture from Canada and children's clothing from Panama. As Roberto seats himself longingly behind the wheel of a shiny little yellow Fiat mounted on a revolving stand, my eyes falls on an Argentinean food exporter's display of Oreo cookies, Ritz crackers, Libby's Vienna Sausages, Wrigley gum, M&M candies, Kellogg's Frosted Flakes and Froot Loops.

Will Cuban children get to eat Froot Loops despite the U.S. embargo? Roberto rolls his eyes, but declines further comment.

I buy lunch at a sunbaked outdoor cafe, and we dine greedily on a cholesterol nightmare of fried chicken, french fries, beer and ice cream. Four musicians—two guitar players, a man on a bongo drum and another on maracas—suddenly appear at my elbow, grinning with mock flirtatiousness and breaking into the songs their fathers sang to diners in the cafes of Obispo Street in the 1950s: "Besame Mucho" and "Perfidia." I am overcome with nostalgia and tip generously, and they repeat the two songs over and over. And then, with almost manic zest, they break into a long song about Che Guevara.

The next day, at the airport gate, waiting hours for our return flight, we Americans—doctors, missionaries, journalists—exchange stories about the charm of the people we've met and the hardships we've witnessed. No one has answers.

The airport's air conditioning has been turned off to save electricity. Everyone is hot and avid to leave. But everyone wants to return "someday."

"Bring soap," we remind each other. "next time don't forget to bring everyone a few bars of soap."

A NATION FOR ALL TIME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEKAS. Madam Speaker, if we were to take a poll of the American people on the question, should the Government of the United States ever be allowed to shut down, everyone knows that the overwhelming answer would be no, of course not. Perhaps a 98-percent return on such a poll would indicate that response.

Benjamin Franklin and John Adams and George Washington and James Madison and their colleagues in Philadelphia in 1789 established a nation which they conceived to be one that would last for all time, never to be shut down, not even for 5 minutes. Yet, since I have been a Member of the Congress, and it has happened many times

before that, but since I have been here, the Government of the United States has shut down eight separate times and the budget of the United States has not been completed on 53 occasions.

□ 1100

This alarmed me when I first came to the Congress, so I began to introduce legislation some 8 years ago that would prevent a Government shutdown; that would say that if we have not, as a Congress, completed the business of the day and formulated a budget by September 30, the end of the fiscal year, if we have failed to do that, then the next day there should be an automatic replay, an instant replay, of last year's budget just to keep the Government going that would prevent a shutdown while allowing the Congress to proceed to negotiate to complete the budget that it has deemed necessary to accomplish.

I have never been able to get it passed by the Congress because the President of the United States, whether it is Republican or Democrat, and the Congress, Republican- or Democrat-controlled, have failed to see the efficacy of the bill that I have introduced.

It seemed to me a simple proposition. We have a budget. If we come to the end of the budget process and no new budget has arrived, there are only three alternatives.

One is that the Government must shut down because of the lack of a budget. That is the constitutional result of having no budget.

No. 2 is to pass temporary funding measures, called continuing resolutions, for a specified time, a month, 6 months, 8 months, whatever we want, until the Congress and the President can agree on a budget.

Or third, we can adopt my proposition, which would simply say that if we do not have a budget, then the law should require an instant replay of last year's budget, thus ensuring that the Government of the United States would never shut down.

After 8 long years I finally was able to muster enough support from well-wishing Members, colleagues on both sides of the aisle, to bring it to a vote as part of the supplemental appropriations legislation just last week. I was really shocked, then, with the result. We won, and I felt elated about that. But the rhetoric that accompanied the opposition to my bill was astounding. All but a handful of enlightened Democrats voted against the bill and spoke against it.

What the Democrat rank and file, through their leadership, were saying is, you Republicans caused the shutdown last time. Therefore, we are not supporting your proposition to prevent shutdowns. Does that make sense? They say, you shut down the Government. Now the Gekas bill, which would prevent Government shutdowns, is unacceptable.

Figure out the logic to that, because I cannot. All that would do would be to

continue Government, prevent Government shutdown, and the budget process could take on its own evolution in its own good time between the President and the Congress of the United States.

Many of them said that the reason they are voting no on this proposition to shut down the Government was because President Clinton, as he has, has promised to veto it. If the President of the United States does not want to see the Government shut down, why would he veto a proposition that would prevent Government shutdowns? Explain the logic of that to me, I ask the Speaker and the Members.

What in the world does that mean? We want to prevent a Government shutdown. Well, let us prepare legislation that would prevent Government shutdowns. Well, then let us veto the legislation that would prevent Government shutdowns.

The point is that it logically can be assumed that the people who vote against prevention of a shutdown favor the risk of a shutdown.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. PRYCE of Ohio). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the House stands in recess until 12 noon.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 3 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 12 noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SUNUNU) at 12 noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

We offer these words of prayer, gracious God, and we do so with humility and with grateful hearts. We place before You our own special petitions, asking that You would bless us when we need encouraging and give us vision for a new day. It is right to place these supplications before You, knowing that You have created each person in Your image and have given the gift of life and the opportunity for service to all. So we pray that You would breathe into our very souls the breath of forgiveness and the faith and hope and love with which to meet the responsibilities of the day. In Your name we pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote

on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 311, nays 44, not voting 78, as follows:

[Roll No. 139]

YEAS—311

Aderholt	DeGette	Johnson (CT)
Allen	Delahunt	Johnson (WI)
Andrews	DeLauro	Johnson, Sam
Archer	Dellums	Kanjorski
Armey	Deutsch	Kaptur
Bachus	Diaz-Balart	Kasich
Baesler	Dickey	Kelly
Baker	Dicks	Kildee
Baldacci	Dingell	Kilpatrick
Ballenger	Dixon	Kim
Barcia	Doggett	Kind (WI)
Barr	Dooley	King (NY)
Barrett (NE)	Doolittle	Kingston
Barrett (WI)	Dreier	Klecza
Bartlett	Duncan	Klink
Barton	Dunn	Klug
Bass	Edwards	Knollenberg
Bateman	Ehlers	Kolbe
Becerra	Emerson	LaHood
Bentsen	Engel	Latham
Bereuter	Eshoo	LaTourette
Berman	Etheridge	Leach
Bishop	Evans	Levin
Blagojevich	Everett	Lewis (CA)
Bliley	Ewing	Lewis (KY)
Blumenauer	Farr	Linder
Boehlert	Fawell	Lofgren
Boehner	Flake	Lowey
Bonilla	Foley	Lucas
Boswell	Ford	Luther
Boucher	Fox	Maloney (CT)
Boyd	Frank (MA)	Manzullo
Brady	Franks (NJ)	Mascara
Brown (OH)	Frelinghuysen	Matsui
Bryant	Furse	McCarthy (MO)
Bunning	Gallegly	McCarthy (NY)
Burton	Ganske	McCollum
Buyer	Gejdenson	McCrery
Callahan	Gekas	McDade
Camp	Gibbons	McGovern
Campbell	Gilchrest	McHale
Canady	Gillmor	McHugh
Cannon	Gilman	McIntosh
Capps	Gonzalez	McIntyre
Cardin	Goode	McKeon
Castle	Goodlatte	McKinney
Chabot	Gordon	Meehan
Chenoweth	Goss	Meek
Christensen	Granger	Metcalfe
Clayton	Hall (OH)	Mica
Clement	Hall (TX)	Millender-
Coble	Hamilton	McDonald
Coburn	Hansen	Miller (FL)
Collins	Harman	Minge
Combest	Hastings (WA)	Mink
Condit	Hayworth	Moakley
Cook	Herger	Molinari
Cooksey	Hinojosa	Mollohan
Costello	Hobson	Moran (KS)
Cox	Hoekstra	Moran (VA)
Cramer	Hoolley	Morella
Crane	Horn	Murtha
Crapo	Houghton	Myrick
Cubin	Hoyer	Nadler
Cummings	Hutchinson	Neal
Cunningham	Hyde	Ney
Danner	Inglis	Northup
Davis (FL)	Jackson (IL)	Norwood
Davis (VA)	Jenkins	Nussle
Deal	John	Obey