

# Advancing Democracy in Cuba: The International Context

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The international debate surrounding the adoption and implementation of the Helms-Burton law has revealed differing approaches to the idea of promoting democracy in Cuba. The United States' NAFTA partners, the European Union, and the rest of Latin America have sketched three distinctive views on how to induce Cuba's democratization. The dynamics of this debate and its resolution has major implications for Cuba's insertion in the international economy and will shape the island's political dynamics in the immediate future. One issue is the degree of international convergence on the nature and magnitude of political conditions (or "conditionalities") demanded for full participation in the emergent international bodies.

This chapter discusses these alternative approaches, paying particular attention to those of the Western Hemisphere. The first part summarizes the nature of the economic crisis in Cuba and how the pre-existing political and institutional context has led to a response dominated by a new form of internationalism. The analysis then considers Cuba's evolving relations with other nations and regions in a broad context that touches on Europe-Cuba relations as well. The last section probes further the relevance of Latin America to the challenges of political and economic change in the island.

## CUBA'S NEW INTERNATIONALISM

The post-1989 collapse of state socialism in Eastern Europe led to a severe contraction in the Cuban economy and with it the need to either refine the state-centered development model or find new support from the international community.(1)

The country adopted significant forms of change in the economy in subsequent years, including expanding the tourist sector in partnership with foreign private capital, the legalization of dollar holdings, and the limited liberalization of food and crafts production. The response to the crisis was essentially a new outward strategy that minimized changes in the internal economy. The main policies were largely oriented to attract dollars to stabilize the local currency and trade accounts and resources to a segmented part of the economy linked to the outside. While part of the economy's external sector has grown, the critically important sugar sector and much of the non-external sector remained stagnant. By most accounts, the country has yet to define a viable new development strategy.

The official response to the crisis can be partly explained by the institutional characteristics of Cuban state socialism--centralization, collectivization, moral/ideological orientation, charismatic authoritarian, and a high degree of non-market external support (Font 1996). Cuban state socialism was shaped by a peculiar international context that made possible heavy outside sponsorship of Cuba's extreme form of state socialism. Soviet and CMEA support during the 1970s and 1980s allowed Cuba's socialism to develop in relative insulation from the difficult market forces that drove much of Latin America into a structural crisis in the 1980s, followed by a major era of reform in the 1990s. Cuba's outward strategy before 1989 had indeed been quite successful in mobilizing international resources to the island and left as legacy a high international profile, including a large and effective foreign service. Through the second half of the 1990s Cuban leaders continued to deny the need for substantial market reforms, proclaiming the viability of the state socialist model and the notion that it represented the only legitimate option for the Cuban nation.

Cuba's new internationalism in the second half of the 1990s sought to find a mode of international insertion through which the island could hope to make up for the loss of markets, aid, and resources since 1990. The search has led to significant progress in the development of bilateral relationships. But Cuba's new internationalism of the 1990s also faced an acceleration of processes of regional integration and globalization, including a policy-making context driven by major market-oriented reforms. In this rapidly changing context, Cuba's process of international "re-insertion" faces the difficult task of developing institutions and policies to gain admission into the major trading or economic blocs in formation--NAFTA, MERCOSUR, CARICOM, and CACM being the most important ones in the Western Hemisphere.

The broad challenge for Cuba is to forge development-oriented international coalitions and institutionalized multilateral economic relations to obtain credits and investment, grants and technical assistance, access to markets, and the like. Having largely exhausted its capacity to mobilize internal investment resources, the country badly needs credits and fresh investment to modernize its eroded capital stock and infrastructure--a figure hard to estimate but that probably exceeds 20 billion dollars at a minimum. Canada, Mexico and Spain have emerged as key partners in this regard. But the bilateral relationships with these countries is unlikely to yield by themselves the full developmental coalitions able to meet the country's needs. With relations with Europe, Asia and Africa also having ceilings in the current context, the Latin American and Caribbean region is of considerable importance to the island.

In the evolving context of the late 1990s, processes of integration in the region must figure prominently in this regard.(2)

In principle, Cuba could hope for membership in Mercosur or even NAFTA, the two largest blocs in the hemisphere. Membership in CARICOM emerged as another possibility (Erismán 1997)--though, even if it fully materializes, this would be hardly sufficient since the Caribbean is too small and relatively poor to provide the kind of partnership Cuba needs. Something comparable can be said about CACM, while the potential of the newly forming Association of Caribbean States will take many years to bear fruit, given the diversity of cultures, political dynamics, and previous disinterest in the countries making up the Caribbean Basin.

Cuba's outward strategy forces its leaders to face economic and political conditions defined by the regional organizations and processes of integration to which it hopes to join. Admission into one or more of the main regional blocs entails a country's ability to meet the political conditions or "democratic clauses" these blocs have adopted. Major political and institutional obstacles related to Cuba's authoritarianism top the list of impediments to a rapid breakthrough in the country's ability to join the main international organizations and integration processes. Though the precise terms of admission Cuba could expect are not yet fully clear, what is less uncertain meanwhile is that the current crisis of the island deprives it of the ability to set these terms. With the end of the Cold War, Cuba went from an era of substantial international leverage to one in which it finds itself with little and probably decreasing influence in world affairs as well as enhanced external dependence. It hence seems unlikely that the country could hope for full membership in the main economic blocs without engaging in a serious process of institutional change and democratization.

## THE BROADER CONTEXT

### US Policy Toward Cuba

US policy inevitably shapes and will continue to shape Cuba's international reinsertion, even if not necessarily in the intended ways. As codified into law by the Helms-Burton Act, the official position of the United States appears as the promotion of democracy in Cuba by isolating the island economically and inducing the collapse or transformation of the current regime. The hardened U.S. embargo is meant to sharply curtail the amount of fresh investment flowing into Cuba and minimize most forms of normal contact. The underlying premise is that this form of pressure will lead to the demise of the political preeminence of Fidel and Raúl Castro and a rapid transition to democracy.

The U.S. embargo toward Cuba has a long history. It began in the early 1960s as a response to the expropriations of U.S. investors during the early phase of the revolution. The Torricelli law of 1992 toughened the embargo in a different context, the notion that Cuba's vulnerability after the collapse of real socialism in Eastern Europe made it ripe for a rapid transition. The rise of conservative Cuban-American influence was a major factor. Frustrated with the longevity of the Castro regime, U.S.-based opponents went on to push for passage of the Helms-Burton law in 1996 and promised even tougher legislation in the future.

Though the current embargo is indeed a very tough one, considerable clarity would be lost by characterizing the U.S. stance towards Cuba as a blockade. Cuba has extensive economic and cultural interactions with some of the closest allies of the United States and access to most markets in the world. Cuba's economic exchanges with the outside are limited mainly by the size and dynamism of the Cuban economy rather than U.S. policy. Moreover, the U.S. is by far the largest source of remittances (\$500-1,000 million per year) as well as aid (scores of solidarity groups aid Cuba with shipments of medicine, computers, and other resources). Many Cuban-Americans and U.S. citizens travel to Cuba on a regular basis, often defying travel restrictions to that effect. While the Helms-Burton law scared off some potential outside investors, others have made use of opportunities opened by the Castro regime. By most accounts, the main constraints on further private investment in

Cuba come not from U.S. laws as such but from the anti-market ideology and laws of Cuba's version of socialism.

Though two measures altered U.S. Cuba policy somewhat through 1997, they do not constitute fundamental deviations from the toughened embargo stance. One was President Clinton's decision to suspend indefinitely the implementation of title III of the Helms-Burton legislation. Adopted in the context of negotiations with the European Union, this was a response to the international outcry over the extra-territoriality inherent in that clause--the notion that U.S. courts had jurisdiction over business people from other countries investing in Cuba or conducting trade with Cuba. Even if it is not a break in policy, this element of the U.S. position gives the State Department and the President some flexibility in conducting foreign policy toward Cuba. The other important 1997 measure was the public announcement of a report, "Support for a Democratic Transition in Cuba," prepared by the U.S. Agency for International Development. This document announces the intention of the U.S. government to provide up to 8 billion dollars to a post-Castro transition government. This measure does not represent a new policy toward Cuba. It was foreshadowed in the Helms-Burton legislation, which stated that assistance would be forthcoming after certifying that Cuba had become a democracy. The prospective and highly conditional aid is targeted at the development of a modern judicial system and legislature, restoration of human rights, and infrastructure.

The Helms-Burton law does represent an external imposition of considerable weight and will shape Cuban development for years to come. Nevertheless, though conventional wisdom is skeptical about fundamental changes to the U.S. position in the foreseeable future, now that it is codified into law, a fresh approach to Cuba policy may be emerging (Font 1998). A considerable number of players in the U.S. polity favor a new policy toward Cuba. This is the case with the media. The immense majority of newspapers oppose the Helms-Burton law. Big business is on record as opposing it. Even the initially expropriated owners appear poised for a different approach. The main factor in the passage and signing of the Helms-Burton law was actually indignation in the Congress and the public at large over the shooting down of the two unarmed small planes flown by Cuban-American opponents of the Castro regime. The immediate political context helps explain President Clinton's signing of the bill, rather than vetoing it as previously expected. A different political context would make changes more likely.

Though Cuba is not yet part of the key regional bodies, processes of negotiation and cooperation surrounding integration efforts in the Americas are defining a new framework conducive to change in the embargo policy toward Cuba. It is noteworthy in this regard that a key element in the still evolving post-Cold War policy of the U.S. toward Latin America is the trend toward reliance on multilateral negotiations to solve conflicts in the region (e.g., Millet 1994).(3)

The opening of negotiations for the formation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, scheduled to begin during the II Summit of the Americas (Santiago de Chile, April 1998), reflects the search for mechanisms of regional cooperation. It will provide the last opportunity this century for discussing a new role for Cuba in the full regional system in which the United States is preeminent. Canada, Mexico, and Chile, as partners and prospective partners of the United States in this endeavor will be of considerable importance in this regard.

## Alternative approaches: Canada and Mexico

Passage of the Helms-Burton law actually had the unintended effect of intensifying international opposition to the US embargo. That law's extra-territoriality and negative implications for overall trade liberalization have it a major irritant in international affairs. Three emergent alternative perspectives on how to advance democracy and human rights in Cuba have emerged. Though they have in common a rejection of the Helms-Burton law or some of its clauses, they differ significantly in terms of their linkages to political change in Cuba.

Canada and Mexico, the U.S. partners in NAFTA, reject outright the hardened U.S. embargo and have defended a policy of direct engagement with Cuba as a better way of promoting economic and political liberalization in the island. This openness to Cuba is characterized by the absence of conditionalities or hard demands in favor of political change.

There are important economic interests at play in both cases, since Canada as well as Mexico have emerged as major economic partners to Cuba in terms of investment, trade, and tourism. In addition, Canada provides some forms of aid to the island. Politically, both countries use Cuba policy in part to signal independence from Washington's leadership in the context of heightened sensitivities about national sovereignty resulting from U.S. preeminence in NAFTA.

The January 1997 visit to Cuba by Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister, Lloyd Axworthy, underscored the independence of Canadian policy with respect to Cuba as well as Canada's substantial economic relations with Cuba. Though sharply criticized in Washington and Miami, Axworthy's meetings with Castro and Cuban authorities renewed pledges for Canadian investment and economic relations.

Canada has apparently succeeded in pressing Cuban authorities to allow joint seminars on human rights, something that could indeed have enduring significance. Right after Axworthy's trip Canadian officials communicated that concrete initiatives on promoting human rights in Cuba would be adopted within a few months. Too little is still known about this aspect of the Canadian approach to permit a full assessment of the Canadian policy of engagement and its impact on a meaningful process of democratization in Cuba, but Canadian policy is now a factor of considerable weight. The Mexican position was reiterated by Mexico's Foreign Minister at the Guadalajara meetings of the Latin American Studies Association in April 1997.

## The European Approach

Spain and the European Union agree with the idea of contact and engagement, but condition official aid and the promotion of enhanced economic relations with Cuba to specific measures Cuba would need to take to promote human rights and democracy. This is hence a distinctive approach. The position of European countries with respect to Cuba reflects norms of the evolving European Union. European countries are adopting common policies over a range of foreign policy issues.

Cuba policy in Europe was shaped by the election of a conservative government in Spain. The critical role of Spain reflects the key role of that country as a major investor and trade partner to Cuba. Of course, Spain has strong historical and emotional ties to the island. Cuba was its last colony in the Americas--and it was in

the context of the Spanish-American War over Cuba that Spain lost all of its remaining colonies. Many Spaniards have family links to Cuba. The Spanish government and the European Union oppose the Helms-Burton law largely because of the extra-territoriality of its Title III. The European connection is of vital importance, but Cuba cannot hope to develop a free trade agreement with any of the European countries or the European Union as a whole under present political circumstances. It is difficult to obtain official aid and credits unless political and economic reforms are accelerated.

## Latin America

The second half of the 1990s have brought heightened form of regionalism and globalization to Latin America . Cuba's evolving relationship to Latin America will hence need to take into consideration Latin America's economic re-alignment process favoring regional and extra-regional economic units and multilateral forms of interaction. By 1997, the Rio Group, MERCOSUR, and the Ibero-American summits assumed important political roles, led by the largest and most influential countries in the region outside the United States. In Central America and the Caribbean, previous efforts of the Contadora Group, the G3 (Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela) led to the creation of the Association of Caribbean States. In part, this broad movement reflected the erosion of vitality the Washington-based Organization of American States experienced in previous decades. In counterpoint with these processes, the official U.S. agenda for the Americas still called for turning NAFTA into a free trade agreement for the entire hemisphere by the year 2005, to be known as the Free Trade Area of the Americas.(4)

Throughout the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, Latin American governments focused on democratization, economic policy reforms (prompted by a lingering crisis), and peace-making efforts. Multilateral efforts had a narrow sub-regional focus. The Rio Group, one of the most successful, emerged as the main political forum in the region, focusing on processes of democratization in Brazil, the Southern Cone, and other countries in South America. This consultative body went on to focus on economic liberalization and economic integration, paving the way for MERCOSUR.

At least through 1997, Latin American statements about advancing democracy in Cuba remained vague and did not really articulate a coherent alternative approach linking Cuba s international reintegration to a process of democratization. The importance of the Sixth Ibero-American Summit(5)

in this context is that it took a major step in this direction.

Latin American countries generally pursue an approach to Cuba likewise marked by independence and distance from Washington s official line. The early September, 1996 meeting of the Rio Group, for instance, strongly condemned the Helms-Burton law. The Rio Group, an organization of eleven Latin American countries representing 300 million people (Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay and Panama), was formed in 1986 to promote democracy and economic integration in the region. It is the main political forum in the region. This vote came out in spite of direct pleas by Madeleine Albright, the current Secretary of State and then U.S. envoy to the United Nations. Earlier that year, the Inter-American Juridical Committee, an agency of the Organization of American

States, declared the Helms-Burton legislation "not in conformity with international law."

The Sixth Ibero-American Summit confirmed the anti-embargo position of Latin America, passing a resolution against Helms-Burton and other clauses decrying obstacles to free trade. But its focus on the consolidation of democracy in the region led to a more general call for democracy. The twenty-one signatories of the Summit's Viña del Mar Agreement, a list which included Cuban President Fidel Castro Ruz, endorsed the region's commitment to democracy (and the latter's superiority over authoritarianism and totalitarianism), political pluralism, and the primacy of human and civil rights.

Like the governments of Mexico and Canada, Latin American leaders clearly advocate the incorporation of Cuba into the region's multilateral bodies, seeing this as a better way to promote changes in the island. But they are evolving toward a more assertive position with regard to explicit calls for democratization.

The Sixth Ibero-American Summit did not directly assess the claim in Castro's presentation to the twenty-one delegations that Cuba already has a system of direct grassroots participation that is better than "representative democracy." In fact, the Summit emphasized the role of "national traditions" and other factors in determining the "means, instruments, and mechanisms most suitable" to define a road toward democracy. That way, it endorsed the idea of diverse forms and approaches to democracy.

However, several major statements during the Summit demanded the return of democracy to Cuba. Shortly before the event, the Chilean Congress passed a resolution urging full democratization in Cuba. During the summit, Chilean President Eduardo Frei dismissed the idea that the Cuban polity was democratic, emphasizing that the only legitimate democracy is one built on respect for human rights and one which "makes decisions according to majorities expressed in honest elections." Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar was even more blunt, directly pressing Castro for democratic reforms and hinting that European aid was conditional upon such moves. The Spaniards pointed out that the continuation of Cuba's single-party system and Castro's thirty-seven year rule contradicted Castro's very signing of the Summit's final resolution. It is noteworthy that during Castro's visit to Chile, that country's Socialist Party organized a luncheon for him in which prominent party figures, including Hortensia Bussi de Allende, Salvador Allende's widow, made dramatic pleas for democracy in Cuba. This seems to reflect a broad consensus in that country on the need for socialism to unambiguously embrace democracy.

Much of Latin America is hence articulating a distinctive third position. While Latin America vigorously opposes the Helms-Burton law and supports Cuba's integration into the region's economy and multilateral organizations, the Summit indicates that it is evolving toward a form of assertive cooperation and diplomatic pressure to help the Cuban people move toward democracy after nearly four decades of authoritarian rule by one party, one leader, one regime, and one model of social organization.

Latin America's regional gatherings (the Ibero-American Summits, the Rio Group, and the like) will no doubt continue to address the issue of Cuban democracy in months and years to come. With the issue of Cuban democracy officially in the agenda of multilateral organizations, the period between now and late 1999 (when

Cuba is scheduled to host the Ibero-American Summit) will see efforts to define the specific patterns of cooperation and conditionalities deemed effective in the development of democracy in the island. On the other hand, key Latin American countries will also give growing attention to trade and integration issues in the context of the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas. The Cuban case would bring additional issues to the tall agenda of negotiating relationships with the U.S. and Canada in the context of parallel processes in South America and Latin America.

Three alternative positions to the U.S. policy hence can be discerned in the international debate about Cuban democratization. That represented by the traditional positions of Mexico and Canada maintain that economic contact with little or no pressure is the best way to promote long-term change toward democracy. The rest of Latin America seems to be moving toward a middle position emphasizing assertive cooperation to enhance the prospects for political development.

The very internationalization of the debate about the promotion of democracy in Cuba is as interesting as the differences between the various approaches. Both are significant for Cuba's transition dynamics. Judging by most post-Communist transitions, democratization is a difficult and painful process. And there are really few grounds to expect that this will be less so in the Cuban case. Growing international discussion and cooperation on this issue--including the task of deriving lessons and support from other experiences--will shape the daunting task of building an effective democracy in Cuba.

#### DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Latin America's special significance to Cuba derives in no small part from the region's experiences with democracy and transitions to democracy. Still unfolding, these processes define the main political developments in the region. The experiences with democratization are also a reservoir of practical and theoretical knowledge that could help Cuba's own search for a modernized political system. Latin American democratization is also important because it defines the political and institutional framework governing the region's relations with Cuba. Given the new emphasis on democracy (with all its problems, at no other point in history has Latin America been so uniformly engaged in the construction of democracy), the marked inclination is to go beyond the preference for deeper relations with other democratic countries toward the explicit promotion of democracy.(6)

This trend toward democracy is in fact one of the underlying historical processes facilitating regional integration. To Latin American policymakers, the latter would be inconceivable without basic consensus on forms of governance and the bonds linking current democratic leaders in the continent. While the processes of democratic transition in Latin America have been rooted in local conditions, there are many signs of effective cooperation. In the case of Brazilians and Chileans, there is a unique bond, as many of the leaders of the Brazilian democratic movement of the last two decades developed close personal and institutional relationships and networks during exile in Chile in the 1960s.(7)

Perhaps more importantly, political parties of the left have openly embraced democracy. This includes the Workers Party of Brazil, the PS and PPD of Chile, MAS in Venezuela, the PRD in Mexico. In Chile, this movement made possible a very strong coalition, Concertación, with the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), a

historically centrist political organization whose intellectuals also have very strong links with democratizing movements in the region. Democratic socialist and social-democratic currents in Latin America have in fact played key roles in processes of democratic transition and consolidation. At the same time, conservative forces in the region have also experienced processes of renewal which have taken them to reaffirm democracy. The movement of Latin American society to reaffirm and deepen democracy as the only form of legitimate political organization is hence both broad and deep.

The rich research and debate generated by processes of democratic transition and consolidation in the region has major implications for the Cuban case. They have yielded and continue to yield major results and implications for the understanding of political change (for recent reviews see Brachet-Marquez 1997, Sørensen 1993, Remmer 1995). Though the task of extrapolating these experiences to the Cuban case is fraught with great perils, there are plenty of illuminating lessons.

The Latin American experiences made a large number of scholars favor actor-centered, strategic models of democratization over those emphasizing structural prerequisites. Few such prerequisites could be found to predict advances or failures of democratization in the region. Rather than viewing Latin American democracy as the natural result of economic development, education, or value systems, much of the emphasis has come to be placed on political actors making decisions. In this context, transitions take place in the context of divisions in the authoritarian regime often prompted by economic crisis, new patterns of mobilization, the death of autocratic leader, military defeat, or foreign pressure. Those who start political reforms see themselves surviving in the new regime.

In this perspective, there is no single path to democracy, as the actions and interactions toward democracy cannot be easily predicted. Paths differ in terms of speed, elite continuity, nature of elite settlements, role of the masses, and the relative role of internal and external forces.

The Latin American experiences tend to confirm the view of transitions as path-dependent phenomena in which institutional and structural frameworks constrain choice, even if they in turn are re-shaped by them. The nature of the pre-existing constrains reverberate through time, creating conditions for continuity. Democracy is partly contingent on ideological shifts and institutional developments. The new consensus in the region is that it requires active care and defense.

The discussion of democratization in Latin America has focused on the basic path of the Southern Cone, including decisions "from above" and peaceful negotiation. Even if such experiences as Nicaragua and Mexico represent differentiated transitions that have not been fully theorized, strategic interactions by consequential actors have been identified as critical in all cases in the region.

The contingent or strategic interaction approach justifies optimism about the prospects of installing or maintaining democracy even when prerequisites may not seem to be present. But certain strands of the "prerequisites" school can also lead to optimism in Latin America. Latin America made decisions largely as a result of the strengthening of the democratic impulse within, in the context of long struggles for democracy as well as ideological shifts. And, as recognized in Huntington's recent

reaffirmation of culture and political culture, Latin America as a whole should be seen as part of the tradition of Western civilization.

Cuba is not really an exception in this regard. Like Latin America in previous decades, it accompanied the ebb and flow of political liberalism since the turn of the century. The Cuban revolution itself began as a reflection of a long-sustained struggle for democracy. Through almost four decades of Marxism-Leninism, important segments of the Cuban population have probably remained wedded to basic western values and concepts. And, as noted, Cuba is desperately seeking incorporation into regional and international blocs dominated by the liberal or liberalizing democracies of the West, including Canada and Spain. There are hence grounds to surmise that Cubans will adopt the kind of institutional and political profile found throughout the West and Latin America.

The Latin American experiences with democratization tend to confirm some of the lessons from the Eastern European transitions, including the role of outside factors. Distillates of the literature based on Eastern European cases often favor a policy of assertive engagement with such features as:

--sensitiveness to the need for balance between economic and political reforms

--providing outside support and understanding to construct a political order based on pluralism, rule of law and respect for human rights, free media, free markets, and the like.

--offering outside technical assistance in designing and maintaining safety nets.

--helping to build civil society, including the creation of a non-profit sector of national and international non-governmental organizations.

--encouragement of incorporation into the post-Cold War system of international security.

The Western Hemisphere too has taken significant steps toward an engagement policy in support of democracy and democratization.(8)

The Ibero-American summits and the Summit of the Americas have converged on an assertive stance in this regard. The new willingness and ability of Latin Americans to engage in joint action to support democracy and peace has included the leadership of the Rio Group and the Contadora group. In the early 1990s the OAS began to reflect the new sentiment.(9)

The General Assembly meeting in Santiago de Chile in June 1991 adopted a strong endorsement of democracy in "The Santiago Commitment to Democracy and the Renewal of the Inter-American System, calling for "the creation of efficacious, timely, and expeditious procedures to ensure the promotion and defense of democracy." More broadly, the U.S. and Latin American governments are collaborating with counterparts in Europe, Asia and the hemisphere to create "a vast interlocking array of organizations, mechanisms, and programs" to promote human rights and democracy (Millet). A growing list of examples shows how the above array of organizations are supporting regional cooperation in favor of democratic

development--monitoring elections, reforming electoral laws and proceedings, training police forces, improving democratic administration and legislatures, strengthening the courts, and the like (in Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Paraguay, Guyana, Ecuador, Panama, and even Mexico).

The Cuban case presents a challenges for the region, given the sympathy that Cuban state socialism still elicits among some sectors, including the perception of it as a rare case of successful standing up to U.S. hegemony and interventionism. Moreover, while engagement with Cuba over this issue risks complicating relations with that country or the United States, the odds of success seem low. Nevertheless, countries playing exemplary or leading roles in the region--including Chile and Brazil--have opted to tackle the difficult regional dilemmas and political costs associated with the international promotion of human rights and democracy.(10)

One of the issues in need of clarification is how to gauge the character of political trends and dynamics in Cuba, including the regime's claim to have already embraced a distinctive form of democracy billed as superior to others in the region in terms of social policies. The Sixth Ibero-American Summit in fact emphasized the idea of multiple paths toward democracy in the region. In the process, it left open to interpretation important aspects of democratic development and precisely where the Cuban case stands in that regard.

#### DYNAMICS OF CUBA'S REINSERTION INTO THE NEW WESTERN HEMISPHERE

If Cuba's process of re-insertion into the changing Western Hemisphere and world economy can be expected to have profound implications for internal political and economic dynamics, the precise impact of this process on the development of Cuban democracy hinges on Cuba's willingness and capacity to engage in substantive reforms. In the context of its pronounced anti-market, ideological, and authoritarian institutional form, Cuban state socialism has adopted limited market measures reluctantly, cautiously, and with an eye to maintain itself. It has seemed to prefer antagonism to rapprochement with the United States on the grounds that proximity would endanger political unity. At least on the short term, a reinsertion process that did not challenge these premises would tend to reinforce this response.

It seems reasonable to expect that changes in Cuba's institutional framework will take time and effort. One plausible scenario for the institutional-ideological factor to change is an extended period of "social learning" driven by poor performance and crises. The regime either believes that state socialism can survive or so fears the consequences of economic liberalization and democratization that it will not embrace either or, much less, both. Either way, the end result is a decision to maintain reforms to a minimum and retain control. If--as many believe--Cuba does not have the size or other conditions to maintain the course successfully, then crisis or a prolonged period of stagnation in the socialist sector of the economy will be the result. Continuing crisis would lead to change probably in the medium or long term, possibly in the course of changes in the leadership. That way, change would take a relatively long time to occur and a transition would be characterized by political and social turmoil. Insufficient interim reforms would substantially delay an eventual process of recovery.

What is certain is that Cuba will continue to place in high and even increasing priority its relationship to the international system. The island's new internationalism cannot

but deepen. While the above discussion has emphasized external influences on the island, there is actually enough fluidity in the international system for Cuban decision-makers to contemplate a process of reinsertion that minimizes or even reduces the need for change. This strategy is likely to lead to tactical innovations and eventful foreign relations in the near future.(11)

Relations with the Caribbean and Latin America are of special strategic significance in terms of membership in larger economic units in formation and the process of gaining international leverage.

It follows from the line of analysis sketched above that major internal reforms will probably await the results of these campaigns, as Cuban policy-makers will need to have exhausted all possibilities in the international arena before they adopt massive internal reforms. Meanwhile, two key external forces capable of altering the dynamics and terms of Cuba's reinsertion are the prospects for a policy shift in the U.S. as well as the acceleration of regional and global multilateralism. As noted above, critics of the current U.S. policy claim that it is counterproductive to democratization since the Castro regime uses it to justify its rule. The embargo failed to induce change in Cuba for more than three decades and clashes with notions of sovereignty.(12)

Unilateral interventions have generally failed to promote democracy. Castro's longevity in power owes in part to his ability to play to the worst fears of Cuban nationalists and convince Cubans that the U.S. is bent on intervening on the island to gain unfair advantages. The Helms-Burton law gives support to those skeptical of the US's intervention in Cuban affairs.

In this context, it seems highly likely in the short run that enough Cubans will distrust U.S. policies and oppose any form of rapprochement that does not respect the principle of Cuban sovereignty. If so, the Helms-Burton will not succeed in either overthrowing the current regime or creating conditions conducive to democracy. In addition, the Helms-Burton law might be a significant impediment to political stability and democracy in a post-Castro Cuba, since governments coming to power under its rule will tend to be seen as lacking legitimacy by vast sectors of the Cuban population.

The toughened embargo policy toward Cuba is being challenged in the United States as well as throughout the Western Hemisphere and Europe, where it is seen as clashing with important international principles and trade policies endorsed by the United States. President Clinton inherited from George Bush a vision of trade integration partly as a way of shifting from the regime of development aid which had guided policy making since the late 1940s. Enthusiasm for NAFTA and trade integration cooled down considerably in response to labor opposition as well as the Mexican crisis of 1994-95. However, though support for a Free Trade Area of the Americas, originally proposed by the US President in 1994, was also receding in the United States, liberalized trade and economic relations continue to be pillars of the foreign policy of the United States. The growing perception is that the Helms-Burton law neglects to take fully into account the interests and views of with other nations in the hemisphere as well as important lessons from transitions in various parts of the world. This aggressive legislation, not present even in the depths of the Cold War, will fuel intensified international opposition in the context of trade and economic liberalization and integration. In this context, it is indeed conceivable that the US

policy toward Cuba will experience significant revision in the not too distant future. If so, hardliners in Cuba will not be able to claim that the island's authoritarianism and poor economic performance are explained or justified by US aggressiveness.

## CONCLUSION

Several implications follow from the above discussion. First, to the extent that democracy and the promotion of democracy have emerged as international norms, particularly in the context of Latin American and European integration, it seems likely that international actors will play a key role in Cuba's dynamics of transformation compared to other democratizing transitions. A word of caution, however, is necessary. Powerful economic actors have apparently decided to lobby against any law or policy that link or subordinate trade to political goals. Much will depend on how politicians and policymakers in the region interpret their roles in the process of globalization and integration.

Second, Latin America provides an important framework to help orient actors in the critical decisions shaping the Cuban path toward integration and democracy. The integration process in Latin America and the Caribbean (MERCOSUR, CARICOM, and CACM) is a key stage in which to define Cuba's new role in the world economy. But, as noted, this influence is not unambiguous. Policymakers and policy-oriented fora in the region have yet to fully probe the mutual relevance between the Cuban dynamics of transformation and the processes of regional integration and change. If negotiations about Cuba's participation in regional integration processes can advance the dynamics and prospects of democratization in the island, an immediate task is to develop channels of discussion and assertive cooperation that bring key players together to address the difficult predicament of the Cuban nation and the role of Latin America and the Caribbean in the search for constructive solutions. The Ibero-American summits, one of the few regional fora in which Cuba participates, can be important in this regard.

Third, broader negotiations for an expanded Free Trade of the Americas are a critical factor in structuring new patterns of cooperation in the hemisphere. This process brings together all nations in the hemisphere, except Cuba. In fact, Cuba is not part of any of the key regional organizations in the Western Hemisphere--the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank, NAFTA, and the like. Obviously, this situation will need to come to an end at some point. The sooner, the better. Cuban society will be damaged for a long time to come if it plays a marginal role in the formative stages of this process. It is primarily up to the Cuban authorities to respond to this challenge. Nevertheless, debate on a policy toward Cuba and its hemispheric integration may make such an adequate response more likely, while beginning to forge the context governing the island's incorporation into the regional integration and cooperation schemes. Again, the first challenge in this wider context is to specify the conditions and processes under which Cuban society could have access to the changing Inter-American system. Beyond that, the task is to construct an effective framework to engage all actors. Discussion in the context of the European Union will be central in defining the conditions of Cuba's access to other forms of international cooperation and integration.

Lastly, if the United States, which has a key role in the process of global liberalization and cooperation, also adopts a fresh approach toward Cuba, the island will face an international context rather favorable to democratization as well as

liberalization and long-term economic recovery. This will be a test of the readiness of Cuban society to make full use of this opportunity. We can surmise that most Cubans would happily seize it before a new millennium arrives.

#### APPENDIX:

##### Regional Organizations in Western Hemisphere

ACS Association of Caribbean States. In 1992 the leaders of the Central American Common Market decided to negotiate with CARICOM the formation of a broad regional organization including the two. Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela joined the deliberations. Collectively, member countries have a population of 202 million inhabitants and more than \$500 billion dollars in mid-1990s. [See Jessica Byron (1997), Ceara-Hatton (1997), Erisman (1997).]

CACM Central American Common Market. Signed in 1960 by Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. [See Erisman (1997).]

Andean Pact Initially called the Andean Subregional Integration Agreement, its purpose was to promote economic integration by the progressive elimination of tariffs and coordinated industrial development. Original agreement signed by Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru in 1969. Venezuela joined in 1973, but Chile withdrew in 1977. Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru have suspended membership for brief periods, responding to bilateral conflicts with other member countries. After 1992, the Andean Pact aimed at the creation of a free-trade zone and then an integrated common market by 1995, but its limited success has been overshadowed by the rise of MERCOSUR.

CARICOM Caribbean Community and Common Market. Created in 1973, taking the place of the Caribbean Free Trade Association of 1965. Its purpose is to promote trade and development within the region. Governed by a Council made up of Ministers of Government. The Secretariat is in Georgetown, Guyana. Current 14 members: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Suriname, Jamaica, Montserrat, St Kitts-Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago. It also has 2 Associate Members and 9 Observers. [See also Ceara-Hatton (1997), Erisman (1997): 20-23.]

FTAA (ALCA) Free Trade Area of the Americas. Concept articulated in I Summit of the Americas (Miami, December, 1994) and further developed by Ministerial and lower level meetings (e.g., Ministers of Trade Meeting, Belo Horizonte, Brazil, May 1997) as well as Business Fora. The II Summit of the Americas (Santiago de Chile, April 1998) meant as the start of multilateral negotiations for the establishment of the FTAA. [See also Ceara Hatton (1997).]

GROUP OF THREE (G-3) Informal association between Mexico, Venezuela, and Colombia, the three largest countries/economies in the Caribbean basin.

LAIA Latin American Integration Association. Born in 1980. Latin America Free Trade Area (LAFTA) came into existence in 1961 with the goal to promote trade and became LAIA in 1980, with the limited purpose of protecting existing intra-regional trade.

MERCOSUR Decision to form it made in 1991 by the presidents of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Trade liberalization started in December 1994. Grew out of bilateral accords. With population of 200 million and a combined GN of \$420 billion. Bolivia and Chile joined as associate members in 1996?. Cuba would like to join, but MERCOSUR is likely to remain a South American phenomenon for some time. Its headquarters are in Montevideo.

NAFTA Following an earlier accord between the United States and Canada, in 1992 Mexico initiated discussions to form a free trade agreement among the three countries. Came into existence on January 1, 1994. Trading bloc of 320 million people.

OAS Organization of American States.

The Rio Group The Rio Group is an organization of eleven Latin American countries representing 300 million people (Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay and Panama) formed in 1986 to promote democracy and, later, trade and economic integration in the region. Cuba and the Dominican Republic have expressed interest in joining, but the Rio Group has repeatedly declined.

SELA Sistema Económico de América Latina (Latin American Economic System). Founded in 1975. Regional organization of Latin American countries, excluding the United States and including Cuba, to promote economic cooperation and development. Emphasizes study and discussion. Has 26 members. Decisions are made at annual conferences held in Caracas, where SELA's secretariat is located. It has had a limited impact on public debate and policy.

#### Notes

1.The essays in Centeno and Font (1996) discuss various aspects of Cuba's post-1990 crisis.

2.Besides FTA's, other possible options are Customs Unions, Common Markets, and Full Economic Unions. Cuba's bilateral relationships have failed to produce bilateral free trade agreements with industrial nations and are unlikely to do so in the near future..

3.The well-known major U.S. operations to change governments by force in Latin America and the Caribbean include Guatemala (1954), Chile (1973), Cuba (1961), Grenada, Nicaragua and Central America in the 1980s, Panama.

4.French-Davis (1995) notes at least 25 bilateral and multilateral trade agreements between 1989 and 1995 (see also Byron 1997, p.3)..

5.The Declaration of Viña del Mar is discussed in Barzelatto & Font (1997).

6.For instance, the Rio Group has maneuvered repeatedly to prevent the return of authoritarianism in Paraguay.

7.Brazilian exiles in Chile during the 1960s include current President Fernando Henrique Cardoso as well as such prominent figures in his government as José Serra

(past Minister of Planning), Francisco Weffort (Minister of Culture), Paulo Renato Souza (Minister of Education), and several others. Several leaders of other parties, including the Workers Party, also lived in Chile in the 1960s.

8. Millet 1994 provides a useful overview.

9. With the OAS, some early steps include the formation of a Unit for Promotion of Democracy in 1990.

10. For Chile, see "Cuba no va a ser invitada a la Cumbre," an interview with the Chilean Foreign Minister ( *La Epoca*, May 25, 1997, pp. 12-13). Chile has emerged as a leader in the hemisphere. It has completed the most mature and consolidated economic and political reforms in Latin America, has experienced sustained economic growth for more than a decade, has hosted a number of important international gatherings (including the 6th Ibero-American Summit and the upcoming Summit of the Americas). It is next in line to join the NAFTA countries into an expanded free trade area in the Americas and in that role will serve as a link between that body and MERCOSUR. Chile has been a member of the UN's Human Rights Commission.

11. The visit of Pope John Paul II to Cuba in early 1998 confirms this prospective analysis written in early 1997. By the same logic, other events will take place after full assimilation of the Pope's visit.

12. Indeed, Cuban nationalism has been wounded by U.S. policies well before Castro came to power. The very rise of the U.S. to world power entailed costs to Cuba. Most Cubans believe that the Spanish-American War (1898) took victory away from the hands of Cuban insurgents and led to a humiliating intervention (lasting until 1902, but later repeated) and the much-resented Platt Amendment imposed to the Cuban constitution, giving the United States government constitutional rights to intervene in the island's affairs. Cuban nationalism, fueled by fears and resentments about U.S. designs on the island, simmered throughout the ensuing decades of the 20th century and was no doubt a major factor in defining the course of the Cuban revolution of 1959. Cuban nationalists base their arguments on a two-century history that began with George Washington's efforts to buy the island of Cuba from Spain and includes the Manifest Destiny and the rise of annexionist currents in the U.S. and Cuba.

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