



**Cuba Transition  
Project**

**Transition from Communism: Lessons  
Learned, Challenges Ahead for Cuba**

**Conference Proceedings**

**INSTITUTE FOR CUBAN & CUBAN-AMERICAN STUDIES**

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI



# **Transition from Communism: Lessons Learned, Challenges Ahead for Cuba**

**The Omni Colonnade Hotel  
Coral Gables, Florida**

**Tuesday, November 9, 2004**

**Conference Proceedings**

**Sponsored by**

**The Cuba Transition Project\* at the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, University of Miami in collaboration with the Embassy of the Czech Republic in the United States**

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The Cuba Transition Project (CTP) at the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami is an important and timely project to study and make recommendations for the reconstruction of Cuba once the post-Castro transition begins in earnest. This is being accomplished through individual original research, work-study groups, and seminars. The project, which began in January 2002, is funded by a grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development.

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3. **Foreign Investments** compiles foreign investments in Cuba and foreign investments abroad by Cuba, including joint ventures, risk contracts, cooperated production, and management contracts.
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5. **Political Prisoners** a searchable listing of Cuban political prisoners, including accusations, sentence, and picture (when available).
6. **Treaties and Accords** a collection of existing treaties and accords entered into by the Cuban government during the Castro era.
7. **Organizational Charts** a collection of charts of the Communist Party of Cuba, the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers, the National Assembly, the Ministry of the Interior (MININT), the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (MINFAR), and Cuban Institutions and Organizations. Also included are biographies of Cuba's most prominent officials.

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

November 8, 2004

I send greetings to those gathered for the "Transition from Communism in Central Europe: Lessons Learned, Challenges Ahead for Cuba" conference.

This conference is an opportunity to draw attention to those who struggle for life's basic liberties and to identify effective ways to support a transition to democracy in Cuba. I welcome the efforts of the Czech Republic and former President Vaclav Havel to advance the great cause of freedom. There is no doubt the 11 million Cubans living under brutal dictatorship desire to live in freedom, just as Central and Eastern Europeans did at the end of the last century.

The United States is committed to helping bring liberty and democracy to Cuba. Last year, I established the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba to hasten Cuba's transition to democracy and to prepare to aid the Cuban people. The Commission's 2004 report provided many recommendations that we are working to implement, including additional support for democracy-building activists in Cuba, tougher economic sanctions against the Fidel Castro regime, safeguards against human rights abuses, and plans for economic assistance to a post-dictatorship Cuba. We will also cooperate with our friends and allies and international organizations to ensure that following a democratic transition, the Cuban people are able to successfully recover from decades of misrule.

I commend all those who are working toward a day of freedom in Cuba. By helping lay the foundation for a sovereign Cuba to build democratic institutions, establish the rule of law, and facilitate the creation of free markets, you point the way to a brighter future for the Cuban people and people around the world.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes.



Statement of Senator John McCain  
Miami, Florida, November 9, 2004

Ambassador Palous and the Embassy of the Czech Republic deserve our thanks for hosting this important event. The Czech people have taken control of their future and embraced the principles of democratic rule. They fully understand the opportunities and the challenges of free society, and lovers of democracy everywhere salute them.

But the people of the Czech Republic have not been content only to enjoy the blessings of liberty and democracy in their own country. Rather they have sought to promote democratic principles in countries where they are sorely lacking, and it is for this reason that tonight's event is so vital. The Czech Republic has illustrated, time and again, its commitment to those who still suffer the indignity and repression of Fidel Castro's totalitarian rule. While the challenge of opening Cuba lies squarely on the shoulders of the Cuban people on the island and throughout the globe, the Czech experience represents a beacon of hope.

Witness the transformation in the Czech Republic over the past decade and a half. To see the streets of Prague today is to be inspired. Freedom and prosperity are in the air and the sense of optimism is palpable. The streets of Havana will, one day, provide this same atmosphere of freedom. Drawing inspiration from democrats and democracies around the globe - and drawing on the remarkable spirit of the Cuban people everywhere - Cubans are forging a free nation.

As Chairman of the International Republican Institute, I can attest to the important role that international support plays in encouraging and promoting democratic transitions. IRI's work with the Czech Republic and other formerly communist states helped reformers evolve from dissidents to democratic leaders. I am proud of IRI's contribution to the tremendous achievements of the people of Central and Eastern Europe. I am equally proud of IRI's work in drawing attention to Cuba's homegrown democracy movement. By shedding light on the challenges facing dissidents and showing the world the true nature of the brutal Castro regime, the vast majority of the world's democracies have condemned this cruel regime.

I am in awe of the transformation of the Czech Republic over the past fifteen years. And knowing what I know of the Cuban people, I can say with confidence that one day a free Cuba too will welcome all of us to its shores.

# MADELEINE ALBRIGHT

November 8, 2004

Dear Friends and amigos:

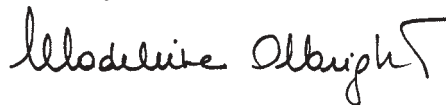
Good evening. Tonight, Czechs, Americans and all Cubans who remain free in mind and spirit are in solidarity. We come together in memory of one Velvet Revolution and in anticipation of another -- a peaceful and early transition to Cuban democracy. We join in the tradition of Jose Marti and Vaclav Havel, in support of Oswaldo Payá, the organizers of the Varela project, and all who struggle for liberty and justice. Together, let us build a bridge broad enough and strong enough for us all to walk across, drawn by the promise of a new day in Cuba, and guided by the growing light of the coming dawn. Let us honor, as well, the special legacy of Czechoslovaks and the Velvet Revolution; for it is thanks to them that the whole world knows -- democracy goes best with rock and roll.

Fifteen years ago, the world celebrated in Prague.

Tonight, we celebrate in Miami.

And have no doubt, before long, there will be a celebration in Havana, as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Madeleine Albright". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Madeleine K. Albright

## Introduction

At the Fifth Communist Party Congress in 1997, the last to be held in Cuba, Fidel Castro outlined his policies and programs for the immediate future. He explained that the mild economic reforms introduced in Cuba to cope with the collapse of the Communist world would end and that no new economic reforms would be introduced. Faced with mounting economic difficulties, the party did not retrench from communism as its ideology.

As he has done in the past, Castro showed that in Cuba politics dictate economic decisions. Fearing that economic openings might lead to political change, Castro rejected both. Castro also reiterated his long-standing anti-American posture, accusing the U.S. of waging economic warfare against his government and calling for “military preparedness against imperialist hostility.”

In private meetings and in public speeches Castro showed significant concern about his own mortality and his desire to ensure succession rather than transition once he departs from this world. The party Congress reasserted Raúl as the undisputed heir to Fidel’s dynasty. Fidel summoned the faithful to support Raúl so as to ensure the continuity of the revolution.

While Raúl’s position as head of the military and second party secretary makes him the logical replacement for Fidel, it seems that the older brother wanted to make it clear to the party cadres and the population at large that his brother, as his anointed heir, should be supported and obeyed and that his leadership would be best for Cuba’s future.

The following decade has made Castro’s wishes reality. Raúl and the military have increased, in an unprecedented fashion, their control of the economy. Raúl has gained in power and importance as the day-to-day manager of Cuba’s internal developments.

The government’s economic policy has returned to the failed paths of the past. Increased centralization and control and greater militarization and coercion have created a cul-de-sac situation. The sufferings and misery of the Cubans have continued with no end in sight.

Castro has returned also to an emphasis on ideology, particularly anti-Americanism to motivate and engage a Cuban population characterized by apathy, alienation, and boredom with the promises of a failed revolution. Increasingly the Cubans risk their lives in makeshift boats to escape the island; cue to obtain a visa to come to the U.S. or await Castro’s death and better times. The “battle of ideas” is a euphemism for ideological indoctrination and psychological pressure and is Castro’s attempt to create an elusive “new man” in Cuba.

The battle of ideas, the appointment of old Marxists leaders to run the Communist Party schools, the crackdown on the Internet, the arrest in 2003 of 75 prominent dissidents are evidence that Cuba is undergoing a Chinese-type cultural revolution – albeit one slower and less dramatic than in China. An aging leader seems to be trying to purify and rejuvenate his “exhausted” revolution before departing from this world.

Yet, the Castro era may be coming to an end, if for no other reason than biological realities. Castro is 78 years old and deteriorating physically, in 2001, he had a brief fainting spell; in 2004 he fell and broke an arm and a leg. Both events, shown on Cuban and international television, produced significant anxiety on the island and increased speculation about a future without Castro.

## *Succession not Transition*

For the regime, the problem of succession is crucial. No totalitarian regime has been able to devise a smooth system of transition, and Castro's disappearance could touch off an internal power struggle. Most likely, however, this power struggle would take place within the revolutionary ranks rather than outside them. Despite Castro's overwhelming presence, it seems doubtful that the revolution would collapse were he to die or become incapacitated.

The stability of the regime is based primarily on the strength of its institutions. The armed forces are undoubtedly the most vital of the three "legs" on which the revolution stands. The other two, the Communist Party and the security apparatus, serve, under increased military supervision, to control, mobilize, socialize, and indoctrinate the population. The organization and strength of the bureaucracy that has grown up around these institutions seem to assure the revolution's continuity.

A revolt against Castro's rule in the absence of large-scale outside intervention seems unlikely, especially as long as the Cuban armed forces remain loyal to him and to their immediate commander in chief, Raúl. The continued loyalty of the armed forces appears highly likely. A Castro creation, they have developed a large measure of professionalism, are thoroughly integrated into the political system, and enjoy an important and trusted role in the general management and control of the economy. Today, more than 65 percent of major industries and enterprises are in the hands of current or former military officers.

Opposition and dissident groups and projects have developed in the recent past. The best known is the Varela Project, which gathered more than 11,000 signatures to petition the National Assembly to amend Cuba's laws and permit free elections. For the first time in more than four decades, large numbers of Cubans peacefully mobilized to petition the government.

Castro's response was swift and brutal. He held his own plebiscite to proclaim the permanent and unchanging communist nature of his regime and prohibit the National Assembly from considering such projects. This was followed by the arrest and sentencing to long jail terms of several dozen dissidents, journalists, and librarians, including many members of the Varela Project.

While opposition and unhappiness have been growing in Cuba, the dissident groups are weak and usually infiltrated by Cuban state security. Without access to the state-controlled media and constantly harassed by the police, these groups find it difficult to organize and operate. Many of their leaders have shown enormous courage in defying the regime. Yet, time and again, the security apparatus has discredited or destroyed them. They do not represent a major threat to the regime.

At this time, the line of succession seems clear. If Fidel were to die or become incapacitated, Raúl Castro would succeed him as ruler. Most likely, Raúl would allow for a collective leadership, with himself remaining in command of the military and the party and for a civilian as president.

Yet the notion that the younger brother will outlive the older could be flawed. Raúl is also in frail health and could die or become incapacitated before Fidel. Under this scenario, a collective leadership would emerge, with representatives of the party and the military in key positions but with the latter exercising greater influence.

But assuming that Raúl survives Fidel and takes power, he would face significant challenges. A bankrupt economy, popular unhappiness, and the need to maintain order and discipline in the population at large, as well as to increase productivity within the labor force, are some of the more pressing problems. Raúl would continue to be critically dependent on the military. Lacking the charisma and legitimacy of his brother, he would also need the support of key party leaders and technocrats within the government bureaucracy. He thus would likely create a framework for collective leadership controlled by the military. It is probable that after a period of consolidation and harsh repressive rule, this collective leadership would initiate limited and gradual economic reforms.

Perhaps the critical challenge for a Raúl Castro regime would be to balance the need to improve the economy and satisfy the needs of the population with maintaining continuous political control. Too rapid economic reforms may lead to an unraveling of political control, a fact feared by Raúl, the military, and other allies bent on remaining in power. Some overtures to the United States also seem possible after a time, especially if no major opposition develops on the island. While maintaining an anti-U.S. posture, a consolidated Raúl regime may welcome American tourists and limited U.S. trade and investments.

### *Challenges of a Post-Castro Cuba*

Any post-Castro government will face significant challenges and problems. There will be the awesome task of economic reconstruction. Cuba's extreme dependence on Soviet bloc trade and the adaptation of its economy to an unnatural and immense subsidy inflow for nearly four decades created an artificial economy, which has disappeared. Cuba does not have a viable economy of its own. As nearly every category of imports keeps shrinking, a vicious cycle of poverty mercilessly grips the country. Petroleum from Venezuela's Chavez, tourism, and remittances from Cuban-Americans are keeping the economy afloat.

Cuba has a weak internal market. Consumption is limited by a severe rationing system. Whatever transactions take place outside it is in the illegal black market, which operates with foreign currency and merchandise stolen from state enterprises or received from abroad. The Cuban peso has depreciated considerably, and its purchasing power has dropped. Huge and persistent government deficits, a large and burdensome foreign debt, and the absence of virtually any stabilizing fiscal and monetary policies have accelerated the downward economic spiral.

Production of sugar, Cuba's mainstay export, has dropped to levels comparable to those of the Depression era, and prices of other Cuban commodities continue their downward trend in international markets. Sugar appears to be a losing commodity with dire future prospects.

In addition to these vexing economic realities, there will be also a maze of legal problems. Obviously, Cuban nationals, Cuban Americans, and foreigners whose properties were confiscated during the early years of the revolution will want to reclaim them or will ask for fair compensation as soon as this becomes feasible. Cubans living abroad await the opportunity to exercise their legal claims before Cuban courts. The Eastern European and Nicaraguan examples are good indications of the complexities, delays, and uncertainties accompanying the reclamation process.

Cuba's severely damaged infrastructure is also in need of major rebuilding. The outdated

electrical grid cannot supply the meager needs of consumers and industry; transportation services are woefully insufficient; communication facilities are obsolete; and sanitary and medical facilities have deteriorated so badly that contagious diseases of epidemic proportions constitute a real menace to the population. Cuba's health system, once the showcase of the regime, has deteriorated significantly, especially after the end of Soviet subsidies. In addition, environmental concerns, such as pollution of bays and rivers, are in need of immediate attention.

Economic and legal problems are not, however, the only challenges in the nation's future. One critical problem that a post-Castro Cuba will have to deal with is the continuous power of the military. In the past, Cuba had a strong tradition of militarism. During recent years, the military, as an institution, has acquired unprecedented power. Under any conceivable scenario, the military will continue to be a key, decisive player.

Any immediate significant reduction of the military may be difficult, if not impossible. A powerful and proud institution, the armed forces would see any attempt to undermine their authority as an unacceptable intrusion into military affairs and a threat to their existence. Their control of key economic sectors under the Castro regime will make it more difficult in the future to dislodge them from these activities and limit their role to a strictly military one. Reducing the size of the armed forces will be problematic, too. The economy may not be able to absorb the unemployed members of the military, or the government may not be able to retrain them fast enough to occupy civilian positions.

The military role will also be affected by social conflicts that may emerge in a post-Castro period. For the first half-century of the Cuban republic, political violence was an important factor in society. A belief developed in the legitimacy of violence to effect political changes. This violence will probably reemerge with a vengeance in the future. Castro's communist rule has engendered profound hatred and resentments. Political vendettas will be rampant; differences over how to restructure society will be profound; factionalism in society and the political process will be common.

A free and restless labor movement will complicate matters for any future government. During the Castro era, the labor movement has remained docile and under continuous government control. Only one unified, Castro-controlled labor organization has been allowed. In a democratic Cuba, labor will not be a passive instrument of any government. Rival labor organizations will develop programs for labor vindication and demand better salaries and welfare for their members. A militant, vociferous, and difficult-to-manage labor movement will surely characterize post-Castro Cuba.

### ***Racism and Other Problems***

The apparently harmonious race relations of the Castro era may collapse in a free society. There has been a gradual Africanization of the Cuban population over the past several decades. In part because of greater intermarriage, in part because of the out-migration of more than a million mostly white Cubans, there is a greater proportion of blacks and mulattoes in Cuba. This demographic shift has led to some fear and resentment among whites in the island. On the other hand, blacks feel that they have been left out of the political process, as whites



still dominate the higher echelons of the Castro power structure. The dollarization of the economy has accentuated these differences, with blacks receiving fewer dollars from abroad. The potential exists for significant racial tension and even conflict, as these feelings and frustrations are aired in a democratic and free environment.

One difficult problem for a post-Castro Cuba is that of acceptance of the law. Every day, Cubans violate communist laws: they steal from state enterprises and participate in the black market; they engage in all types of illegal activities, including widespread graft and corruption. They do this to survive. Eradication of such necessary vices of today will not be easy in the future, especially since many of these practices predate the Castro era.

The unwillingness of Cubans to obey laws will be matched by their unwillingness to sacrifice and endure the difficult years that will follow the end of communism. A whole generation has grown up under the constant exhortations and pressures of the communist leadership to work hard and sacrifice more for society. The young are alienated from the political process and are eager for a better life. Many want to migrate to the United States. If the present rate of request for visas at the U.S. consular office in Havana is any indication, more than two million Cubans want to move permanently to the United States.

Under a U.S.-Cuban normalization of relations, Cubans will be free to visit the United States. Many will come as tourists and stay as illegal immigrants. Others will be claimed as legal immigrants by their relatives who are already naturalized citizens of the United States. Still others will travel to third countries in the hope of eventually entering the U.S. A significant out-migration from Cuba is certain, posing an added major problem for U.S. immigration authorities in particular and for U.S. policy in general at a time of increasing anti-immigration feelings and legislation and security concerns in the United States.

While many Cubans will want to leave Cuba, few Cuban Americans would abandon their life in the United States and return to the island, especially if Cuba experiences a slow and painful transition period. Although those exiles who are allowed to return will be welcomed initially as business partners and investors, they will be resented, especially as they become involved in domestic politics. Adjusting the views and values of the exile population to those of the island will be a difficult and lengthy process.

Cuba's future is therefore clouded with problems and uncertainties. More than four decades of communism will surely leave profound scars on Cuban society. As in Eastern Europe and Nicaragua, reconstruction may be slow, painful, and not totally successful.

Unlike these countries, Cuba has at least three unique advantages: proximity to, and a long tradition of close relations with, the United States; a major attractiveness to tourists; and a large and wealthy exile population. These three factors could converge to transform Cuba's economy, but only if the future leadership creates the necessary conditions: an open, legally fair economy and a free, tolerant, and responsible political system. Unfortunately, life in Cuba is likely to remain difficult and improve slowly.

*Jaime Suchlicki*

Director

Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies

University of Miami

January 2005



## Opening Remarks

The following video greeting, recorded in Prague, on October 14, 2004, was addressed to the participants in the seminar.

**Václav Havel, President of the Czech Republic:** Ladies and gentlemen, dear participants in this important and interesting conference organized by the University of Miami, and also you Cubans who have the opportunity to watch us directly with the help of Martí television.

Your conference, taking place fifteen years after the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, is addressing the question of why that development did not also affect Cuba and why Cuba survives like a strange relic of the past, the only totalitarian system of the true communist type. It is difficult to say why that is; there are perhaps several causes, primarily geographical position and tradition. However, what seems important to me is to make use of that delay and not to shed tears over the fact that democratic changes did not reach Cuba a long time ago. I do not think that we from Central and Eastern Europe, that is from former communist states, have the right to give Cubans advice about what they should do. It does seem to me, though, that we have the right—even the duty—to articulate our experiences and offer them in such a way that they eventually avoid the mistakes which we made and, in so doing, compensate for that delay. Communism was a new historical phenomenon; its collapse occurred for the first time in history, and coming to terms with its legacy does not have any historical parallel either. It is a new experience, and for that reason those who have been through it should not keep what they have learned to themselves. And now I would like to stress two things.

The first is that during the very process of changing the system, however it happens—and I would not dare predict how—it is extremely important that everybody who wants change works together, that they attempt to follow, if possible, the moderate route, the route of dialogue, of vision, not to succumb to any form of fanaticism, that they maintain their beliefs and try to find what unites people, not what divides them. Of course, the democratic opposition will divide in the future into various political parties, which will compete against one another in elections. But the different views of different groups should not destroy the work which has been done together. In the dramatic revolutionary phase, at least, this is very important.

And the second, possibly more important thing, is something I spoke about in Prague at a conference in support of Cuban democracy: That is, how important it is to be prepared for what will follow the changes.

Suddenly there will be freedom of the press, speech, and assembly. There will be privately owned businesses; big state properties will be privatized. There will be restitution, and exiles will return. There will be an enormous cascade of tasks; we ourselves were confused and perplexed by the sheer number of tasks that all demanded attention at the same time, and none of which could be put off. It seems to me that it is important that Cubans study our experiences well and are ready for what will follow. So they [will] prepare new laws, a new constitution, and give some thought to the principles of restitution and economic transformation. Perhaps this will appear to many to be a dream, a utopia, or raving about a far-off reality. But the day may come—and we do not know when, it might be quite soon—when all of these tasks will

suddenly open up before you with great speed. It seems important to me to think about that. I send my regards to Cubans and to the conference's participants and I wish Cuba the quick arrival of democracy.

**Jaime Suchlicki:** I want to thank first of all the Czech Embassy in the United States and Ambassador Martin Palouš for their support. It was his idea that started the ball rolling to do this seminar, so I am grateful for his support and for cosponsoring the seminar. I also appreciate the assistance of the Center for a Free Cuba and Frank Calzón. I would like to thank USAID for the financial support that made this seminar possible and to all the speakers that are here today who have left their jobs and activities to join us for the modest honorarium that we are able to offer. I also want to thank the Institute for Cuban and Cuban American Studies (ICCAS) and Cuba Transition Project (CTP) staff, and especially Georgina Lindskoog, CTP Coordinator, who has helped me, put this seminar together.

Tonight, there is going to be a concert at the Arttime Theater. You are all invited; we will have Czech and Cuban music; it will be in appreciation of the fifteenth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. It is sponsored by Bacardi, and I am grateful for their support.

We have, in the packets that you have received, statements from four Cuban opposition leaders: Marta Beatriz Roque, Gustavo Arcos Bergnes, Vladimiro Roca, José Ramón Moreno Cruz, and an anonymous labor leader in Cuba. We salute them, and we salute their courage in providing us with information and statements about transition in Cuba at this very difficult time that Cuba is going through.

We have received three letters; one is from the President of the United States, the Honorable George W. Bush; the second is from Senator John McCain; and the third one is from former U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright. I would like to thank each of them for their support. I am now going to read the letters.

I'd like to turn the microphone over now to the Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic in Miami, Alan Becker, who will introduce Ambassador Martin Palouš

**Alan S. Becker:** Thank you, Dr. Suchlicki. On a personal note, it was thirteen years ago, probably this week, in this hotel, that I really first met Martin Palouš. The night before, my friend, Jorge Más Canosa, said, "Do you know the Deputy Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia?" And I said, "No." And he said, "I want to introduce you." And he introduced us and asked if we could get to know each other, and we did, and the next day, right here in this hotel, then Minister Palouš invited me to come to Prague the next week and meet with the Foreign Minister, and they asked me to be the consul for that country, and I am very proud and pleased to have been able to serve in that capacity ever since. So it is a special, personal honor for me to introduce to you Martin Palouš, the Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United States, appointed by President Havel back in 2001. Martin was born in 1950. A true Renaissance man, he received his college degree in chemistry from Charles University, then later studied philosophy and social sciences, and much later got his law degree. Ambassador Palouš was one of the first signatories of Charter 77 and served as a spokesman for this dissident human rights group back in 1986. He was a founding member of the Civic Forum and was elected to the Federal Assembly after the Velvet Revolution in 1990. He became a member of its Foreign

Affairs Committee and later became Deputy Foreign Minister. He has also held a number of academic positions: teaching at Charles University, lecturing widely around the world, including here in the United States. He has published many articles and books and is noted for his translations of the works of Hannah Arendt. As I said, a true Renaissance man, a great supporter of human rights, and our friend, Ambassador Martin Palouš.

**Martin Palouš:** Good morning. Welcome. I am very glad that the Czech Republic could play a certain role in this matter we are here for today. It is interesting that it is not the first time. Actually, right after the Berlin Wall fell down and the Velvet Revolution changed the life of my country, I see he was one of my first friends over here who tried to explain the complex Cuban situation. And it seems to me very topical and very important that our relationship between the Czech Republic, Czechoslovakia as it was then, and Cuba is based on our common experience of suffering and struggling with totalitarian rule. We now have reasons to celebrate. Today is the fifteenth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, a highly symbolic event. A wall that was dividing Europe, a wall that was dividing nations and families has miraculously disappeared, and now everyone who travels to our part of the world can see what a miracle it is, how quickly things changed. It can sometimes be hard and uneasy, but always, freedom is the greatest gift.

I am very glad that today's conference is not only well attended, as I see here, but also that there are some participants that are not here physically; there are several people who sent their contributions from the island of Cuba. Because I think that the most important thing is that what we are doing here is not just an academic exercise; it really is a political process and a political process based on dialogue, based on different experiences and an exchange of them. If I was to define, and you can take it or leave it, by three basic points how I see the problem, I think there are three elements in the policy of my country. First: Express solidarity with all dissidents and political prisoners. This is the first, utmost, and most important thing. And don't think that this is just moral support. Moral support means much in this situation, and it has political weight. Don't believe pragmatists that say that morality and politics are two separate things. Dissidents always appreciate that. And [the dissidents] are future politicians, and they must be supported. So anything that can be done in this respect is very helpful. I think that they hear our voices, and they receive our messages. Point number two is international contacts. As you know, the Czech Republic tried hard, and we amazingly were quite successful three times, as you know, in Geneva to present a resolution condemning the state of human rights in Cuba after the United States, it was felt, failed in 1998. And we learned that the small Central European countries can make a difference. They can bring together parties that sometimes have difficulties in communication. I think that the Cuban case revolves in a triangle; I call it very often a Bermuda Triangle: the United States, European countries, and democratic countries in Latin America. The conference that took place in Prague in September [2004] I think was a tremendous signal because, for the first time, politicians, academics, and journalists from these three parts of the world met and spoke out very clearly. Former presidents of Costa Rica, Chile, Uruguay, the Czech Republic, former prime ministers, politicians all agreed that democracy is our option for Cuba and committed themselves to work on this cause, which is a very important thing. And the third thing which I think is crucial, and I really can't comment

on it or enter too much into that discussion, is dialogue among Cubans themselves. It seems to me a crucial thing that after forty years of, very often, poisoned propaganda tried to separate Cubans in exile and Cubans at home, it is really high time for dialogue among Cubans on the future of Cuba and on its transition to be upgraded and intensified, because the time is ripe; it will come soon. I wish all Cubans and this conference great success. Thank you.

**Jaime Suchlicki:** The Head of the U.S. Interest Section in Havana does not need any introduction in this town. James Cason has had a distinguished career in the Foreign Service, has served in a number of posts, and has received numerous awards from the State Department. But his badge of honor is his work in Cuba. He is a constant defender of freedom on the island, a constant defender of the opposition, a constant attacker of the violations of the regime of the human rights of the Cuban people. He has done an extraordinary job in the two years he has been in Cuba. It is for me a great honor to introduce James Cason.

**James C. Cason:** Dr. Suchlicki, thank you very much for inviting me to speak at this important conference. You know, it is quite a challenge to describe the current conditions in Cuba to an audience that includes so many distinguished Cuba watchers. So, at the risk of telling you things you may already know, I will try to summarize what I see in Cuba today. For the friends of the Cuban people that want to accelerate an easy, inevitable transition, one of our hardest tasks will be to restore hope in a country where little remains. In Spanish the verb *esperar* means both “to hope” and “to wait.” But most Cubans use it to tell you they are waiting, not hoping—waiting for change, waiting for the Castro’s strange and unsuccessful experiment to come to an end.

Cubans’ frustration is understandable. After years of scraping by on the lowest wages in the Western Hemisphere, Cubans are tightening belts once again in the face of new dollar restrictions and exchange fees and punishing power and water shortages. The few positive economic measures, the minor market mechanisms adopted in the mid-1990s, are being rolled back. For many Cubans, especially young adults, leaving their country appears to provide the only hope for a better life.

And yet, Cubans survive. That is what I want to talk about today. How an endlessly inventive people cope with the regime determined to remain on the wrong side of history. How Cubans defend themselves against a decrepit dictator’s whims, as they wait, hope, and prepare for the day when their talents and energies will be released.

I’ve spent the last two years on one of the most beautiful islands in the world. From my office on the Malecón, I can see all the way from Vedado to Old Havana, El Morro, and beyond. The view is beautiful from my office, but let me tell you, life on the ground is hard. We can all speak at length about Cuba’s economic ills, but it largely boils down to this: Most Cubans earn only pesos, but they need dollars to survive. While a few dwindling staples are available at subsidized peso prices at ration stores, some food items and almost all household products and clothing are available only at high prices at dollar stores. I spoke to one young woman who complained that she could not find a single store in Havana that still sold soap in pesos. If you need a bottle of aspirin, you better be prepared to pay for it in dollars. The same goes for other basics like cold medicine and band aids. When peso salaries are converted to

dollars, families can barely feed themselves, and there is little room for “luxuries,” like children’s toys or a night out with the family. The average salary in Cuba is only 260 pesos a month, and that’s less than \$10. Professor Carmelo Mesa-Lago estimates that average real wages fell 44 percent from 1990 to 2002, while income inequalities expanded exponentially, from something like 4.5 to 1 in the 1960s to 12,500 to 1 more recently.

Lack of access to dollars is at the root of the growing income inequality. Only 2 percent of the labor force works in tourism. An even smaller group works in other joint ventures. A significant minority of Cubans receives a regular supply of dollars through remittances from relatives in the United States. On November 14, 2004, Castro’s new 10 percent tax on dollar exchanges for convertible pesos goes into effect—the convertible pesos will now be required in hard currency stores. Such measures coerce a leery population to shift holdings from dollars to other hard currencies or to convertible pesos, which are as flimsy as the paper they are printed on.

Many Cubans without access to hard currency do not regularly get three square meals a day. The ration card only provides about ten days of sustenance, and the rationed food supply is erratic. One ration store shopkeeper took to referring to eggs as *americanos*. Why? Because the government always says the Americans are coming, but they never arrive.

In the countryside, thousands of Cubans have adjusted to eating once a day. United Nations reports document substantial undernourishment and malnutrition, and there is little hope that the state will raise salaries to a living wage. In parts of Cuba, there is a real fear that the misery of the Special Period of the early 1990s is returning.

Cuba’s basic infrastructure suffers from systemic neglect. Nowhere is this more clear than in the emerging and related crises in water and electricity supplies. Some residents in drought-plagued Eastern Cuba go a week or longer without running water. Belatedly, the Cuba government is rushing to build new water systems. But the planned aqueduct from the Cauto River to Holguín is well past the construction deadline, due to poor engineering that led to the bursting of the new pipes.

Cuba’s energy shortage reached critical proportions this summer [2004]. The sulfurous crude oil used in Cuban power plants led to major breakdowns. Last May, a turbine rotor on one of the main generation plants broke, disrupting the entire electrical grid. At the height of the summer, when the heat was as suffocating in Cuba as it was here in Miami, Cubans went without electricity for hours and even days at a time. The power was on so seldom that people began referring to the “illuminations,” not the blackouts. Without lights or fans, Cubans coped by sleeping on their roofs. Food, which is relatively expensive in Cuba, spoiled in non-functioning refrigerators. Scattered protests occurred in Havana, even among a population afraid to vent publicly its frustrations.

Another of the Revolution’s major failures is housing. A UN report estimated that nearly two partial collapses occur in Old Havana every three days. One study estimates the housing deficit at 1.6 million units, and the percentage of housing units that do not meet habitability standards at 39 percent. Cubans worry, complain, and some die in collapsed buildings, but the government does not listen. After all, no Cuban politician’s livelihood depends on solving this problem.

With little hope of finding suitable housing, Cubans continue to subdivide already



cramped apartments to accommodate the rising demand. Children, parents, grandparents, and other relatives live crammed together. Newlyweds carve out a few square feet to start married life, while divorced couples have no choice but to continue to live together.

The decay of Cuba's basic infrastructure is turning two of the triumphs of the revolution, the health and education sectors, into Potemkin villages. A Cuban has access to all the doctors he wants, provided he has dollars or political connections. Without these, the average Cuban can spend months awaiting his turn for surgery. The regime invests heavily in producing a huge surplus of doctors, many of whom are sent abroad to win political capital among Cuba's friends, but skimps on purchasing adequate amounts of medical equipment and medicine.

The most basic medical items, like anesthesia and sterilization equipment, are no longer routinely available. When Cubans go to the hospital, they are expected to bring their own sheets, food, and even bandages. High-level officials don't have to worry about the deterioration of the health care system; they receive excellent care at special facilities reserved for their exclusive use. And foreigners, too, can obtain top quality health care if they pay in hard currencies. In the meantime, ordinary Cubans beg foreigners to buy them painkillers.

One sad anecdote highlights the decline of the Cuban health system. We learned that an elderly Cuban was being kept alive on a respirator in a Havana hospital. To prepare for the coming hurricane, city power was turned off, and the hospital generator had only an hour and a half of diesel left. The patient's family hurriedly collected money to buy more diesel for the hospital, so that he would not die when the generator did.

Now, what of Cuba's vaunted educational system? Yes, primary education is free, as it is in many other noncommunist countries. But what of its quality? One report estimated the educational budget contracted by 38 percent from 1989 to 1997. Books, notebooks, pencils, and chalk are scarce. School buildings are deteriorating, notwithstanding the occasional coat of paint, fresh paint slapped on particularly when foreign visitors come.

Meanwhile, children are taught to glorify Fidel, Che, and five Cuban spies imprisoned in the United States. They are encouraged to fire imaginary weapons at invading Yankees. Fed Marxist-Leninist balderdash, they are dissuaded from critical analysis. Secondary school teachers continue to abandon the educational system to work in tourism and other sectors to earn a living wage. The government's response: the *profesores emergentes* program, in which high school graduates are getting quick pedagogical training and are brought in to teach younger children.

The regime's response to pervasive scarcity, decaying infrastructure, shriveled social programs, grab bags of half-measures, skewed priorities, and disinformation? More often than not, the government's proposed solution is worse than the initial problem.

Many of the stopgap measures aimed at easing the energy deficit seemingly solve the problem by shutting down what little production there is in Cuba. Too much energy is being used in offices and schools? Shorten the work day and delay school openings. Cement factories and hotels are too energy intensive? Shut down the main culprits for the month of October.

Yet, the regime keeps spending scarce resources on its own strange priorities: There is no housing for young families, but there are buildings for Committees for the Defense of the Revolution on every block. There is little fuel for school buses and ambulances, but plenty to

bus in millions of protesters to rallies. There are not enough bandages or sheets in the hospitals, but the regime keeps exporting surplus doctors for political effect.

The greatest waste of all is the massive investment in state propaganda—the political rallies, the international conferences and festivals, and the media monopoly that endlessly depict Cuba’s triumphs and the rest of the world’s woes. The government propaganda machine wastes much needed resources churning out “weapons of mass distraction”: newspapers, magazines, and radio programs that instruct Cubans on how they should see the world. I venture to say that this propaganda machine could be shut down, and few Cubans would care. Except for Fidel Castro, who values controlling Cubans’ minds above all else.

Recent government measures are taking the economy in the wrong direction and will only worsen living standards. In particular, the government is rolling back its mid-1990s introduction of modest market mechanisms, such as self-employment opportunities. Since early 2003, under the pretext of clamping down on vice, the Cuban government forced the closure of many private room rentals and peddlers working on the margins of the tourist trade. Dozens of home-based private restaurants that opened across the country ten years ago have closed under heavy tax burdens and official harassment. The government has stopped issuing new licenses for many self-employed categories, such as magicians, video and audio technicians, and second-hand booksellers. Castro still hates all those who are independent of “his” state.

This year, in an effort to recentralize the economy, the government announced that state enterprises will no longer exchange hard currency amongst themselves. The government also divested state companies of their side businesses. For example, a commercial group that sells real estate can no longer also run restaurants. Hundreds of hotel managers were dismissed this past summer, as big hotel chains were centralized under two or three mega-chains.

Government personnel moves have favored orthodoxy over competence and sought to cover up mismanagement at the very top. You remember in the nineties that Castro prodded Basic Industry Minister Marcos Portal León to accelerate the conversion of power plants to run on Cuba’s domestically produced heavy crude oil. Now that the use of domestic oil has led to power station breakdowns, Castro ousted Portal, a convenient scapegoat for Castro’s failed plans. Portal was one of the world’s longest serving energy ministers and a manager versed in Western business practices. He was replaced by a young, little known, Communist Party *apparatchik*.

Perhaps most discouraging of all, in explaining the moves against the dollar, the regime is returning to rhetoric about a “New Man” or a “New Society,” as if Che’s nonmaterial incentives had not been proved ineffective over the last forty-five years. Castro’s economic policies have been such a disaster that he is making the “bad old days” look quite good. In the 1950s, Cuba competed with the first world in social and economic indicators. Then, Cuba was the destination for thousands of impoverished European immigrants. Now, Cuba is a country with major outflows of migration, with one-tenth of its population in the United States.

Most Cubans have long lost the hope that Fidel is capable of loosening economic controls that make daily life in Cuba so difficult. Cubans often say that the island is shaped like a crocodile, but the regime is more like a frightened turtle, withdrawn into its shell. When Castro visited Vietnam and China in early 2003 and observed firsthand the significant economic changes there, he rejected any such economic opening for his beleaguered country.



Many young Cubans who grew up in the 1990s have known nothing more than the struggle to make do with less and less, with little hope on the horizon. On Saturday nights, they watch the latest American movies on Cuban TV, but that is the closest that these young people will get to a real supermarket, a real magazine kiosk, a real internet café. Even the most capable among them cannot dream of legally earning a salary of more than \$30 a month.

How is it that Cubans have managed to hang on for so long under such hardship? It's been almost fifteen years since the loss of billions of dollars in annual Soviet aid led to the Cuban economy's collapse. How have they coped with a totalitarian state on an island where there is nowhere to hide from the repressive regime?

Cubans have coped by adopting the much discussed "double morality," *la doble moral*. The state exhorts them to be good revolutionaries, but good revolutionaries cannot eat on state salaries. They must make money illegally, providing goods or services outside the official economy. Many people go to work every day, not for the paltry salaries, but to use state resources to make money on the side. You may have heard Cubans say that they have three basic rights: the right to free education, the right to free health care, and the right to steal freely from the state. Cuba has also become the premier destination for sex tourism in this hemisphere, as young women discover that they can make as much money in one hour as the state will pay them for a month's work.

The *doble moral* works equally well when people are forced to participate in the government's political activities. When pressed, most Cubans mouth support for the maximum leader's obstinate notions about how human nature should conform to his ideals. What's the point of taking a courageous stand against the state's wishes, many Cubans ask. Why risk state retaliation, a heavy fine, your child's educational future, your job, even jail, when there is only the question of a few more years before Fidel dies and things get better?

Another classic Cuban coping mechanism, of course, is humor. I am always amazed that within hours of the latest official misstep, the jokes began to circulate. When Fidel interrupted emergency radio broadcasts during Hurricane Charley to discuss relations with Venezuela, the Cubans took to calling him "Armando Cuesta," as in "*Armando los venezolanos cuesta a los cubanos*," or "Arming Venezuelans costs Cubans."

Of course, the ultimate coping mechanism is to get out, something Cubans do by the thousands each year. At the U.S. Interest Section in Havana, we issue more than 20,000 American visas a year to Cubans starting a new life in the United States. Thousands more seek illegal migration channels. We discovered an interesting demographic trend among those who choose to leave illegally. It's not the youngest Cubans who despair of making a life for themselves, but those in their late twenties and early thirties—educated, with no job prospects, married, living at home, and supporting a family on a peso salary while forced to buy everything from soap to cooking oil in dollars.

For those who stay behind, the survival strategy is simple: keep your head down, don't make waves, and await the biological solution. All Cubans, no matter how they feel about the regime, are playing a waiting game these days, some with anxiety, some with gleeful anticipation.

We must not assume, however, that when Castro dies, Cuba will transform itself into a democracy the following day. Castro has planned for that day, anointing his brother as

successor, centralizing much economic power in the armed forces and Interior Ministry, and insisting that his revolution will survive him. Moreover, Castro has done his best to thwart the existence of an independent civil society with an invigorating free exchange of ideas and popular participation in governance.

Most Cubans on the island today have known nothing but communism. Seventy percent were born after the revolution. Many Cubans think it is normal that there are exactly 609 candidates for the 609 seats in the National Assembly, that a small group of people decide the country's policies, that government controls the most important aspects of their political, economic, and social lives. Simply plunking down a genuine electoral system will not be sufficient in the future. It will take a long time to impart the habits of democracy on the island. As Vaclav Havel said in his speech before the International Committee for Democracy in the Cuba Conference in Prague, "After thirty years in jail, the newly released prisoner has trouble making his own daily decisions."

We all recognize that change will require hard work; most of that hard work will have to be done by Cubans. Some Cubans will adapt successfully to earning a living without the state as job provider, some Cubans will enjoy the rough and tumble of politics, and some will be disappointed when democracy does not magically solve all of Cuba's ills. We and the rest of the international community can certainly help ensure that Cuba's future is in the hands of Cubans. Cuba's courageous pro-democracy activists are already laying claim to a say in their country's future and are having an international impact. In a country where one man claims to speak for his country against alleged outside interference, the peaceful opposition is reminding Castro and the world that there are eleven million people in Cuba who have the right to have rights.

The dissidents have shown that neither dictators nor outside well-wishers can speak for Cuba or its emerging civil society. The skill and passion with which the dissidents lobbied the EU countries to keep their embassies open to the dissidents demonstrates that the varied opposition groups can make common cause to protect shared principles.

The lonely voices in the opposition are getting less lonely by the day. Fed up by the food and power shortages and the latest government-imposed crises, Cubans are increasingly losing patience with Castro. In the weeks since Castro's well-publicized fall, more and more regime supporters are now saying that it is time for Castro to step down.

In a different context 135 years ago, U.S. Secretary of War [John A.] Rawlins worried about how to resolve Cuba's bloody wars of independence. As he was about to die, Rawlins told a cabinet colleague, "I recommend poor and martyred Cuba to you. Always go on working in favor of the Cubans. Cuba should be free and its tyrannical enemy should be overwhelmed."

I would like to thank Vaclav Havel, in particular, for all the work he has done to focus worldwide attention on Cuba. As he said in Prague about Cuba, "I would not think only about removing the dictator, but devote most of my time to thinking about what will come next." He is right, of course, and that is why we are here today.

As we think about ways to ease Cuba's transition, we will rely on our EU colleagues to give us the benefit of their experience. After all, eight former communist countries met the conditions—mostly democratic rule, good governance, and market economies—for joining

the European Union since the fall of the Iron Curtain.

Personally, I am very optimistic about the long-term prospects of Cuba. The Cuban people have the ingenuity of the windsurfer who sailed his way across the Florida Straits and the pluck of the dissident who stays home to fight peacefully for his country's future. Cuba's friends in this room and around the world stand ready to help if and when we are asked by a representative, democratic government. And that day, I'm sure, is not far away. Thank you.

## Questions and Answers

**Q:** Would you give us some insight as to the mistakes the democrats have committed in Czechoslovakia, what the Cubans can avoid in the future, what can they draw on regarding Central European transition as well as the Russian one?

**James C. Cason:** Of course, one of the problems is that the government controls all of the information in Cuba, and the government says there won't be a transition; there will be a succession. So, one of the first things is trying to get information on experiences of countries that were formerly communist or other sorts of dictatorships that were trying to move to a more democratic form of government, and so you are finding that there is a great deal of desire to get information on just what those experiences were, and we'll do our best to make sure that the kinds of things that come out of this conference will get to them so they can study them. One of the things that Cubans are doing now, particularly three or four of the democratic groups are trying to start some kind of a dialogue among themselves since the government will not dialogue with them or concede that they are legitimate or highly placed in Cuba, they are beginning to discuss among themselves: "Well, what do we want from a future government in Cuba? What are our priorities? What kind of government do we want to have? What kind of institutions?" So this dialogue has begun now in Cuba, and all over the island, people are discussing the future, and what they would like it to be.

Very briefly. Difficult questions: the question of restitution, property rights. Because if you want to move fast you don't want to end up with legal messes and long suits and legal quarrels, but you need the rule of law and justice. The second thing: what are you to do with the repressive organs of the state, [such as the] political police force? An extremely difficult thing. And then, how do you want to handle the matter of the past in general, which means people who suffered, who seek justice and retribution, and obviously there isn't always an easy answer for this one. You have a Truth Commission with certain success in some countries, which is why you want to try legal methods, but always it is going to be difficult. Our situation was that we really had to practice many things. Right after the Velvet Revolution, we enjoyed a great consensus, and we admired how everything went smoothly and everyone was on board. But a couple of months later, we discovered that there were people with different experiences, and it's always very difficult to reestablish dialogue. If you have dialogue from the first day of the revolution, pray that you will have it six months or a year after the revolution, because you will need it. What I said here, it seems to be a topical question, the culture of dialogue between people here in the American exile [community] and people who are ready and courageous enough to have dialogue on the island.

**Q:** Mr. Cason, we heard Vaclav Havel mention that Cubans must be ready to prepare a new constitution. Of course, there is a totalitarian Stalinist constitution imposed by Castro during his rule, a period of governance in Cuba which was not voted [upon] by the direct, secret vote of the population. However, the 1940 Constitution is still in force, and it has never been derogated by the direct and secret vote of the people of Cuba. Do you consider it very difficult, since you have the experience of living in Cuba, for the Cuban population to accept a democratic constitution made by all layers of the population like the 1940 Constitution? Because in our opinion, Eastern European countries base their changes upon post-monarchy constitutions, but Cuba doesn't have a history of monarchy; it has a democratic history, and it has a Constitution that has never been derogated, the one of 1940, which is an example of a constitution. Do you see the possibility of reinstating that Constitution in a free Cuba?

**James C. Cason:** Of course, it is going to be up to the Cuban people both here and in Cuba itself to decide what kind of constitution and what kind of institutions they want. For example, we had electoral night in my house a couple of days ago, and one of the questions on the ballot was, "What kind of government would you like to see: a parliamentary system or a presidential system?" and most of them voted for a presidential system. But more directly to your question, it's amazing—most Cubans have not even seen the Constitution of 1976, much less the Constitution of 1940. You can't find those documents in Cuba, so most people are not aware of what was in the Constitution of 1940, and there is a lot of desire to get those documents to see what went on before history started in 1959. So, it's going to be up to the Cuban people to decide what kind of government they want, what kind of structures, which constitution—whether they want to take an old one and modify it, keep the Constitution of 1940—it's going to be up to them, but first of all, one of the big tasks is to let them see what they had in the past.

**Q:** Marcos Portal is a smart, good businessman, good engineer, well-followed by those he was bringing along, and a member of the family. What do you expect from the younger professionals, what kind of attitude; what can we expect to be the reaction from the younger professionals after seeing the firing of Marcos Portal? What can they expect for themselves, and how can you monitor that?

**James C. Cason:** I think there are reformists in Cuba, but it's not good for your health to say you are one, because you won't be one for very long. So I think there are people in the government that would like to see something better than what they have now. I think there are people that really care about the citizens and realize that these decisions are getting back toward a Stalinist form of government and are doing nothing for the average person, so there are people in government; there are technocrats that have been working toward a change. Something like a Vietnamese or a Chinese model to start out with, but this is all after Fidel's trip to Asia, and he said, "If we adopted the changes that have been made in those countries, we (the elite) are going to lose political control." So it's very difficult for a young reformer or somebody who thinks differently to have any impact because the dictator doesn't listen; he does what he wants. So those people seem to be very frustrated, and we are finding lots and

lots of people on rafts who are young professionals. And remember that most young professionals may get a university degree, but when they get out, they have no jobs. As a personal example, in my residence, we have architects, biologists, and chemists working as gardeners because there are no jobs. It's very frustrating to go through six years of university to come out and earn ten pesos, so most of them will try to get a job in tourism or find a raft or marry a farmer—or do anything to get out because there is no job satisfaction. One more question.

**Q:** I remember reading about the new effort by President Vaclav Havel toward democracy in Cuba, which was established in the past year. We deeply appreciate the support to all Cubans, especially to the ones inside Cuba, to make Cuba free. But what troubled me was when I read the report and had gone into the website, there seemed to be a single dissident highlighted, mentioned by name, and other dissidents not mentioned. My question is: Has that original thrust, which seemed to be concentrated on a single dissident, Mr. Oswaldo Payá, has that now broadened to recognize that the dissident movement is very broad and has many political views?

**Martin Palouš:** I think that President Havel already answered this question before me. It would be unfortunate to support one person only. I think the message from Central Europe is that all courageous individuals, all leaders of various groups should get together, work together because they all have one and the same goal, and that is to bring democracy, justice, and, obviously, freedom to Cuba. There are many people here—I will be very frank and open with you—who are afraid that Oswaldo Payá is to be seen as the only dissident and his Varela Project. It has been said many times, I think by President Havel, that there is no convention whatsoever to decide who is going to be who. President Havel, Central Europeans, and the International Committee for Democracy in Cuba support everybody who is on the island. I think now that the greatest support should go to Oscar Biscet, who is imprisoned in a very difficult condition. We should speak for him, but [also] for everyone: for Vladmiro Roca, for Marta Beatriz Roque, for all dissidents, so there is no reason to single out one over another.

## **PANEL I: *Lessons from Transitions in Totalitarian Countries***

**Ivo Sanc:** I come from the Czech Republic. I am the mayor of a small but beautiful town, Kutna Hora. Since October 1999 to December 2003, I was working in Kosovo for three years for the UN as a municipal administrator of the capital town of Pristina, with one year acting as an advisor to the so-called Decentralization Mission of the Council of Europe in Kosovo. Our task was to create policy and to prepare the concept of the reform of public administration and local government. I would like also to mention one special reason why I am here. I spent a year working in Cuba as a scientist in 1990. Actually, I left my country of Czechoslovakia just on the second day of our Velvet Revolution, and I remember my friends who came with me to the airport who attended the demonstration the day before who were beaten by the police. They told me, “So you are leaving the country for the so-called island of freedom, which probably will be free very soon, but here in our country, in Prague, we have been beaten again, and we don’t know what is going to happen.” But it was fifteen years ago, and where we are now, Cuba—and I used to say that Cuba is the most beautiful country I have seen in my life with the most beautiful people that I met there—is in the same situation, if not worse, as fifteen years ago, while we have proceeded on our way to a new society, to democracy. Despite many difficulties and weaknesses and troubles, I can proudly say that we are a successful example of a transition of democratization, of progress, and of freedom.

So today, I would like to talk about one important part of transition, and that is transition at the local level—that is, local self-government and local administration. As my predecessors and especially Mr. Ambassador [Martin Palouš] mentioned, we have quite a lot to offer to Cuba because of many similarities and few differences in our modern history. I can mention the cooperation of Czechoslovakia in Cuba. You know, thousands of Cubans used to work in our country, and thousands of our experts worked in Cuba during the ’70s and ’80s. I was one of them, one of the last experts working in Cuba.

I mentioned we are a successful case of democratization and transition from a totalitarian to a free society. From the point of view of economic development, we are at the top of post-communist countries. From the point of view of political transformation, we have all democratic institutions operating, with the usual troubles, with standard achievements and standard problems.

We can also mention a good understanding of Czech people [regarding] the troubles of the Cuban people. I can remember fifteen years ago working at a research institute. I could speak very openly with my Cuban colleagues, and I could see very similar conditions, very similar relations among the people to the regime. Many people were silent enemies of the regime. There were also many people who collaborated with the regime; there were many people who tried to utilize the situation and benefit from it. So, very similar conditions to our country. And it would be very interesting, but it would take much more time, to analyze the behavior of people and the transition of minds or lack of transition of minds in our country, and I suppose in Cuba [the situation] would be very similar.

There is also one important point about negative lessons learned from our transition. Yes, we had negative lessons learned; maybe I will mention them later. So, speaking about transformation on a local level, there are many, many dimensions, and all the dimensions must be



evaluated, considered, and analyzed. Of course, the political dimension, how to create a plural society, how to regenerate or create political parties, how to attract people, how to handle the communists and the collaborators with the previous regime—that is very important on a local level. Principles of solidarity and decentralization: this is something that even communist regimes like to speak about. However, it was not a decentralization of decision making; it was not a decentralization of real management of society; it was a decentralization of control and a de-concentration of state power. And we had it so everything was decided by the Communist Party; everything was transferred to the local units of the Communist Party, and everything was managed by the Communist Party and their collaborators. It is very similar or even worse in Cuba because their Committees for the Defense of the Revolution are something really, really bad. However, there is great potential, or there was some potential among our people, and I am sure there is great potential among the Cuban people, who are certainly very capable and very enthusiastic to keep things in their own hands and to decide about their future on a local level, regional level, and central level.

Dealing with transformation of a local self-government and local administration, of course, competencies had to be transferred from the central level, from the ministries to the local authorities. It happened in our country, of course. We, the mayors or local counselors, are never happy with the degree of decentralization. However, I must admit that it was a great achievement of our revolution to devolve or to transfer the power to the local level.

Economy and finance and property rights are, of course, a very important and very difficult part of transition. It happened that property transformation in our country was a simple restitution. Luckily, we had good records in our archives. I don't know what the situation is like in Cuba. Fortunately, the government and politicians at the central level, in the first stages of the revolution, decided to transfer a lot of properties to municipalities, to the local authorities. I am glad to say that local authorities proved that they were able to manage that property and to use it for development. Of course, local authorities must be allowed to generate money locally, to collect local taxes, fees, and charges.

The role of the civic sector is very important. We have tried to encourage groups of people, associations, and clubs, and they are very active and very successful in dealing with culture, social affairs, education, and civil sectors.

I also included the role of internationals and the role of foreign advisors. I remember in the first half of the '90s, many foreign experts used to come, and even my town was involved in one project sponsored by USAID. It was very good; we appreciated it because it was a great inspiration for us, it brought us many new experiences, and it gave us the chance to travel and recognize the situation. I must also appreciate that this kind of aid or support finished soon, in 1996 or 1997, because it was at that time that we needed to realize [what to do] for ourselves. We appreciated that we got these lectures, and we were able to do it independently. Sometimes, we complained a little bit that the international experts hadn't had a lot of knowledge of specific conditions in our country, and sometimes some people felt underestimated by foreign advisors. So, we would like not to be seen as people we used to call "emperor advisors," but it is always good to share the experience with internationals and to be enriched by foreign ideas and experience.

The last bullet point is negative experience at the local level. I would mention two or three



of them. First, there is a danger of the growth of corruption [which comes with] the growth of bureaucracy, so that is necessary to keep in consideration.

I would like to add a few sentences on my experience in Kosovo because this is a completely different example of transition. Our Velvet Revolution passed very peacefully. We were able to use our traditions from the times before the Second World War. We had people who still remembered it. However, Kosovo, in a country completely destroyed by tragic civil war, was a completely different case. There was a very important dimension of the ethnicity of people and ethnic conflict between Serbs and ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. But Kosovo is a very interesting example of an international community which came there to create institutions, to create structures, and to run the country in the beginning and to step-by-step hand authority over to the local people. I must say that all the efforts of the international community have not been fully successful. I would estimate 60 percent success and 40 percent failure. However, there are many, many lessons learned which may be very useful for Cuba in transition, because certainly the United Nations and other international organizations will be interested and will try to help a Cuba in transition. Thank you for your attention. I would be happy to answer your questions. Thank you.

**Teodor Marjanovic:** Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, I would like to express my pleasure that I was given the opportunity to address you. I am thankful for this chance, and I am sure this conference will be a great success. In 1989, when the communist regime in Czechoslovakia broke down, I was 19 years old. At that time I lived in Slovenia, which is a tiny republic in the northwest of the territory of the former Yugoslavia. So I lived in a country that is 500 miles away from what today is the Czech Republic, where most of my family lived. And from Slovenia I wrote features for several Czech newspapers, basically all about what it meant to live in a collapsing state. And when a war, a very brutal war, broke out in 1991 in Yugoslavia, I traveled around the Balkans as a reporter, and I wrote many reports directly from the war zones. Why am I telling you this? I certainly do not want Cubans to experience anything brutal or in any way similar to the way the Balkans disintegrated. I guess everybody here today is committed to the peaceful political transformation of Cuba with the goal of replacing Fidel Castro. But I want to stress that there are many possible ways of transition. The possible ways of *escenarios de cambio*. There is a peaceful one, as in Czechoslovakia, and a violent one, as in the Balkans. The violent one is possible; it can happen. Very few people in Yugoslavia expected that war, full-scale war, would break out. And yet it did. Therefore, I guess our role here is not only to promote dialogue with the dissident movement in Cuba, but to start to work with those great people sitting now in jail or living under constant pressure from the Cuban secret police. We have to work with them as if they are politicians now, not in the future. Why? First, because they have already produced solutions for the transition quite similar to those solutions that were on the table in May of 1988 in Czechoslovakia. I guess [the Cuban models] are copies of some of those solutions. These people have vivid political conditions, and they live on the island. But I wonder: Are they skilled enough not only to write statements and possibly deliver speeches in front of crowded squares, but also to act as resolutely in decisive moments that will come sooner or later? Members of the dissident movement in Cuba share a common goal of a free election. But do they know how difficult it

is to maintain unity without a common enemy? Do they know how difficult it is not to fall apart even before the first election is held on the island? Will this movement be able to embrace the participation of Cubans living now in exile? And finally, I wonder, are dissidents ready on the one hand to repudiate any attempt of repeat succession of Castro's cronies, but on the other hand, are they prepared for a political play that involves that ability of finding a compromise?

This conference itself proves that there are international conditions necessary for a successful push for democracy in Cuba. Yet, the violent example of the Balkans and the peaceful example of the Czechoslovak Velvet Revolution—and both happened, basically, at the same time under the same conditions—show that people changing a regime have to have solid political skills. So, I think it is necessary to start to talk about the day after the Cuban liberation, and it is necessary to talk with these great people on the island. The solution must prepare them for all possible worst-case scenarios, and it must unite them with the exiles in Florida. Thank you very much.

**Irving Louis Horowitz:** In a post-communist essay on transitions in Eastern Europe some years ago, I noted that 1989 was arguably as significant a date in the history of modern civilizations as was 1789. Both cataclysmic events spoke to the need for human liberty; elites responded to mass pressures; both resulted in uneven consequences. Many researchers have since confirmed the centrality of 1989 to the international economy, polity culture. What I wish to do here is briefly review the fifteen years since that monumental set of changes, examine what we have learned, and derive from that experience ways to create a better and more efficient policy context.

What took place in that dark world behind the Iron Curtain was not simply a functional change in political organization and economic system, but a monumental change in the intellectual contours of everyday life: specifically, the relation of the individual to the collectivity, the personal to the universal, and, above all, the connection of inherited histories to current policies. Only if we acknowledge this will we be in a position to calculate what bearing, if any, the revolutions of 1989–1991 will have on revolutionary changes anticipated but presumably yet to come in a post-Castro Cuba. Given the unequal results of transitions in this former monolithic Soviet bloc, it is wise to say that although changes are in the offing elsewhere, as in Cuba, the character of such changes remains to be determined by events.

The most overwhelming fact is the multidirectional and multidimensional character of these transitions. More directly, they are about the limits of theorizing about the political future. Regime *change* is not the same as regime *development*. Good consequences do not necessarily follow from overthrow of bad systems. Moreover, the initial phase of regime change may itself prove to be an interregnum—with further changes after the initial overthrow of the old regime. The wide-open universe has entered a new era, that of collective actions and nation-states. Seen in this light, human actions become more rather than less significant as an element in political and economic decision making. Older, deeply flawed ideas of historical inevitability and laws of society require careful and critical review.

The near identical collapse of communism in Europe with the end of Marxism-Leninism as a dominant ideology and theory reminds us that ideas that assume a state of pure deter-

minism or of history operating behind the backs of men sound an archaic note. More to the point, communist regimes as such appear as a blip within an actual historical timetable, rather than a premeditated stage of history. In many of these former communist lands, problems that characterized East Europe before the respective seizures of power and impositions of Soviet style rule in the 1940s have now reappeared. Thus, in Yugoslavia, ethnic and religious rivalries in the region that date back a half millennium have resurfaced. The Czech Republic and Slovakia went their separate ethnic ways, as was to be expected of areas with distinct urban and rural tendencies. Religious differences in the Baltic states resurfaced among Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania. The conclusion is clear: Communism as an economy could not destroy or even hold in check the free market as a culture.

Indeed, one scholar recently pointed out that there is a geographic component to all of this. The closer one is to the West, the more important was the tradition of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in post-Stalinist reconstruction. But the closer one gets to nations under the influence of the old Slavic-Russian Empire, the more likely the re-imposition of tyrannical and dynastic regimes. So places like Bulgaria and Romania show strong tendencies to see weakened democratic institutions and greater likelihood to return to despotic regimes. In short, cultural formations count a great deal in the post-1989 universe. More pointedly, what a country had in the way of institutions prior to the rise of communism is likely to affect that state after the collapse of communism. This suggests that in a post-Castro Cuba, one can expect some sort of military rule, accompanied by a parallel set of civic institutions. This might be called the Turkish model, but in pre-1959 Cuban terms, it might be better called the Batista Model with a modernized, benign, but less corrupt organizational platform. Indeed, I would argue that the famous “Ochoa Affair” remains the lingering ghost in the Castro closet, representing a fear that a transition will take place through military sponsorship.

There is, then, no single road to democratization, better yet, no assurance that transition inevitably will lead to greater democracy. The malleability of people, the strength of nationalism as a guiding mass force, the insistence that benefits of the welfare state be retained—all play a part in the post-dictatorial phase in any country. While a certain pride can be ascertained on the part of nearly all member states of the former Soviet Bloc, there is no acceptance of democratic societies in those states. Some have even slipped back into top-down management, vitiating the gains made by popular masses directly after the fall of communism. Even in this brave new world, these states continue to insist on medical security from cradle to grave. The old pre-communist structures exist side by side with communist structures that are only partially dismantled. In short, the transition process is not a utopian path to paradise but a field of broken stones that must be navigated by the tough and gritty survivors of hard times and bad regimes.

The current Heritage Foundation report indicates that on an index of economic freedom, such nations as Romania and Belarus, not especially strong candidates for a free market economy to start with, have gotten worse in the eight years between 1996 and 2004. Those nations with greater Western influence have fared better over time in absolute development, no less than relative changes over time. The general trends are encouraging, but they indicate a lack of uniformity that even those with optimistic hopes for places like Cuba must take into account. Of course, Cuba has not only strong American influence, but also a Cuban-American

population of wealth, substance, and pride ready to contribute to a transition process that restores democratic norms and free market activities quickly.

The paramount issue remains: How did dictatorships with ironclad rulers dissolve so quickly and even quietly in many instances? The conventional answers are often trotted forth: the rigidity of organizational structures, the incapacity to prepare alternative scenarios to meet crises and contingencies, and the isolation of party cadres from masses whom they presumably served. But a new explanation has surfaced that is closer to the marrow of actual Soviet power. At one and the same time, it emphasizes the centrifugal authority of communist leadership, which held open the carrot of a diffusion of power through the so-called national question, a situation in which different linguistic, cultural, and national clusters could exercise power in regional power bases. These manifold groupings gave sustenance to nationalist drives that could not readily be bridled by central committee cadres. Indeed, the central committee itself sometimes embedded such separatist nationalist sentiments. For example, the choice of membership in the Soviet central committee was often dictated by the power of regional and separatist cadres.

One consequence was the emergence of national liberation forces, from Chechnya to the Ukraine, that could not always be held in check. The national ideal became a unique source of separatist tendencies. Even if the national ideal itself could not lead to the dissolution of centralized Soviet power, when that central authority needed mass support and was challenged in a time of legitimacy by the autonomous regions, none was forthcoming. Instead, national strivings became the organizational bases for demands for national independence and not simply cultural artifacts to be worn on celebratory occasions. The Stalin regime recognized these dangers both before and after World War Two, but the need to forge a united front against the German Nazi invaders prevented the full-blown dismemberment of [the Soviet Union by] such national separatists. In short, the ideological wrinkles of Lenin and Stalin, forged in 1912 to mobilize the vast non-Russian masses behind the Bolshevik Cause, while a brilliant device toward that end in 1918, also proved to be the undoing of the regime in 1991.

Admittedly, this is a simplified version of events in Russia. It would be foolhardy to assume that arguments by analogy are authoritative. The Russian “model” hardly fits the various Eastern European variations, which, in turn, can properly be subdivided into fourteen different ways a nation might make the transition from communism to capitalism. Given the importance of the Cuban situation, a nation that has had the same dictator in power since 1959, this cautionary note is critical. The size of the Russian nation, the number of different Eastern European nations, the relationships among these adjoining lands and cultures—all argue against easy assumptions and analogical reasoning. That said, similarities do exist. Like the nations of Eastern Europe earlier, Cuba still does adhere to the communist ideology: single person and party rule, liquidation of private enterprise and even middle-sized property holdings, and terror as well as persuasion as means of social control. The early Stalinization of Cuba, conflating the party apparatus with the organs of state power, indicates that analogies, however imperfect, can and should be made when feasible.

Castro is physically brittle, if not exactly politically vulnerable at the moment. The volatility of banning the use of the American dollar as the primary medium of exchange in Cuba has thrown an entirely new dimension into the mix. So the case for transition scenarios

as a whole is not difficult to make. The trick is to do so without engaging in utopian fantasy, or worse, imposing such fantasies from afar on a subject population already bewildered by events and continuing fears of foreign domination. On the basis of the above type of analysis, one that takes seriously communism as an interregnum rather than a permanent fixture of the political landscape (admittedly, in the case of Cuba a very long one), one needs to examine with care the sort of political system and economic structure that prevailed in that country between 1943–1959. One can legitimately postulate a Turkish Solution. That is to say, there is a likely short-term solution predicated on military dominance that admits a strong place in the sun for a civilian sector in organization, administration, and law.

A sort of contingent democracy, limiting political democracy while opening private sector initiatives as a means for stimulating a dormant economy, can well be imagined. There might be reparations to expatriates who left the island and also demands for massive Marshall Plan-like aid from the United States, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and like-minded nongovernmental organizations that function more like semi-governmental agencies in times of crisis. All of this will be part of a basket of bargains granted and demanded in the short run. What happens in the long run, say a decade after the termination of the Castro regime, is open to speculation and little else. Exactly how the end of the communist regime comes about, the role of the exile community in re-supplying Cuba with talent and money, the supply and demand of basic goods such as sugar, coffee, and other raw materials, will be factors for lengthy deliberation and determination.

It would be dangerous to assume that the end of the Castro regime is also closure to its Communist Party or its mass cadres built up over the decades. This *demos* [part of the population] will not easily be capped and returned to the genie bottle. Much will depend on exactly how and when Castro is dislodged from the seat of power. If there is a national cohesion of opposition that ends the Castro stranglehold on power, then the prospects for change look reasonably promising. But if there is some sort of effort to impose change from above, some quick effort to return to a democratic status that existed only sporadically in the first third of the twentieth century, then we could well face a lengthy struggle along the lines of Iraq. Ernesto Guevara is already a folk hero of no small proportions, and adding Fidel Castro to the list can only further mobilize guerrilla insurgency and military terror activities once again.

My opinion, and it is only that, is that the rancor and bitterness within the Cuban masses is nowhere near as severe as in places like Iraq or, for that matter, Serbia and Bosnia. Religious divisions may exist, but at far lower levels of antagonism. One must reckon with racial divides between traditional elites, most of whom remain white, and blacks that have tasted a measure of power for the first time. There is also the politicization of the Cuban masses as such, and that factor is unlikely to recede into quiescence and a return to traditional models of super ordinate or *cacique* rule. These elements seem to provide serious grounds for presuming an increasing role for the military, if not to seize power overtly, then at least to maintain civil order covertly. Cuban people are unlikely to decimate or destroy each other in fratricidal combat. But they are quite capable of opting for military solutions in the polity while pursuing free market solutions in the economy.

This anti-scenario scenario is not intended to deflect opponents of the Castro regime from their self-appointed mission. It is to serve notice that those charged with intellectual and



academic rationalizations for political and economic changes [need] to make their policy clientele aware of options. A policy predicated on bringing about democracy without delay in Cuba is different from one focused upon the immediate termination of the reign of Fidel Castro and the Communist Party. Indeed, going one step further, it might be argued that eliminating the Castro regime but retaining Communist Party controls may itself be a reasonable, albeit short-lived approach. This raises the range of issues with which policy makers constantly deal: what is it that we really want to see take place, and when, and under whose auspices? The consequences of conflating policy and principle, however well intentioned, can be risky and even counterproductive. We have seen this in places as far ranging as Vietnam to Bosnia and Iraq—and the consequences require little further elaboration when it comes to examining prospects for Cuban liberation in 2005.

## Questions and Answers

**Q:** Since you are presenting a different view of the potential transformation, I wonder, in your view, if there were a military transition, is there a potential for a positive interaction with the dissidents in Cuba, or would that result in a new divide in Cuba?

**Irving Louis Horowitz:** Absolutely. Again, I think the Turkish model is very important. I think Turkey in the Middle East performed an amazingly positive role: It was a balance wheel between Israel and the Arab Middle East, and it functioned as a pivotal nation in terms of the European Union and its prospects. On the other hand, it is a conservative Muslim society. Yes, of course, the dissidents will have a role to play. They will no longer be dissidents. Some of them will have positions of civil and administrative power. What we are describing here is a situation which is very different from the Castro regime. On the other hand, it is also very different than the expected “democracy from above” that I think many people would prefer to see. I am not describing what is preferable; I am trying to describe what I think is empirically possible.

**Vendulka Kubáľková:** Thank you very much. I cannot refrain from starting on a personal note. This is a very emotional moment for me, to be involved in a celebration of the fall of the Berlin Wall. I was raised under the Iron Curtain. My life was pretty much defined by the Cold War. I did not know anything other than the parameters of life set through the eyes of a child. When it finally collapsed, I could not even believe it, because it was so firmly established in my mind that this was a reality of the world that was never somehow going to collapse. I saw the Berlin Wall myself as a small kid, as a Pioneer on an exchange trip to East Berlin. You know, a Pioneer with the red scarf. And we looked at the soldiers and the dogs and the horrible wall with considerable trepidation. It was a very remarkable moment for me, to be so close to it. Then my childhood was spent forgetting that life could ever be any different. In fact, the only person who never gave up was my grandmother, who was always saying, “It’s going to fall after Christmas. It’s going to happen after Christmas.” And, of course, the “after Christmas” came too late for her, for my family, many of whom died, and for me, because I found myself spending my life on the other side of the Iron Curtain, and I would have loved



to devote my life to my country and work there.

I think it is a pity that we have been obstructed from making a bigger deal of this anniversary. The Cold War was replaced by the War on Terror, and the damage which the Cold War has done to us somehow seems dwarfed by the horrors of terrorism, by the horror of the new problems which the world is facing. And I think it is a great shame, in many regards, that we don't make more of this anniversary and, therefore, I am very grateful to the Czech Republic and the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies for sponsoring this moment of reflection on one of the biggest human revolutions humanity has ever witnessed. I will enlarge on what Professor Horowitz said. It was not really a question of a few European countries; it was actually a question of 28 countries, an estimated 500 million people who at one and the same time decided to give up the Leninist model and embark, all at the same time, on a transition to something else.

I would like to add to the diagnosis of Professor Horowitz that the transitions have not been uniformly successful. If you look at the classifications given from the point of view of how many countries are actually in some sort of form of capitalism or which are, going by Transparency International, free, you will notice that it really is a handful of countries, including the Czech Republic, my homeland, which actually did make it. And, therefore, I think it is very important for Cuba that when "Christmas" comes that they be prepared. It may come in all sorts of shapes and forms, and I think it is very important to actually draw on the reservoir of experience, not only of the Czech Republic, because the Czech Republic started from very different initial conditions. It was not dilapidated and did have some tradition that was still in existence in the minds of the population.

I would like to add my several lessons, if I may, and I am very much trying to summarize them in a staccato form because we do not have a lot of time. First of all, socialism failed everywhere. It has already failed everywhere. Number two, capitalism and democracy, however, do not happen. They have to be built. Three, Leninism breeds landmines not only in the sense of making the interaction of capitalism very, very difficult, but it also breeds landmines in the minds of the population. I think that should not be [understated]. We have had the pleasure of listening to the members of the Czech delegation; we have not quite appreciated that we listened to members of the Czech elite, successful officials of the Czech Republic. What I think is important to recognize is that the Cuban population, like the Czech population, and I can testify because I was raised in such circumstances, have been educated in a state of fear, mistrust, the pseudo-safety of pseudo-equality, and the protection of un-freedom. They have not been raised to handle individualism, which is a primary condition of the successful functioning of democracy and capitalism. Communist doctrine taught all of us to suppress our individuality and actually to practice self-abnegation in the name of goals with which we ceased to agree. Therefore, there is a tremendous amount of cynicism; there is a great deal of pathological fear and envy; there is a great deal of disrespect for property, private property, because that was what we were educated [to believe] was one of the worst evils we could imagine.

Also, it is important to realize that the sense of morality has been completely devastated right across the Soviet Bloc. What I also think is important to note is that even in the Czech Republic, one of the most successful of the transition countries, there is unemployment, which

the Czech population or the ex-communist population has never experienced. The social net has crumbled. My various relatives are very unhappy with the new poverty, which they never could understand. What is also, I think, worrisome is that even in the Czech Republic, in its recent elections, the Communist Party of the Czech Republic scored very well, which, true enough, in democratic circumstances should not matter, but it is, I think, still of some concern.

I think what is also important is to prepare [for the fact] that once the self-imposed Berlin Wall, the “Cuban Wall,” behind which Cuba is barricaded, is actually going to collapse, it will open a very difficult period for which I think no recipe exists. What is very important for all of you who will play a role in it is to anticipate that the reversals of the successes about halfway through the first decade have to be anticipated and prepared for. I have no recipe, no advice about how to address this and how to actually restore to every Cuban who lives behind the Cuban Berlin Wall a sense of trust: trust in other people, trust in institutions, and get them out of the cynicism. I, therefore, think it is a very important task that the Institute of Cuban and Cuban-American Studies is performing of trying to educate the Cubans who are in Cuba waiting for their “Christmas.” Thank you very much.

**Moderator, Alan S. Becker:** On the question of when that Christmas will arrive, I am reminded of two years ago, when President Havel was here in Coral Gables for a visit, and he mentioned at that time that three weeks before the Velvet Revolution, neither he nor anybody else in the Czech Republic would have expected that that would occur within their lifetimes. That events change so rapidly, that it is efforts like these that prepare for those changes, and then when it happens, it happens in the blink of an eye. Likewise, the importance of this date in history when Ambassador Palouš first came to me and suggested this symposium, what he said was that Americans, understandably, and the world understandably, have a clear focus on the events of 9/11, but the events of 11/9, that is, the fall of the Berlin Wall, are very historic and need to be recognized. I now call on Michael Radu. He is the very distinguished head of the Center on Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism of the Foreign Policy Research Institute.

**Michael Radu:** Thank you. Both the time and the previous contributions limit the number of things I can say. Castro has seen himself, and has been seen by everybody, enemies and friends alike, as the symbol of the Cuban Revolution, so to see him stumbling in front of the television cameras is a highly appropriate symbol of what is happening. And I am sure that this is a symbol that is not missed by most people in Cuba. That said, we also have to understand that Cuba, in addition to being a communist country, is a Latin American one as well. So Castro is very different from the faceless bureaucrats of Eastern Europe; he is also a *caudillo* who happens to also be a communist. Both sides are important. Castro as *caudillo* provided for so long the symbol of unity, a center of authority of the ruling elite. With his passing, which seems to be earlier than those who look at family tradition, such as the age of his father, would have hoped, that factor of unity is being weakened. Ultimately, what is going to happen after he dies is very hard to predict, so that is my excuse if I am wrong. But there are a few plausible ways of looking at it. In the very short term, probably it will be something that reminds me of a cartoon of the early '80s referring to the Soviet Union. This was the time when Secretary Generals of the Communist Party were dying every three months or some-

thing. [The cartoon] was of two KGB guards in front of a large bed with a few characters in it. And one of the guards looks at the bed and says, “This one seems to still be moving. I guess he’s the next Secretary General.” Now with Raúl’s health and other problems, that may be the first additional step. But then we are going to have to face the reality, which is the same in every country, which is that there are certain institutions that work, certain institutions that don’t work, and certain institutions that people pretend to have working. The fact of the matter is, from what I understand, in Cuba that is the Communist Party, and its accessories are not really working very well anymore, if they ever did.

So, what are the institutions that work? Obviously, the economic institutions don’t work, and that is admitted even by the regime. So we are left with the one institution which was mentioned by Professor Horowitz already, which is the military. The problem is that the Cuban military is quite different from other militaries in Latin America, in the sense that it is far more heavily involved in the economy than other military institutions in Latin America. Not that those were not involved economically, but not so massively and so directly. So a kind of arrangement in which the military keeps the power and allows technocrats to run the economy, which is not unknown (it happened in Chile in a different context under Pinochet), is perfectly plausible. But then we have to also understand, and this is not an optimistic way of looking at it, perhaps, that this year we not only celebrate fifteen years of the fall of the Berlin Wall, but also this year the Cuban regime has reached the same age as the Eastern European communist regimes had in 1989. And so we have to warn them: what is the legacy of 45 years of communism? I am not going to get into my personal experiences from my home country of Romania, but let’s look into what is happening in Cuba today.

Corruption is a universal phenomenon, and people in Cuba, all of them, have to be corrupt if they want to survive. Everybody has to steal from the only place that has something to steal, which is the state. Now this is not going to change after Fidel and Raúl die. That mentality is going to continue. You can see it in Eastern Europe, even in the most successful Eastern European countries like Slovenia, the Baltics, the Czech Republic, not to mention countries like Romania or Albania or Kosovo. That mentality is not going to change overnight; it will not even change in a generation.

The second issue is that the responsibility of the Cuban people for their own future is much higher, relatively speaking, than that of the Eastern Europeans in 1989. Why? Because in Eastern Europe, ultimately, whatever happened in 1989 happened mostly, not totally, but mostly because something happened in Moscow. That made it possible for the Poles and the Czechs and the Hungarians to do what they did. The Cubans don’t have that excuse, to say, “Well, we can’t do anything because there is Moscow behind [everything] with their tanks preventing change.” Although Castro is trying to convince the Cubans that Washington is somehow the alternative to the East Europeans’ Moscow, I don’t think that works very well. I don’t remember many Eastern Europeans flocking to the Soviet Union to escape communism in their own countries, so the analogy doesn’t work, even for a child.

But we need to be careful of what to expect and especially not to expect too much too early. Ultimately, what Castro is doing is hurrying up the weakening of the system, because this banning of the dollars is in part confiscation, in part an attempt to control the economy further. But it is also going to increase corruption because it is going to expand the black

market arrangements, if that is possible in Cuba, to expand them further. And the black market, by definition, cannot be controlled. So this attempt to control more of the economy and more of the lives of the citizens may, in fact, result in less control, at least for his immediate successors. I am going to stop here. Thank you.

Moderator: Professor Horowitz has one brief comment.

**Irving Louis Horowitz:** Very brief. Something that might mitigate the change in Cuba is the size and the power of the American Cuban community. You can almost imagine an informal Marshall Plan impact on Cuba after Castro falls. Vendulka Kubálková is absolutely right in her analyses. I would only caution and make one point about the weakness of the system, corruption and the black market, some of that will be mitigated by the enormous outpouring of support—financial, organizational, and spiritual—that will come in as a result of the end of Castro. So that might be a positive value to offset the risks involved in this transition process. It doesn't change anything that has been said. I think both Michael Radu and Vendulka Kubálková have spoken very wisely, and I offer a cautionary note, but I would say that one very different element is the American Cuban community, and it ought not to be overlooked in the transition process.

**Vendulka Kubálková:** I think the important factor for the Cubans to consider is what happened to East Germany. One could argue, in fact, that East Germany enjoyed a cushion of West Germany, and it did not work. It did not work. If you compare the figures for Poland and East Germany, you will see that, in fact, the effect of the unification was very damaging to West Germany, and, therefore, a plan like the Marshall Plan I think will have to be done very, very wisely rather than pumping funds into East Germany, which I believe was largely the case. And, therefore, the educational factor, which I think was not considered in the East/West German scenario, is something from which we should learn—to emphasize that you must educate people first before you start throwing dollars.

## PANEL II: *Succession or Transition in Cuba?*

**Brian Latell:** It's very good to be here again. What I'd like to do in these relatively few minutes is engage in a counter-factual future exercise to answer or address Jaime Suchlicki's question: succession or transition?

Imagine that Fidel Castro is on his deathbed. The first thing that I think will happen, once it is clear that it is his deathbed, is that Raúl calls together the general staff of the military, including all of the regional army commanders. He tells the senior military: "We must increase security. We cannot have a *maleconazo*. We cannot have a large exodus of people leaving, running to the beaches, and getting ready to go to Florida. We have to increase security, now that it is clear that Fidel is lingering and he is going to die very shortly; we have to be sure that security is tight." He orders them to arrest more dissidents, to put other dissidents under surveillance, and to do basically on a smaller scale what his brother did at the time just before the Bay of Pigs, to greatly tighten security. The dilemma, though, for Raúl, and he discusses this with his generals is, he says: "Even though we must do all of these things to increase security, we cannot have any Tiananmen Square, we cannot have any mini-Tiananmen Squares, because that would almost immediately undermine the legitimacy of my government." So the first dilemma is how to increase security but to avoid the danger of any kind of outbreak of major violence involving civilians. The funeral for Fidel Castro is a mammoth, a huge, huge manifestation. Tens, hundreds of thousands of Cubans come to the funeral, as well as a number of foreign dignitaries, many presidents from Latin America. Hugo Chávez comes, and he cries; he weeps uncontrollably. There are other Latin American presidents there as well, and they behave a little bit better. A former American president goes. There are a number of American political figures, some of them very noted. All of this poses quite a dilemma for the U.S. State Department and for the administration, whichever administration it is, whether this happens in the next four years or later. What does the American administration do in terms of giving visas and permits to Hollywood celebrities and others who want to go to the funeral? Are they allowed to go or not?

Imagine a month later. The second month after Fidel dies. There had been a month of mourning, official mourning, so not much has happened during the first month of mourning. At the beginning of the second month, Raúl Castro gets up in front of a large audience in the Revolutionary Plaza, and he delivers an hour-and-a-half-long speech, and he reads a letter, which he says was Fidel's last will and testament. It's quite long, of course; it's supposedly written by Fidel, so it's very long, but there is a critical phrase. It says, "Comrade Raúl will lead and carry forward the revolution, I know, with all revolutionary principles and with flexibility." And it is the word "flexibility" that, of course, attracts the most attention. Fidel in this last will and testament seems to be giving Raúl a bit of a blank check. He doesn't necessarily have to do everything exactly the way Fidel did, at least that is the way that people are interpreting it in Cuba. There is a leak from the State Department soon after this speech, and it appears that they don't believe (in the State Department or in the CIA) that Fidel actually wrote that letter. [They say] it's a forgery, that Raúl wrote that letter; one of his people wrote the letter so that he could have more "flexibility," have some maneuverability. Raúl appoints a hardliner to be the Chief of State; he appoints Machado Ventura to be the head of the Council

of State. He [Raúl] wants a hard line, but he wants some flexibility. He names López Miera to be the Minister of the Armed Forces, so he has given up two of his positions, but he retains the other two: he keeps the head of the Party, and he's the head of the government. Raúl begins to appear in civilian clothes. He puts down his uniforms, he retires from the armed forces, and he starts appearing with his wife and with children and grandchildren. He starts to project a public image of the softer side of Raúl. There is economic decompression on a limited scale. There are street vendors now appearing all over Havana. There are flea markets every Saturday and Sunday in many parts of the city, where people are exchanging and selling and auctioning. Many of the *paladares* now have sidewalk cafés. There is some economic decompression, but it is under control.

In the third month after Fidel's death, CNN is reporting that there is a sharp decline in anti-U.S. rhetoric, and there is a lot of head scratching [in Havana] and in Washington about that. What is not known outside of some small circles in Washington is that at the fence line at Guantánamo, where an American and a high-level Cuban military official regularly meet and talk—they meet once a month—at those fence line talks, the Cuban general proposes to the American that military-to-military discussions and contacts be engaged, that Cuba wants to have a direct but secret high level contact with the Pentagon, and they want it to be done in a third country, at a high level, but very discreetly, and to demonstrate their sincerity in this, they secretly inform the Navy Captain at Guantánamo that the two Cuban military pilots involved with the Brothers to the Rescue pilots shoot down have been arrested; they have been removed from their positions and are being held in a prison in Cuba, but they are not willing to announce this publicly. It is a gesture of good faith to encourage high-level, military-to-military ties.

In the fifth month after Fidel is dead, the military must use tear gas to repress some very substantial popular demonstrations in Havana. The rising expectations have just been impossible for the police to control. The military has to go out, they use tear gas, and there are six deaths. Raúl is not sure what to do; he fires one general and two colonels, but it's not clear. He can't determine who gave the order, and he's worried about command and control in the armed forces. This [could mean that] command and control [is] breaking down, [that there are] other disloyal generals and colonels. He's not sure about the armed forces that, remember, he no longer controls.

In the sixth month, Carlos Aldana comes out of retirement. Carlos Aldana returns, and he becomes Raúl's Chief of Staff. The press begins to report that this is Cuba's Deng Xiaoping in waiting, that Aldana is perhaps the Deng Xiaoping of the Cuban succession transition. There are rumors at the same time that Marcos Portal has also come back and is working secretly in Raúl's entourage. And with these two individuals, both of them with reputations, as you know, in the past as relatively progressive reformers, a fierce debate erupts in Raúl's government, a debate between the hardliners and the moderates. Aldana and Portal are telling Raúl, "We can't have the circuses. It's either bread or circuses. Fidel was always able to have the circuses. He was always able to go out and to maintain morale, to, at some level, convince the people because of his charisma because of his historical importance, but Raúl, you can't expect to do that. People are not going to follow you; they are not going to be submissive as they were with Fidel. We have got to provide bread, not circuses." The hardliners, Machado



Ventura and the other hardliners, say, “This is outrageous, we cannot abandon any single element of Fidel’s program. All of his wishes are sacred.”

In the seventh month, it is clear that Raúl is vacillating; he’s not sure whether to go with the hardliners or the moderates. But there is a hard currency crisis, and the economy is sinking into greater and more dire circumstances. Raúl goes to Paris and Frankfurt and Prague, hoping to get international assistance. He says that he is going to open up the Cuban economy and allow foreign investment, even to the extent of majority [foreign] ownership, even to the extent of lifting almost all of the restrictions on Cuban labor and foreign corporations, so he’s tilting toward the moderates.

By the ninth month, the moderates have prevailed. Carlos Aldana replaces Machado Ventura as the president of the Council of State. More and more, he is appearing to be Cuba’s Deng Xiaoping. [Marcos] Portal replaces [Carlos] Lage. Raúl never liked Lage—he has always seen him as so pious, so imperious. So Lage is replaced, and with Portal back in government, what does it matter, a little bit of nepotism in a Cuba run by one of the Castro brothers? There are *samizdat* publications that are appearing, and dissent is being expressed openly.

In the tenth month after Fidel Castro’s death, Oswaldo Payá goes to the Czech Embassy in Havana. There is a press conference, and Payá, with the Czech ambassador at his side, announces that he has collected 600,000 signatures for the Varela Project, all of them done legally, all of them done fairly and openly, 600,000 signatures for the Varela Project.

In the eleventh month after Fidel’s death, Raúl and Carlos Aldana decide to try to adapt a strategy from Mexican history: the *palero* parties that the PRI [*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*] organized and manipulated. They decide that they are going to try the same thing. They organize some *palero* parties, political parties that are not really independent but are meant to give the appearance of being independent. Vladimiro Roca takes charge of one of those *palero* parties; it is called the Cuban National Revolutionary Party. He’s getting money from the government and supposedly is independent, but [the party is] not really independent. These *palero* parties elect representatives to the [National] Assembly, and as many as one hundred of the 609 are supposedly opposition.

In the twelfth month after Fidel’s death, the United States and the Cuban government, Raúl Castro’s government, open defense attaché offices in Washington and Havana. So the United States and Cuba have senior military representatives in each other’s capitals. In that same month, the twelfth month, Raúl delivers another speech, and he announces that the Cuban intelligence service has been providing the U.S. government with actionable intelligence in the counter-terrorism arena, actionable intelligence that resulted in the FBI and the CIA apprehending a number of high-level international terrorists—Muslim, radical, al-Qaeda and other terrorists—and that was because of the Cuban government’s secret cooperation with the United States. Clearly, anyone reading between the lines realizes that by now, in the twelfth month, there has been a secret intelligence liaison between Cuba and the United States. So there are now intelligence and military liaisons.

In the thirteenth month after Fidel’s death, Raúl dies suddenly of liver failure. Carlos Aldana is the first among equals. He brings General Rosales del Toro out of the Sugar Ministry, and he makes Rosales his Vice-Premier. Rosales is now number two, and with

Rosales working with the military, Aldana guarantees security in this new administration. Pérez Roque, the foreign minister, is appalled because Oswaldo Payá is named to replace him; Oswaldo Payá becomes the foreign minister. Pérez Roque flees to the Venezuelan Embassy and seeks asylum. And Cuba, after thirteen months, only thirteen months after Fidel Castro's death, what is it that Cuba has had? Is it a succession, or is it a transition? Or is it elements of both? And how would the United States deal with developments like this? [These months have] been relatively nonviolent, and there have been a number of areas in which cooperation has occurred. The key variables, it seems to me, are, of course, all the ones that we talk about so often: the command and control of the military; the quality of leadership that Raúl would exercise; and the patience, the forbearance, or the militance of the population and the dissident community. And the other key variable, of course, is economic policy. If there is a succession regime, how does that succession regime manage without sweeping economic reforms? And if it does enact sweeping economic reforms, how does it maintain control over the population? So this scenario is a kind of Chinese one, isn't it? Thank you.

**William Ratliff:** "Fidel Castro is history!" That's what most of us thought when the Soviet Union collapsed. The belief that the dictator could not long survive without the massive aid he had received for decades from the Soviet bloc was conveyed by the title of a book by Andres Oppenheimer, *Castro's Final Hour*. More than 100,000 hours have passed since that book was published in 1992, and Castro is still in control, despite periodic hints of mortality. One is reminded of Maximo's sobering joke about Fidel's seeming immortality in Ana Menendez's book, *In Cuba I Was a German Shepherd*. Analysts of Cuban affairs have learned to refer to his eventual departure with more circumspection, focusing on vaguer references to the island's eventual "transition."

If there is an immediate move toward democracy after Fidel goes, then Cuba's leaders may draw some inspiration from the experiences of post-Franco Spain and/or several Eastern European countries that have moved from authoritarian to democratic systems. The prospects for this outcome are perhaps being enhanced by the best-known dissident on the island today, Oswaldo Payá. After introducing the Varela project, Payá released (in December 2002) a detailed "Transitional Program" for greater popular involvement in Cuban affairs beginning now. But in March and April 2003, when I was last in Cuba, Castro responded to Payá and an increasingly active dissident movement with his most brutal wave of arrests and imprisonments in decades, virtually decapitating the dissident movement, proving that formidable obstacles remain to gradual or substantive reform.

In May 2004, the George W. Bush administration's newly established Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba published a program described as a "proactive, integrated, and disciplined approach to undermine the survival strategies of the Castro regime and contribute to conditions that will help the Cuban people hasten the dictatorship's end." In hundreds of pages, it laid out steps to that end, ranging from sharply curtailing Cuban-American remittances and everyone's travel to Cuba to increased support for dissidents on the island. Some of these steps were being implemented by mid-year. Today I will be talking about what I think is the most likely of the post-Fidel "survival strategies" the Commission hopes to subvert.

Many analysts, myself among them, think it likely that after Fidel, the island will remain

for a while under some kind of authoritarian control, whether we and/or the majority of the Cuban people like it or not. If this is so, there are several strategies the country's new leaders might adopt. My comments now are not a blueprint of what I would *like* to see happen after Fidel but what I think most likely to occur. All such speculation is constrained by the fact that we do not know when Fidel will leave us, who will be in position to take power when that time comes, or what domestic and international conditions the new leadership will inherit. What we can anticipate with some certainty is that the maximum leader's successors will inherit a decrepit economy and a potentially highly volatile population.

Fidel's authoritarian successors, should that be the direction the island goes at first, will be sorely taxed just to retain power. If post-Fidel governments are to remain authoritarian for some time, the surviving political and/or military leaders will need to understand that although the Cuban people put up with abject poverty under Fidel, they are not likely to long tolerate such conditions under any other leader. They understand this, and it poses a daunting challenge for them. They will have to undertake substantive developmental reforms in order to retain power, and yet the process itself may create so many additional expectations and demands that the new leadership will be overwhelmed by the changes it unleashes, at least by the medium term.

The survival strategy I will discuss here is the possible Cuban adaptation of some of the ideas and experiences of the past quarter-century in China. During Mao Zedong's lifetime, Chinese leaders supported Maoist, guerrilla-style revolutions throughout the world, a variation on Castro's model at that time. Now, however, Chinese leaders do not promote their "model" for other countries. For example, during a visit to Havana in November 2004, Chinese President Hu Jintao said each country should follow "an independent development path that suits our own country's conditions."

In the broadest of terms, the Chinese model (or learning from China) might be defined as the promotion of primarily export-oriented, market-style economic reforms, by means of programs and institutions that are guided by a largely politically authoritarian government that continues to proclaim itself socialist. There is little specifically "Chinese" in the various parts of this "model." It is more the combination by a successfully reforming major communist, or formerly communist, country. Cuba has a relatively well-educated population and could become a player in globalization quite quickly.

During the past fifteen years, there have been extensive contacts between the two countries. Chinese presidents have visited Cuba three times, Jiang Zemin twice and Hu Jintao in November 2004. And important members of the Cuban political, military, and business elites, including Fidel and Raúl Castro and two-thirds of the members of the Communist Party Politburo, have visited China and remarked with great interest on the Chinese experience. A former high-level Cuban intelligence official, Domingo Amuchastegui, has said that after the younger Castro's visit to China in 1997, Zhu Rongji, the main architect of many of China's economic reforms, sent one of his chief aides to Cuba, at Raúl's request. In Cuba, according to Amuchastegui, he "lectured hundreds of Cuban executives and leaders, causing a tremendous impact."

If this is so, one might well ask why Chinese-style reforms haven't *already* been launched to stimulate Cuba's pathetically stagnant economy? The answer is simple: Fidel Castro

doesn't want them. Fidel is far closer in his ideas and policies to Chairman Mao than to any Soviet or Russian leader or to Deng Xiaoping or any other post-Mao reformist Chinese official. Castro's alliance with the Soviet Union during the Cold War and his often strong and even abusive criticism of China, can be explained largely by his need for Soviet-bloc money, arms, and a nuclear shield during his conflict with the United States. For all practical purposes, Fidel is a Maoist, though he came on his convictions without the guidance of the Chinese leader. Like Mao, he cannot abandon his old ideas at the end of his life without admitting that his career has been a sham. So, like Mao, he undoubtedly will embrace egalitarian socialism until the very end.

At the same time, although Fidel will never tolerate Chinese-style market reforms while he rules, he has provided "theoretical grounds" for such changes when he is gone, which is more than Mao ever did. Consider Castro's shifting attitude toward China's foremost reformer, indeed true revolutionary, Deng Xiaoping. When Deng took power in the late 1970s, Castro called him a "numbskull" (*mentecato*) and a "caricature of Hitler." But when Deng died in 1997, Castro referred to him as "an illustrious son of the Chinese nation" who had made a "valiant contribution to the consolidation of socialism in China." When Fidel (in his wheelchair) awarded Hu Jintao the Order of José Martí in late 2004, he declared his independence from the Chinese experience by saying that each country must have policies that respond to its concrete conditions. But he went on to say that socialism will remain "the only real hope for peace and the survival of our species," as has been "indisputably demonstrated" by the Chinese people and their Communist Party. China is "the most promising hope and best example for all the countries of the Third World." Thus, future Cuban leaders can argue that, as the maximum leader accepted China's reforms as "consolidating socialism" in China and the best example for the Third World, they [such reforms] must be appropriate for Cuba as well.

There are indications that many of Cuba's probable post-Fidel leaders are strongly inclined in that direction, as was suggested by the warm welcome Zhu Rongji's deputy received in Cuba in the late 1990s. Ambassador Alcibiades Hidalgo, who was Raúl's top aide and a Cuban UN ambassador, said last spring that the younger Castro "has sympathized for many years with change in the Chinese style, that is, capitalism or something like it in the economy but a single party and repression of politics." Former intelligence official Amuchastegui added, "Once Fidel Castro is out of the game, other areas of the Chinese experience [beyond the role of the military in the economy] will most probably be implemented in Cuba rather quickly."

So, more specifically, but briefly, what are some of the potential lessons from the Chinese experience that might be adapted in post-Fidel Cuba?

1. Above all, Cubans need a new way of thinking, different from both the egalitarianism of the Castro decades and the paternalism of the colonial centuries. Despite the proven business successes of many Cuban-Americans in Miami, this may be the most difficult lesson of all. There are indications that many Cuban officials are more pragmatic than they seem today, but one should never underestimate the difficulties inherent in changing the ways people think and act.

Several Cuba specialists at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, with whom I have discussed this subject at length, emphasize that first and foremost, Cuban leaders and people need to smash (*da-po*, an uncompromising word in Chinese) the stifling egalitarianism of the Castro period. Cubans must turn instead to promoting initiative, market productivity, and growth. The Chinese specialists argue that when Cuban government policies encourage individuals and groups, domestic and foreign, to produce, the economy will expand, and living standards will rise for most Cubans, as they have for the majority of the Chinese people. The fact that Chinese leaders and people seem to have made this change so successfully, despite their millennia-long traditional and Maoist histories, might in itself be considered an inspiration to Cubans, with their much shorter history, to do the same.

2. One important aspect of this change in thinking, but also a separate matter unto itself, relates to dealing with nationals in exile. Overseas Chinese were critical to China's reform process. They quickly returned to China with their money and skills, took advantage of the new business opportunities, and adapted to the limitations imposed by the continuing authoritarian political system. Overseas Cubans, particularly in America, are numerous, and many are wealthy, highly skilled, and well connected. They—many of you—could make a major contribution to rapid economic development in Cuba even during a post-Fidel, authoritarian period. At present, most Cubans, wherever they are, do not seem disposed to such cooperation, and U.S. policy rejects it. In fact, for mainly cultural and institutional reasons, a post-Fidel authoritarian government in Cuba will not need diaspora support as much as did the government in Beijing. A reforming post-Fidel government will have easier access to nonexile funds and skills than the Chinese did in their early years of reform.

3. In the past fifteen years, China has created a so-far successful model of peaceful and orderly political and military succession within a “communist” system. Deng Xiaoping began it, and it has continued through Jiang Zemin to the current Hu Jintao. Deng, Jiang, and Hu have been largely successful as supreme Chinese leaders despite serious continuing challenges of many sorts, because China's reforms have in most ways benefited a substantial majority of the people. Though Fidel has designated Raúl as his successor and is coaching some younger Cuban followers, Cuba does not have institutions for orderly succession within an authoritarian system, as were developed by the Chinese. This is not surprising. The succession in China was not created by Mao, the Chinese Fidel, but by his first major successor as a way of avoiding the emergence of another Mao-like despot.

4. China achieved the longest period of double-digit economic growth of any major country in modern history by undertaking economic reforms that promoted (often by simply permitting) initiative, competition, and production among a long suppressed but potentially highly creative and industrious people. These reforms ranged from the wholesale transformation of current institutions and practices to the encouragement of private shops and industries of all sizes, something Castro, like Mao, viscerally rejects. Many of the potential specific changes are enumerated by Carmelo Mesa-Lago in his 2002 study, entitled *Growing Economic and Social Disparities in Cuba*, published by the Cuba Transition Project. After reading Mesa-Lago's list of necessary reforms, a prominent Chinese analyst noted that all of the economic recommendations are possible and desirable. “But,” he reiterated, “the most important thing is not specific measures, but a changing of the traditional mentality among



the people.”

5. The Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) was for some years a major player in Chinese economic development. The Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) is already much involved in the Cuban economy, the only Chinese-style [reform] Fidel has permitted, though not yet so broadly [involved] as the PLA was in the early 1990s. Because the FAR is the most relatively efficient and highly trained institution in Cuba, the prospects are that its role will expand in the foreseeable future. The negative qualities of the Chinese PLA experience for a military force, ranging from corruption to loss of institutional focus, are also already evident in Cuba. In time, Cuba may want to examine how in recent years the Chinese have *reduced* the PLA’s involvement in most economic activities. In November 2004, the Chinese government announced that it will begin auditing all high-level military officers involved in finance work.

One of the critical unanswerable questions today is what the Cuban military and police would do in the event of a major uprising against Fidel or against a successor. Deng Xiaoping’s conviction that stability is essential for steady economic growth under authoritarian guidance was demonstrated by the Tiananmen repression of June 4, 1989. Fidel Castro approved of Deng’s use of the military in that crisis, but it is unclear to what degree the Cuban police or military would follow the PLA example, especially if Fidel were gone.

In conclusion, the types and timetables of reforms in Cuba are impossible to predict with certainty. Many of us conclude that Cuba is more likely to move slowly than rapidly toward an open society. But even if political change comes gradually, economic development is likely to be more rapid, very probably patterned in part on ideas gleaned from the Chinese, or still more gradual Vietnamese, politically authoritarian reform experiences. Many in Cuba and abroad would consider such movement to be positive (if not ideal) both for the economic well-being of the Cuban people and for the country’s step-by-step entry into the modern world. It is up to Cubans on the island and abroad to decide how they want to proceed.

**Alcibiades Hidalgo:** First of all, I’d like to thank Professor Suchlicki for this opportunity to take part in this seminar and a special thank you to Ambassador Martin Palouš for this effort to share the experience of the Czech people.

I hope a lot of you noticed that in that very clear and accurate picture that Professor Latell presented about the possible events in Cuba after the death of Fidel Castro that I was not mentioned as a possible successor to be called to Raúl’s side. I appreciate that very much.

Given the limited time, I just intend to summarize some personal experience as a participant for some time in Cuban party leadership and intergovernmental relations today in this seminar. Fifteen years ago, the same day the Berlin Wall was falling into pieces, Cuban troops in Angola, the overall military force, was not less than 50 men at that time and had already begun its organized withdrawal from that distant African country. Under the frame of international accords sponsored by the United Nations and under UN supervision, that agreement signed in UN Headquarters in New York was, by the way, the most important negotiation that involved Cuba and the US since Fidel Castro came to power and was signed with tri-mediation of the United Nations, the United States and with the direct participation of the Soviet Union who was at the time, the most important ally of Cuba in all fields. The Soviet defeat in



Afghanistan was recognized as one of the reasons of the Soviet Empire's collapse was very different in comparison to the Cuban withdrawal from Angola. It was internationally negotiated as a peaceful solution that included the independence of Namibia and for Cuba it was, as a matter of fact, the end of the long history of internationalist missions or adventures in Africa and elsewhere going on for more than thirty years. The contrast between Afghanistan and Angola is just one example that should be taken into consideration to explain why, against all odds, the Castro regime survives until today [without] its most powerful allies.

Fidel Castro's initial reaction to the events that marked the end of Communist domination in Eastern Europe and the disappearance of the Soviet Union in 1991 was to ignore those facts. In his typical reaction to problems with no solution at hand, Castro put the entire blame on the personal mistakes or treacherous actions of Mikhail Gorbachev or his dubious intentions to reform socialism and announced an imperialist conspiracy and influence as the reason for this historical change. Fidel Castro avoids the analysis of these events and practically prohibits their discussion in the higher echelons of the Cuban *nomenklatura*. A new wave of extreme nationalism replaced the usual socialist content in official speech. The disappearance of the former socialist bloc forced the search of new international forums to display an image of the Cuban revolution now victimized more than ever before and under siege by the world's only superpower. The US embargo, ignored in practical terms during the long thirty years of a Soviet-sponsored economy, the one and only "special period" of the Cuban Revolution by the way, came to the stage as the priority of Cuban diplomatic efforts and as the scapegoat in international and internal arenas.

The first and only popular uprising in Havana in 1994 launched the reluctant acceptance of some changes aimed only at the survival of the regime, as the passing of time would demonstrate. Five years later, in 1999, when Havana finally hosts a meeting of Ibero-American heads of state, a gathering that accepted Castro and his participation in 1991, Fidel Castro didn't hide his real intentions of apparent reforms without political change at the time of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and proclaimed in the presence of the King of Spain, Juan Carlos I, that he listened to the advice for openness of different leaders of Spain and Latin America with Mona Lisa smiles.

The selected model to face the new and extremely difficult circumstances was a very limited economic reform without political change. Some economists prefer to label as "adjustment measures" those incoherent decisions presented as the long-awaited return of reform in the Cuban economy. Among them, foreign investment, the appearance of farmers' markets again, some room for private activities and the free circulation of US dollars. The project of a socialist in society vanished. For a long time there was not an ideological or political answer among the Cuban governmental elite to what had happened in the rest of the world, except the continuous appeal of the threat of an invasion, the blaming of every kind of difficulty on the US embargo, or the victimization of the country that reached its peak during events related to the Elián González affair. That moment marked the turning point in the reestablishment of Castro and the Communist Party at the top of Cuban society in the mid-1990s. It was a message of nationalism, of willing obedience to the Maximum Leader and survival as the main purpose of that regime. The supposed "Battle of Ideas," the monotonous display of propaganda designed in the mid-1990s, still prevails and characterizes the internal

political development.

The refusal of the Chinese model or the Vietnamese model, towards which a considerable number of political and economic cadres were or are inclined, but with results unacceptable to Castro, has been moderated, with a considerable part of the Cuban economy under the military establishment. The Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) is the most important institution of the regime, first even to the Communist Party, and intertwined with it in the upper echelons. Economic projects controlled by the military represent now more than a third of the Cuban economy in selected fields. Their existence represents a new form of the war for loyalties and a definite form of corruption. It is also one of the most organized ways to preserve the control of the Communist Party in the event of change. Those economic structures play an important part of the clandestine organization that the Party is supposed to adopt in the event of losing political power partially or completely.

Nevertheless, in this mostly gray picture of Cuban society, the most important event during the last decade was the public presence of an extended opposition that has gained importance both internally and internationally, which unfortunately lacks a clear and decisive unity and leadership. In any case, unity and leadership have been imposed on Cuban society in such a way and for so many years that it becomes difficult to praise it under our circumstances.

The old leader finally remained in power to see the new century, but only in the final stage of his regime. The prevailing tendencies in Cuba are those of a return to political isolation and economic centralization. Strained relations with Europe since last year will continue most probably despite the current efforts to soften the current sanctions. On the other hand, the intimate relation established with Hugo Chávez in Venezuela represents an indispensable support to the perpetual economic crisis but very far from the Soviet aid years, and the rise of several elected Center-Leftist governments in Latin America from Brazil, Ecuador and now Argentina, to very recently Uruguay, certainly oppose that trend of isolation. But even in these cases, Cuba remains a peculiar political phenomenon to which no one wants now to resemble. One of the most obvious failures of the Cuban revolution is that in its final years it represents more a disturbing reference rather than an ideal to the Latin American left.

The current situation has been exposed in detail during this morning's presentations: the sugar industry, the generation of energy, agricultural production and the factories for general goods rest in shambles. The military has become more active in the daily affairs of the economy, and corruption prevails as a part of Cuban society. There is no strategic idea for finding an end to the crisis and today Fidel Castro remains in power with power as his ultimate purpose. The refusal to acknowledge the existence of a legitimate, pacific and democratic opposition is a key factor in the presentation of the Cuban situation as a bilateral and historical conflict with the United States. Castro only recognizes one enemy, and accommodates all his political movements to keep that situation as such. The Sixth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party has been delayed now for more than two years due to the absence of solutions or even promises to present to the population. Through shuffles and changes in the Party and upper government bodies show, on the other hand, a clear tendency to position the "old guard" and some of the most faithful young leaders in the most desired posts in the event of the most awaited death in Cuban history.

The word "transition" does not exist in official language. The succession of power from

Fidel to his brother Raúl is the only possible scenario foreseen by the regime. In these terms, “socialist” equals independence, self-determination, homeland, and even the honor of the Cuban nation. And Fidel Castro will use these concepts as long as he is alive. That legacy will be extremely heavy for anyone who tries to succeed him.

This seminar asks us to think about the lessons learned after the Berlin Wall fell. In spite of the resistance to accept the number of changes that the country would suffer after the physical disappearance of Fidel Castro, a handful of Cuban political and military leaders that govern Cuba according to the decisions of the Castro brothers have also learned their own lessons from the collapse of the Soviet Empire. Fidel Castro opposed in the beginning Gorbachev’s efforts to reform Socialism and understood that they would represent a “no way out” situation for the system. For fifteen years now, and despite his acute sense of political pragmatism for remaining in power, Fidel Castro had opposed the most simple and common sense economic reforms that would improve the situation of the Cuban people, showing a complete indifference to the dramatic change in the way of life for most of the population during the last decade, and imposing an almost unbearable price to the possible successors. The Cuban political elite, the Communist Party and the military have learned from the lesson of socialist collapse in Europe. In the political field, the Party, for instance, has studied these events as much as possible. The Cuban Party has studied in every detail the development of the worker’s revolt in Poland and the role of the National Army and the Polish Party in that situation, trying to learn as much as possible about the reasons of the Polish crisis and, in some cases, modifying policies in Cuba, very close to the ones that provoked the foundations of independent trade unions in Poland.

Today, fifteen years after the Berlin Wall fell, the Cuban political elite is very well aware of the different processes that ended the former Communist empire. The art of survival after chaos, the experiences of former Communist officials or Parties that are still sharing power, or members of those Parties or their secret services in relevant economic positions in a new system are part of those experiences. The possible developments of Cuba after Fidel Castro are, as is well known, of a very different nature. The internal collapse provoked by economic and social crisis is always one very important among them, but most likely the internal succession will be performed in any case, with more possibilities of prolonging the agony [under] Castro if Raúl takes power as the designated successor. The Communist Party, despite Fidel Castro’s unwillingness to prepare for the future, will try at any cost to remain in power, and is working right now for it. The country, after several decades of economic mismanagement and a final period of chaotic machinations, presents the worst scenario for economic reconstruction, even worse than anything that happened in Europe, with the possible exception of Albania. The absence of a democratic tradition in Cuban society is also one of the most important challenges. Since 1948, Cubans haven’t had the possibility of a democratic choice of government. Lessons should be learned from our history during that first half of the twentieth century. Transition, possibly after a short but difficult type of succession is, in this condition, the most foreseeable future. That transition will be a solution only if it comes from the internal factors, first of all the opposition. Cubans on both shores of the Florida Straits have to have the most important role in that change. Thank you.

**Carlos Saladrigas:** Thank you, Jaime, and it is certainly a pleasure to be here today. Before I start, I would like to express, and I'm sure on behalf of everyone who is here, a very deep appreciation to the Czech Republic, to Ambassador Palouš and President Havel, for all that they do, and they do an awful lot, for Cuba's future. Thank you.

I think we have certainly listened to very, very interesting points of view, very interesting alternatives, and what I will try to do is to summarize what I think are some of the most important conclusions, questions that still remain unanswered, and thoughts on what can we do. Clearly, if we were having this conference in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall, which is now fifteen years ago, the mood in the room would be very different. I think, if I remember correctly, there was a sense of optimism that Cuba would be very close, that Cuba was next, that it was going to happen very soon. And here we are, fifteen years later, having the same kinds of discussions, the same kinds of concerns and the same kinds of issues that we were having, or would have had, at that particular point in time. I think there are three fundamental lessons from all of these transitions that have taken place, not only in Eastern Europe, but also in the Pacific Rim and other places, that are incredibly important to the future of Cuba and how the Cuban transition will ultimately take place.

The first of those reminds me of that biblical phrase where Jesus was talking about the end of time, and says, "Only the Father knows the day and the time." And it is so true. One of the conclusions that we have seen from all of these transitions is that no one would have been able to predict, before the transition takes place, the "when" and the "how" of the transition that actually took place afterwards. So it is very, very difficult to predict, and it is very difficult to understand how these transitions are going to take place.

The second main lesson is that these transitional processes are not static or binary. In other words, this theme that we always hear about of a transition or a succession—I think is an incredibly binary way to look at things that in process are much more dynamic and multifaceted, multidimensional, if you wish, in many ways.

The third conclusion that I think is particularly important for us is that so much of how it happens and when it happens is simply outside of our control. Therefore, because we cannot control those events, our thinking needs to be how we can then help create conditions that are more favorable for that transition to happen in the "right" way, in terms of what we would like to see.

We sort of know where we are, and we sort of know where we want to go. The real question is how to do it. And it reminds me of a conversation that I had a couple of years ago with a leading cleric in Cuba, the conversation was, of course, here in Miami; we were having dinner in a restaurant in downtown Miami, and he said, "You know, I know just about everyone in the Cuban elite, and I can tell you that just about every one of these people intellectually recognize that there is a need for change, understands that change is inevitable, but the real difficulty that they have is what ought to be step number one and steps number two and three. So, clearly, what we have is a situation where there is a dearth of solutions, of viable models for change that we can put on the table. And this is one of the reasons I think that the Varela Project is so important, because, regardless of your views on the Varela Project—and clearly there is a lot of difference of opinion—it is a model for change. It is a physical model for change that can lead to a process of change.

What we do know about all of these transitions is that they fundamentally have three tracks. These tracks are independent, although they are definitely interrelated with each other. There is an economic track, there is a political track, and there is a social/cultural track. Not all of these tracks move at the same speed in all of these transitions. Where the economic track moves faster, you have something that more closely resembles the Chinese model. Where the political track moves faster and leaves the economic and social tracks behind, you have potential scenarios for transition where the economy lags so far behind that it creates enormous problems in the transition to democracy. The model implicit in the Chinese model, which is “development first, democracy later” is by no means the best model. In fact, there is ample evidence to suggest that “democracy first, development later” works, in many ways, much more effectively than the Chinese model does. Nevertheless, what we need to understand is that they both work. And the real issue for us is, “How can you get the process of change—if you think of change along these three tracks—how can we get them moving?” And ultimately, getting those tracks moving is going to have substantially more consequences and be ultimately more important than the endpoint, where you want these tracks to terminate.

This leads us to understand how change could take place in Cuba and what is required for change. For change to happen, I think there need to be three fundamental elements: capacity for change (or power to change), willingness for change, and preparedness for change. If you then take all of the different stakeholders in the Cuban situation—the Cuban people, the internal opposition, the exile community, and the Cuban ruling elite—and you rank each of these stakeholders according to these three conditions for change, and you give them values of low, medium, and high, you will quickly see that, of all the stakeholders, the only one that has a significant or high capacity for change are individuals who are in the Cuban elite. Whereas, on the other hand, while the willingness for change exists in the Cuban people, the willingness exists in the exile community, but you have to ask yourself: How well prepared are these particular stakeholders for the change if and when it comes?

This leads to the question of what we need to do, which is to create an incentive to move things forward. One of the things we really need to do is to increase the power of the internal opposition for change: in other words, to increase the people’s capacity for change and the capacity of the internal opposition in Cuba to have more power to cause change. But I think it is also important to understand that we need a strategy to increase the willingness of the ruling elite to create and to cause change. And to do that, there is a very simple equation. The willingness to change exists when the urgency for change—plus the rewards of change—exceed the costs of change. It is a very simple, if you wish, mathematical equation, and again, that tells you what kinds of strategies we need to be pursuing, what kinds of activities we should be pursuing. Clearly, we need to increase the urgency of change, we need to increase the rewards of change, and we need to do everything we can to decrease the costs of change.

Cuba went through a period that was called the *período especial*. I really believe that we are entering a new period that is called “the delicate period,” *el período delicado*. And I mean that very sincerely. We are approaching a moment where change is becoming more likely than ever, more imminent than ever. I think how we approach those processes of change and how we create the conditions that are propitious for change to take place in a manner that is peaceful [are important considerations]. I think almost everyone would share the conclusion



that it is almost an imperative that change be peaceful in Cuba, just as it was in most of the Eastern European nations, and that is clearly the way we want it. Cuba certainly deserves no less than that. It is there, in those conditions, that I think we need to continue to work and create and foster a climate that facilitates change and that gets that process of change going as fast as we can. Starting change sooner is better than prolonging it. We need to look at the Eastern European experience and look for those policies that existed pre-transition and look for those that worked, look for those that were effective, and emulate those models that, in essence, helped to produce (not caused) desirable transitions in these European countries. Thank you.

**Hans de Salas-del Valle:** Thank you. I'll begin with a disclaimer: The views you are about to hear are not necessarily the views of Dr. Suchlicki or of the University of Miami. I'd like to get that out of the way out front. I'd like to take this rare opportunity to address the people here quite honestly, the way I see things after the day-in, day-out study of Cuba—Cuban foreign affairs, U.S.-Cuba relations—and basically I'm going to play the role of devil's advocate here and keep away from euphemisms. I want to throw some cold water on the euphoria that really wonderful change in Cuba is imminent, at least in the near future.

To begin with, Cuba is different, and ideally there are a lot of lessons that could be learned from the experiences of Eastern Europe and some of the former Soviet republics. However, that really presupposes a collapse of the present regime to begin from scratch, and I don't see that happening. First of all, not as long as Fidel Castro is alive, nor once a succession takes place, and I will try to summarize some of the key views I have.

To begin with and to reiterate, there is not going to be a Velvet Revolution in Cuba, at least not if Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, and the successor regime have their way. The internal opposition [members], while very brave and outspoken, are nonetheless neutralized, and I'd like to really stress that. In recent years, there has been a lot of talk about how change must come from within Cuba, and, as rhetoric, that is very beautiful. But as a political reality, I think it's quite misleading. The opposition in Cuba has been neutralized, literally decapitated by the imprisonment of the seventy-five dissidents, completely infiltrated by Cuban intelligence, and most Cuban people today are what I would call politically apathetic. They have no love for their government, but at the same time they are not about to go out and risk their necks. I'm talking about the great mass of the Cuban people, which will ultimately be the quiet decision makers, rather than those who are active, openly in dissent in opposition to the regime.

Mr. Hidalgo mentioned something very important in his remarks, and that is that there were many lessons learned after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and Fidel Castro and his inner circle have been studying them. There are a lot of intelligent people working for him, they have been studying them, but they have been studying them in reverse. In other words, "How can we avoid the fate of the communist ruling elite in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union?" And Fidel Castro has been historically, I think by the United States, by the Cuban-American community, and by most observers, underestimated. He is a diabolical man, if you will, but a very intelligent one, with very capable people working for him, and they have taken these past fifteen years studying what has taken place in places like the Czech Republic, even in the former Soviet Union, precisely to avoid that being the fate of Cuba. Dr. Ratliff mentioned the



case of China, and I think this is really where the regime is going, again, if it has its way. It is true that Fidel Castro is a man who is motivated first and foremost by ideology, hence I think that the analogy with Mao Zedong is very accurate. This does not mean, however, that those who will come after him, the “Deng Xiaopings,” are any great lovers of democracy or a free market society. There may be a market, there may some form of capitalism, but it certainly is not going to be free, and it is certainly not going to be in the context of a liberal democracy.

What we can pretty much foresee at this point is once Fidel Castro passes away and leaves his great political legacy, there will an opportunity for Raúl Castro and his group of *talibanes* to implement and leave their great economic legacy, which is an orderly succession à la China and Vietnam, and in a way the key to assure that is already taking place. And something that has not been mentioned today, obviously because it is mentioned all the time, is U.S.-Cuba relations. The Cuban government has been very effective, particularly in the last three years, precisely under one of the administrations that has taken or is perceived to have taken, one of the toughest positions against the Cuban government, in cultivating a strong lobby, a very strong economic lobby in the United States. I think the Chinese and the Vietnamese understood this very well, since beyond the political rhetoric of democracy and human rights, what matters are economic interests, ultimately. *Lo que importa es el “cash”* [what matters is cash], as we used to say around here. I think Cuba understands this lesson very well. The Chinese have been very successful in, and I’ll speak frankly, in co-opting the United States and the Western world. I think anyone would be pressed to prove that there is anything akin to democracy today in China or in Vietnam, yet they enjoy (the regimes, that is) at least the passive support of their populations. Why? Not because there is democracy, far from it, but because the average person on the street in China and Vietnam has seen an improvement in their lot. Even if they work under quasi-slave conditions, it still is better than what Mao had them under. So, I think it comes down to, for the Cuban regime, a plan for a very orderly, and that is something bad for those who want democracy, but good for them, a very orderly succession once Fidel Castro passes away. And I think his passing has always been anticipated outside of Cuba. He may recover quite well from this fall in six months, and there still may be Fidel for a long time to come, so I think it would be premature to predict his demise any time soon.

Nonetheless, I think there is a well-thought-out plan to lead Cuba down the path of an authoritarian transition. The Cuban people at this point are so desperate. Every three or four months we host, at the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami, groups of newly arrived Cubans who have been here on average about six months to a year or so, and among the things you hear when you get to the collective views of what would happen under a likely succession once Fidel Castro passes away, they admit that even a modest improvement in the economic conditions, in the living conditions of the average Cuban would be enough to quell whatever rioting [or] dissent exists on the island. And I think Raúl and those around him understand this very well, and that is where they are moving. Now, to get back to U.S.-Cuban relations—and again, this is going to be critical—the Cuban government has been very successful in circumventing, essentially, the Cuban-American community, going directly to negotiate with the real powerbrokers in the United States, both in the Democratic and Republican parties.

Let’s clear the air a little bit, and I really want to say this before I lose my train of thought.

Now that the elections are behind us, I think it's fair to say, at least as I see things, that had there been a change in administration, I think there would have been a lot of celebrating in Havana, and I think we would have probably seen, if not a total collapse of the U.S. embargo, certainly an undermining of the embargo within the next few years. The Cuban-American community has won for itself, perhaps, four years to work with. And not only the Cuban-American community, but those who would like to see a genuine transition, and not a succession, to democracy and a free market on the island. However, Cuba also has its lobby, those who have a financial, commercial interest in business with Cuba, and will continue to do business with those with whom they have already negotiated contracts. I am referring, of course, to the astronomical growth of trade in agricultural and food products between the United States and the island. This has essentially won Cuba, along with its traditional friends in Congress, enough votes at this point not only to overturn the travel ban, should there be the political desire to challenge the president, to overturn a presidential veto, but also to gut the embargo. This is how close Cuba is to a tremendous victory.

So I agree with Mr. Saladrigas; the next four years will be a defining period, will be pivotal. Cuba will either consolidate its position and prepare to embark on a very orderly, and ultimately, I believe, very successful, from their point of view, that is, transition. They might co-opt the great phrase devised by one of Clinton's advisors: "It's the economy, stupid." Yes, it is the economy. In fact, we see that throughout Latin America. Recently, there was a somewhat controversial poll taken throughout democratic Latin American nations, and somewhere between 40 and 50 percent of the people said that they would prefer an authoritarian regime, in other words, less democracy, if they could have a better standard of living. I think Raúl Castro understands that. And the regime understands that. Fidel Castro will leave his political legacy, and they will respect that. And then they will get busy to work with very pragmatic economic reforms. Now, reforms à la China and Vietnam. Again, there will be some form of state capitalism. They may or may not allow the *bicitaxis* to operate, but they certainly are not going to allow grassroots capitalism to take place. They, the government, the state, the regime, will be the ultimate powerbroker, and it will be on their terms. An elite will arise. Egalitarianism as such will be relegated to nice rhetoric. In Cuba, an elite already exists, and that elite may grow. And by offering the average Cuban on the street the opportunity to become a part of the ruling and economic elite, they will have co-opted the population. And the great mass of Cuban people will not want to risk a major uprising. They will not want to risk the possibility of chaos. Like many of these same Cubans that I referred to who have arrived recently and have taken part in the groups that we have interviewed, they tell us that they have left Cuba and they want their family members to come, but they have no interest in rebuilding Cuba, in building capitalism. As they say, they have spent forty-five years trying to build socialism, and they have failed miserably at it—let others build capitalism. Thank you.

## Questions and Answers

**Moderator, Jaime Suchlicki:** These have been very stimulating presentations and have raised a lot of questions, so let me use the prerogative of the moderator to ask the first question: What would happen if Raúl were to die simultaneously with Fidel or before Fidel?

What kind of scenario can we anticipate? Can we anticipate an acceleration of transition? A Latin American-type military dictatorship? What would happen?

**Brian Latell:** Raúl dies before Fidel: That is the scenario for the most likely destabilization of all of the scenarios that we talked about. Raúl dies first, and all of the lines of succession are thrown open simultaneously. Fidel has to appoint someone to be the successor in the Party, the State, the Council of Ministers, and he has to think of someone else to run the military. Raúl has run the military since October 1959 and is the longest serving Defense Minister in the world, and by far there is no one that comes even close to him. That is one of the keys to the stability of this regime: one man has run the military. Fidel has never had to run the risk of finding someone else to run the military. So if Raúl dies first, my view is, hold on to your seats, because it's going to start getting really wild very quickly. And if Raúl were to die at a time when Fidel has further deteriorated, both physically and mentally, then I think that that is a prescription for short-term violent upheaval in Cuba.

**Alcibiades Hidalgo:** I agree totally with what Professor Latell explained. There is no such thing as "a third" in Cuba. That means Fidel Castro is absolutely the first one, and Raúl Castro is absolutely the second one. Nobody else has been in a position, except for Carlos Aldana, in the same way, and that is a fantastic idea, to bring him back. And this situation is very possible, because Raúl Castro is not in the best health. It is going to be a very disorienting situation for the Cuban leadership.

On the other hand, it must be understood that the ones that share the many positions, Machado Ventura in the Party or Colomé Ibarra from the Ministry of Interior, and so on, are there because they are loyalists. There is no new wave of leadership. There are some young people who are gathered around Fidel, but I think that they are not recognized by the real power elite in Cuba. Some Cuba analysts, such as Carlos Alberto Montaner, who is here, have already explained that these young people have the power of proximity to the maximum leader that will disappear with him. I don't think any one of them will be in a position to succeed Fidel Castro.

**Frank Calzón:** I neither agree with Carlos Saladrigas' or Hans de Salas' reviews. I think the whole notion of economic determinism as a way of looking at Cuba misses a lot of other factors. The revolt against Batista was not the result of economics. The whole idea of looking at Cuba as a static situation and ignoring the issue of growing expectations, I think, is very risky. And I was shocked to learn that we are in such a bad situation in Washington. I don't know who is monitoring Washington at the Center [for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies], Jaime, but the Cuba Working Group, the most important group that wants to change policy, just lost seven to eight votes, and Mr. [Jeff] Flake [R, Arizona], the most important member of the House on getting rid of the travel ban, was so unsure about what was going to happen that he refrained from presenting his bill. So it is not a question of philosophy; it is a question of adding. I think things are changing in Washington, I think they are changing in our direction. And I think we have to do more.

**Q: Mario Roque,** from the Miami Medical Team. My question is the following: I have heard all about scenarios and elements and factors. There is one factor I haven't heard about, and that is the Chávez factor in a future post-Castro Cuba, if he really decides to help whoever gets in power with fuel supplies.

**Hans de Salas-del Valle:** Yes, I think that is a very good point. The same way that Cuba has arguably played a pivotal role in ensuring first the rise of power of Chávez and the continuity of his regime, I think you could see that in the future as well. To a more limited extent, but nonetheless, Chávez could side with the hardliners in the regime and promise them continuous support and threaten those that would undermine Castro's revolution with no more oil. Of course, he could also infiltrate Cuba with intelligence operatives and things of that nature. So, yes, he could play an important role, but the real direction is going to be determined from within Cuba, and Chávez could play a supporting role.

**Moderator:** There are two other countries supporting Cuba right now. One is China, and the other is Iran, so Cuba has economic and other relationships with other regimes in the world. So it's not only the influence that Chávez can exert in Cuba, but it is the influence of China and the Iranians and others.

**Q:** I have a question for Mr. Hidalgo. This is a matter of curiosity and very simple: What took you so long to change? What makes you different now? Why do you want to be with us? We are curious to know why you have changed after so long.

**Alcibiades Hidalgo:** I don't think it would be a matter of general interest to this seminar, but, in any case, I just want to comment that a lot of people in Cuba believe in that government and work for it honestly, thinking that they are doing what is best for the country. It happens sometimes you realize that you were wrong, and that was my case. And I'm sure that that is the case of a lot of people inside the Cuban government. But, in any case, that political situation is the result of very different factors in our history, and it would take too long to discuss with you right now.

**Q:** If, after Castro disappears and there is a bloody Tiananmen in Cuba, how would the United States react to that scenario?

**Brian Latell:** It's probably a nightmare for the relatively few officials in Washington who even consider that possibility. It's a nightmare because the political dynamic of that kind of scenario would be so difficult. There would be such a cry, here and in other parts of the country, including in Washington, such a demand for strong U.S. action, that it would be a very, very difficult policy dilemma. I don't know how the United States could ignore a Tiananmen, anything like a Tiananmen. If it were on the scale of what happened in Tiananmen Square, with a few thousand people. . . .

**Q:** Would that precipitate an American intervention in Cuba?

**Brian Latell:** It is not inconceivable at all.

**Q:** I am a former political prisoner. I spent almost sixteen years in Castro's jails. As you may all well know, there have been approximately 150,000 political prisoners in Cuba by this time. This, as we all know, will increase in the future. Right now, we have approximately 400 political prisoners in Cuba. Also, adding to that figure, we have approximately, and these are figures given out by various investigative groups, approximately 60,000 people that have been shot by firing squads in Cuba. Now, my question to the panel is, how do you conjugate this within a succession or a transition?

**Hans de Salas-del Valle:** If there is a genuine transition, I think Cuba will have to relive its history. There will be, there should be, certainly, trials for human rights violations. In an ideal transition, I'm talking about here, of course, something closer to the example of the Czech Republic. If there is a succession, I think that is going to be a non-issue. Obviously, the regime is not going to put itself on trial. Human rights violations occur, at least numerically, on a much greater scale in China and Vietnam.

I wanted to address the question about a possible Tiananmen Square scenario in Cuba and what the U.S. reaction would be. Obviously, it depends on a number of variables, such as who is in the White House, has the embargo been lifted (or at least the travel ban), and are they heading toward normalized trade relations even under an authoritarian regime? And I think that you can't overlook the examples of China and Vietnam. Where are the Chinese dissidents today? They are dead, they are in prison, or they are persecuted and isolated within China. So, that is the blunt answer. I'm not so sure that that, in and of itself, would provoke the landing of the Marines. I think it is more wishful thinking, and we have to deal with reality as it is at this point.

**Martin Palouš:** We feel very strongly about former and present political prisoners. We feel also some debt in our maybe idealized transition [because] there are still people that suffer because they had been tortured in the '50s. These people are now reaching an age close to the end of their lives, and I think to bring these people into the discussion is important. And we have several concrete ideas to bring our political prisoners together with them because I think communication and memory are extremely, extremely important.

**Moderator:** We have Marta Beatriz Roque on the line from Havana. She has a message for all of us.

**Martha Beatriz Roque:** [*Translated by CTP Staff. Original Spanish text follows.*] In the first place, a greeting for all those who are gathered there, concerned precisely by Cuba's future. For those of us who struggle in a peaceful way inside the country seeking to achieve that revolution, it is indeed reassuring to know that persons from different walks of life, even some who are not Cuban, are concerned about the need for democracy in our country. We think that transition in Cuba is very close. In fact, a social transition is taking place in our country spontaneously and it is gathering strength daily. We have considered that through the

Assembly to Promote Civil Society we will be able in the first half of the year 2005 to have a general meeting to promote the advance of this social transition, which in turn will give momentum to the economic and political transition. In these days our country is undergoing an economic crisis that I consider irreversible. I do not speak about models, because we do not have here any established model. Without foreign aid, the paralysis of the economy and the situation provoked by lack of fresh cash brought forth by the change of currency is going to aggravate other secondary problems that still plague the social, economic and political areas.

I understand that all of those present there are very well informed about what is taking place in our country. So I just want to mention that our offer concerning the issue of transition is merely an offer to work, inside and outside the country. We think that in order to achieve transition, both we who are inside and you who are outside have to continue working more each day. And I believe this is the only element that will allow us in the end, with God's help, to make possible the wish of all of us who want to see a free Cuba. Thank you very much.

[Original Spanish text: *Sí, primero que todo, un saludo para los que se encuentren allí reunidos, preocupados precisamente por el futuro de Cuba. Para nosotros, los que estamos aquí adentro del país, luchando precisamente de una forma pacífica para lograr esta revolución, resulta de verdad un gesto realmente agradable saber que personas que están en diferentes situaciones, incluso algunos que no son cubanos, que se preocupan por la necesidad que tiene nuestro país de la democracia. Nosotros pensamos que la transición en Cuba está muy cerca. De hecho, en estos momentos en nuestro país hay una transición social que se desarrolla de forma espontánea, pero que ciertamente cada vez coge más impulso. Hemos pensado que a través de la Asamblea para Promover la Sociedad Civil, podamos en un futuro en el próximo semestre del año 2005, en el primer semestre, tener una reunión general para poder ayudar a que esta transición social se mueva un poco más y a su vez ayude a la transición económica y la transición política. En estos momentos, nuestro país esta pasando por una crisis económica que, en mi opinión personal, es irreversible dentro de este sistema. No hablo de modelos porque nosotros no tenemos aquí ningún modelo en rumbo. Pienso que sin una ayuda exterior, esta paralización de la economía, y esta situación de falta de dinero fresco por la cual se ha comido de forma desesperada este cambio de monedas indiscutiblemente va a dar traste con otros problemas secundarios que seguirán complicando el campo social, el campo económico y el campo político.*

*Me imagino que todos lo que están allí presente, están muy al día y muy al tanto de lo que está sucediendo en nuestro país. Y como así lo sé, quiero simplemente plantearles que nuestra oferta sobre el problema de la transición es sencillamente una oferta de trabajo para adentro y para afuera. Nosotros pensamos que para llegar a la transición tenemos que seguir trabajando cada día más, los que estamos aquí adentro y Uds. allá afuera. Y creo que eso es lo único que nos va a permitir en definitiva, por la ayuda de Dios, poder alcanzar este deseo de todos los que queremos ver a Cuba libre. Muchas gracias.]*

**Q:** I cry even at old movies, so listening to Marta Beatriz gives me no need to give an excuse. With all our management and strategic thinking, we cannot forget the moral outrage for the



prisoners and the dissidents, as the ambassador has pointed out. Thinking about models and thinking about how to transition has to be a cool-headed operation, the result of the efforts of those inside, as she just said, and those outside [of Cuba]. So there is no place for antagonism, but there is an absolute need to recognize the rightness of moral outrage at what happens every day in Cuba. We cannot forget that and pretend that we care about any transition. I speak for those of us who are not famous, just hard-working, smart, more or less smart Cubans: Cuban-Americans in the Association for the Third Cuban Republic. One in which, whatever model works, everyone has a place if they are capable of feeling passion to bring together—are we trying to be Swiss? American? I don't know—but we are not truly talking about an integrated, personal contribution to the problems that beset us. No more speeches. Thank you.

**Vladimiro Roca:** [*Translated by CTP Staff. Original Spanish text follows.*] This is Vladimiro Roca of the opposition group, *Todos Unidos*, speaking to you from Havana. First, I would like to send my regards to those who are participating in the event commemorating the fall of the Berlin Wall, an historic event that marked the fall of the totalitarian regimes of Eastern Europe and which we thought at the time would bring liberty and democracy to Cuba. We are presently struggling here, on the island, so that this historic event which you are commemorating manifests itself in our country and that we too can enjoy the freedom and democracy that is now enjoyed by our former socialist brothers. For us this would be the most important issue at this time. Thank you to all.

[Original Spanish text: *Desde La Habana les habla Vladimiro Roca de la agrupación opositora Todos Unidos. En primer lugar, quiero transmitir un saludo para los que participan en el evento de recordación de la caída del Muro de Berlín, un evento histórico que marcó la caída de los sistemas totalitarios de Europa del Este, y que pensábamos en aquellos momentos que iba a traer la libertad y la democracia hacia Cuba. Estamos en estos momentos luchando nosotros aquí, adentro [del país] para que el evento histórico que están conmemorando se haga presente en nuestra patria, y podamos nosotros también disfrutar de la libertad y la democracia que ahora disfrutaban nuestros antiguos hermanos del campo socialista. Para nosotros, eso sería lo más importante en estos momentos. Muchas gracias a todos.*]

## PANEL III: *Strategies to Accelerate Transition*

**Andy S. Gómez:** I am delighted to be joined by this distinguished panel. We have left what I think is probably the most important factor of Cuba's transition to the end. From our earlier panel discussions we have heard many good ideas and lessons learned from other governments that have gone through their own transitions. Traditionally, when the academic and public policy worlds speak of transition, they tend to focus on political, economic, and legal systems with very little attention paid to human behavior. As my colleague Vendulka Kubálková mentioned earlier today, it is probably one of the most important. Transforming the values and attitudes of people that have lived over 45 years under a totalitarian regime will not be accomplished overnight. In a paper that was written for this conference by one of Cuba's leading dissidents that we heard this morning, Martha Beatriz Roque, she writes: "*Hay que elaborar una efectiva estrategia social para que el cubano aprenda a vivir en una democracia.*" We must create an effective social strategy for Cubans to learn how to live in a democracy.

The title of the panel this afternoon is "Strategies to Accelerate Transition." Given today's discussion, I want to push our panelists to help us formulate a new agenda by staying away from the old political rhetoric and looking toward the future. We believe that Fidel Castro's last days may be very close. Therefore, from a public and foreign policy point of view, what should be done to move Cuba's transition forward? To help us formulate this argument, I have developed three questions that I'd like to pose to the panelists for them to consider this afternoon:

- What can the United States, Latin America, and the European Union do to help bring about change in Cuba?
- What can we do to help the people in Cuba develop a civil society that could lead to a democratic form of government?
- What should be the role of the Miami exile community and other Cuban exile communities in the transition process?

To help us answer these questions, I am joined by a very distinguished group of panelists, and I am going to introduce them in the order in which they will speak. First, Ambassador Otto Reich, former Presidential Envoy for Western Hemisphere Affairs; followed by Jorge Mas Santos, Chairman of the Cuban American National Foundation; Kevin Whitaker, Coordinator of the Office of Cuban Affairs for the United States Department of State; Sergio Diaz-Briquets, Vice-President of Casals and Associates; Frank Calzón, President of the Center for a Free Cuba; and three commentators: Orlando Gutierrez, National Secretary Directorio Democrático Cubano; Ramón Colás, founder of the Independent Library movement in Cuba and Research Associate at the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies; and Fredo Arias, *Journal of Transitions* at Harvard University.

**Otto Reich:** I am going to join all those speakers that both congratulated the University of Miami for taking the initiative and the Embassy of the Czech Republic and the people of the Czech Republic, not only for their role in this initiative but for their fifteen years of support

for the cause of freedom in Cuba. As you know, we celebrate the fifteen-year anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. We received, and in this I consider myself just an American citizen concerned with the future of Cuba, we received a lot of support from the former communist countries, but I don't think any one country has done more to keep that dream alive than the people of the Czech Republic through their Ambassador, Martin Palouš, who has been a very good friend of many of us and of the cause, I'd like to thank the people of the Czech Republic.

Andy, as a good university professor, has thrown us a curveball by asking us three questions for which I was totally unprepared. What can we do to accelerate the transition? I'm going to take the three questions that Andy asked, but I am going to put them in reverse. He asked about the role of the United States, Latin America, and the European Union, and obviously none of us can answer all of these questions. The second one is: "What can we do to help build a civil society in Cuba upon which a democratic society can be built?" And the third was the role of the Cuban community in the transition. I am going to start with the last one, because I think it's very important for the Cuban community to communicate to the people of Cuba a new message. Those of us who have been here most of the day have heard two messages directly from Cuba: one from Martha Beatriz Roque and the other from Vladimiro Roca. I think that those of us who have been lucky enough to be in exile—and I recognize that exile in the traditional Spanish culture is a great punishment, and it hasn't been easy for many of us, particularly our parents' generation—we are lucky compared to the people who have had to live in Cuba for forty-five years. And I think that we ought to make it clear to the people of Cuba that we believe that the next elected president of Cuba is in Cuba today—just like the first elected president of the Czech Republic was in jail the day that the Berlin Wall came down fifteen years ago today.

I'm not choosing sides; I think that the Cuban exile community does have a very important role to play, much like West Germany had a role to play in the incorporation of East Germany into the Federal Republic. Although in this case, we are talking about a nation divided, the Cuban people in Cuba and the Cuban people outside. I think the people outside have a very important role, not only in the reconstruction effort, which will be massive, but also in preparing that society for the kind of tolerance that has not existed and that is necessary to build a democratic society. I think it's very important to communicate, using all the tools we have, and, for the first time, for example, we have TV Martí being seen on the island, Radio Martí has improved its frequencies, and there are many other methods that can be used to communicate with the people. But I think the content is also very important. And I think that content should be one of tolerance and one of dividing, frankly, the regime, the oppressors, from the oppressed. And even within the oppressors, there are differences. We heard this morning from Alcibiades Hidalgo, who was the ambassador of Castro's regime to the United Nations. And yet, he got on a boat and left Cuba when he realized he was working for a fraud. It is my belief that just as in the former Soviet Union and Eastern European states, the vast majority of people and the vast majority of the government bureaucrats knew that they were working for a massive fraud, so are most of the people around Castro, but they don't have any choice but to *disimular*, to pretend that they are supporting the system. I think we have to be a lot more tolerant with people who leave the system and come here and not question their motives. If anybody suspects, and I say this as a former government official, that someone is here as an agent, call the FBI. That's their

job. But it should not be the job of the Cuban community to judge others when they risk their lives to leave a dictatorship and come here, just as many of us did a few years earlier. That's like differentiating between the people who came here on the Mayflower and the people who got here on a raft from Cuba not too long ago. We are all immigrants from somewhere; we are all refugees, in the case of Cuban-Americans, from communism.

We need to communicate better, and we need to communicate a message of cooperation, a message to the Cuban people that change is positive, that they shouldn't fear change. But change also means a transition, not a succession, because succession is just a continuation of a regime that has destroyed the Cuban infrastructure, the Cuban economy, Cuban morals, the family; it has been a complete destruction of Cuban society. We need to communicate that, by the way, to the Cuban people. A lot of times they don't know. It's amazing. I've talked to a lot of people who have left, and they don't know how bad things are, but it's understandable that they don't know because they are completely isolated. Cuba is the only country in this hemisphere whose per capita caloric intake has declined over the past forty-five years. This should be broadcast to the people of Cuba. They should know that the result of the fact that the Cuban citizen today, and for the past forty-five years, has ingested a smaller and smaller quantity of calories means that a Cuban baby today, the newborn, is smaller than the newborn of fifty years ago. And there is a doctor, a professor here in town, who has done studies on this. That is the legacy of Fidel Castro—not just the destruction of Cuba, but the actual physical change of the Cuban population to a much smaller person in physical size. Also, I believe that probably the impact on the brain has also been negative.

We have to tell the people [in Cuba] that there is no interest on the part of the Cuban-American community to take what little they have. They have nothing. What they have is literally falling down; it is crumbling down around them. Also, listen to the two messages we had today from Cuba; you have to read between the lines. Those people are not free. I think they are tremendously brave to even get on the phone and talk to us here today. And their message was that the situation of Cuba of today is so bad that you cannot imagine it. These are people who have lived there their whole lives. I agree. I believe the situation is much worse than we on the outside realize and that there could be a collapse at some point in the future. Nobody knows, once again going back to the fall of the Berlin Wall, nobody knew. I was in the [U.S.] government throughout the 1980s, and I can tell you that nobody knew how the Soviet Union was going to end; nobody could have predicted that it was going to end the way that it did, rather peacefully. Three people died in Prague, a lot more people died in Romania, and very few people died in most other countries. I expected a world war, frankly, before the Soviet Union ended, and fortunately, we were wrong.

So, we don't know how it is going to change, but we need to prepare ourselves. My former colleague, Kevin Whitaker, will talk about the President's Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba, but, once again, I think there is a lot more that the community can do, not just physically but psychologically. We need to send a message to the people of Cuba of tolerance—not to the oppressors, not to those who committed crimes, but to those who suffered from crimes. The vast majority of the people in Cuba are victims, and they need to know that there is understanding from this side of the Florida Straits.

**Jorge Mas Santos:** Thank you, professor, and on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) and myself, as a graduate of the University of Miami, I want to thank you and Ambassador Palouš for conducting forums and congresses such as this, which give a voice to those who cannot speak for themselves, the enslaved people of Cuba. And I think it is interesting to note that during the course of the last sixty days, several conferences such as this one, in Prague and also in Rome recently, have allowed us to talk about the realities of Cuba, to talk about not only the past and the present, but, more importantly, toward our vision, toward the future of Cuba, and the dreams and the aspirations of all Cubans to be united under freedom and under a democratic system of government. And when we talk about trying to accelerate a transition, I think it's important that we discuss the context, as Ambassador Reich noted, of a transition versus a succession. And obviously, there are pressures involved in the falling of a communist regime: the privileged few will remain after the disappearance of Fidel and Raúl Castro for physical or other reasons, and [they will] struggle to continue enslaving the Cuban people, to try to maintain a privileged class and somehow try to sell to the international community “models and reforms,” potentially like a China model, and try to convince the world that that is a change. Potentially, what may be seen as a threat to a true transition to freedom and democracy, and I had the opportunity to discuss with many people in the White House some different scenarios in Cuba, [is that] the Cuban government will use these potential changes and reforms as a way to continue repressing the people in exchange for promising the United States of America that there will not be a sea of rafters coming to U.S. shores, in exchange for maintaining the Cuban-American community “under control” and basically not allowing a free flow of people and information to and from the island.

These are obviously threats that exist, but what can we do as a community, as a people of freedom, as the people of the Czech Republic have been through this experience, to accelerate a true transition in Cuba? During these trying times, and it's been a forty-five year struggle, and many brave men and women have given their lives in the struggle for a free Cuba. Many of them have been buried in exile and were never able to see their land free again, and many have lost their lives in the Straits of Florida, and obviously the story and the history of Cuba many times is a tragic one. But it is up to us, those of us who remain in the struggle, to remain hopeful, to remain optimistic, to send a message to the people of Cuba—a message of hope, a message of faith, a message of optimism. Many times during the struggle we have become frustrated, and many times we have been isolated and alone in our struggle and have thought that the world has turned its back on the brave men and women of Cuba. During the period of exile, we have seen where our struggle took us: first, to try to convince the world that Fidel Castro is bad. And [whether he] was the revolutionary, anti-American prince who was seen in many bastions of the media and the international community—that is no longer the debate. The debate is no longer whether Fidel Castro is good or bad. I think the international community recognizes who Fidel Castro is and what he has done to the Cuban people.

Dr. Gomez asked, “How can we help nurture a civil society in Cuba?” I'd like to address that issue first. I think that we are starting to see a semblance of a building up of some sort of civil society and some institutions in Cuba, especially with the disappearance of the Soviet Union as we knew it and the fall of the Berlin Wall fifteen years ago. That is when the aid to



Cuba, which was between \$6 and 9 billion a year, disappeared, and the Cuban regime had to look at other ways to try and maintain total control over the Cuban people. The repressive apparatus is much smaller today than it was twelve, thirteen, fourteen years ago, and we see, especially in the last three or four years, how more attention [has been paid] to the opposition and dissident movement in Cuba, how we can put a name and a face to those brave men and women who struggle in Cuba, how those who have been jailed for merely expressing their opinions have become figures. And as we saw, especially with the Solidarity Movement in Poland, and the face of that movement at the time was Lech Walesa, we have been consistently asked: “Is there a Lech Walesa in Cuba? Do there exist people and faces and names in Cuba who can take the struggle on the island?” My answer has always been that there are many Lech Walesas in Cuba, but they are not known, and those that have been known might have been either jailed or exiled, and that has been the nature of the Castro regime. I think the onus is on us as Cuban exiles, and I think it’s important to note that we are one people divided by one man. We cannot differentiate between Cubans in Cuba and Cubans in the United States. The only difference is our circumstances and the physical space that we sit in, because many times exile is a state of mind. I try to speak for my generation. The thought of Cuba has been put in our hearts by our parents, by our grandparents, and by experiences, so that we know it on an everyday basis. I was born in exile, I was born here because of an accident of history named Fidel Castro. I think it is admirable that there are many Cubans of different generations, and this is not an issue of age, because you do not need to have a certain age to struggle for the ideals of freedom, of democracy of justice, and of love.

And that is one thing that I would believe is non-negotiable in a transition in Cuba, that we allow the Cuban people the right to determine their future. We can sit here and talk about different scenarios and what will happen, and none of us have a crystal ball, but we are only responsible for what we can do. And what we can do is continue to try to promote a policy that isolates a regime that represses its own people, that reduces the size of the repressive apparatus in Cuba, and that helps and assists the brave men and women who struggle for freedom and democracy in Cuba. During the recent measures that were taken by this administration, I think that the increase of aid to the dissidents is very important, the \$7 million to \$36 million in aid. That is an extremely important step and one that we need to promote, one that we need to make sure is put into practice, so that there is not as much red tape as in the past. Hopefully, regulations that do not permit direct monetary aid at some point in time would be reversed, so that we can help those brave men and women in Cuba directly.

In terms of the role of the Cuban-American community in a transition in Cuba, many of us may say that the future leader of Cuba will come from the island of Cuba. Where that leader will come from, I think, is not as important as that the message from the Cuban-American community be that we are here to help. Many times, Fidel Castro has used the propaganda machine on the island and the monopoly that he has had on information to try to convince the Cuban people that those in the Cuban exile community are their enemies, that we are there to take their homes, that we are there to create a new social order. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Cuban-American community, I think, is an example of the personification of the American Dream, of a people who have never and will never forget the plight of our brothers and sisters in Cuba. What we want for the Cuban people is what a free people enjoy all over the



world, which is freedom and democracy and the choice that we as free people have and a right that God gives us, which Fidel and Raúl Castro have taken away from the Cuban people. Our message is a message of love and hope for the Cuban people—that is what we want. We want a peaceful transition in Cuba. There has already been too much blood shed by the victims of Cuba for it to be shed further in a crisis or some type of, hopefully, nonviolent transition.

Another element that I think is important—we've been talking about the creation of civil society in Cuba—is the space that the Catholic Church has created in Cuba. I think that is an important space, and especially after the Pope's visit in 1998, I think the Church will take a pivotal role in a transition in Cuba. I had the opportunity while I was in Rome less than two weeks ago to meet with the Secretary of State of the Vatican, which I think was an extremely important step, that he met with the representatives of an exile group, which had been very difficult in the past. He talked about the difficulty of the Church's role in communicating its message in Cuba. I want also to reiterate Ambassador Reich's statement: What is our challenge? It is to communicate with the people of Cuba. Radio Martí, although effective, cannot be heard all over the island. With TV Martí, we, hopefully, will be able to achieve that that signal is permanently seen in Cuba. These are extremely important tools. And I think that those institutions like the Church that have created some space in Cuba, and a brave gentleman like Dagoberto Valdéz of *Vitrales* in Pinar del Río, who has been able to communicate through magazines and writing the message of the people of Cuba, this message of hope is important because it continues to weaken the hold that Fidel Castro has on the people.

I think that the role of the Cuban-American community is important: we give voice to those brave men and women in different international forums who otherwise could not have that. I think we play a pivotal role helping shape U.S. foreign policy as well as international policy toward Cuba, as well as, for example, the success that the European Union has had with its existing policy, and the changes that have been proposed now by the Spanish government, which, hopefully, will not be successful because as Chancellor Schröder [of Germany] said yesterday, the conditions in Cuba are not right for a change in policy and for a dialogue as we in the past have known it with Cuba.

I am very optimistic about the future, about a true transition to democracy in Cuba. The change is coming. Obviously, we need to extend a hand to those elements in both the civil and military sides in Cuba and the lower and middle echelons that are not known, but do want a change in Cuba, who do not want to see their daughters hold a rifle over their heads and say, "*Viva la revolución.*" We have to continue struggling for that true transition until one day the Cuban people can all be united under the banner of freedom and democracy and, hopefully, with God's help, we will be there soon. Thank you very much.

**Kevin Whitaker:** Good afternoon. I would like to join my colleagues in thanking the University of Miami and the Czech Embassy for staging this event. I am grateful for that. I am also grateful for the opportunity to address you all today. I had the very good fortune to work for Otto Reich for fifteen months, and he used to open meetings by saying, "I'm from the government; I'm here to help you." He's been known to joke around from time to time, but the fact of the matter is that the government has looked at these very questions, and many of the answers to the questions that were posed are in the Commission for Assistance to a Free

Cuba Presidential Report of May 2004, and I recommend it to you. It's a lengthy document. It's 423 pages; it has 695 specific recommendations. There is a lot of precisely what we are talking about here, many questions about how we would propose to deal with these issues are contained therein. Much of the press commentary has focused on the fifty pages on hastening a democratic transition, but the majority of the report goes to the first question that Professor Gómez raised, and that is, how do we formulate a new agenda looking forward? The new agenda looking forward is in chapters two through six of that report. It talks about, in great and specific detail, how the United States would be prepared to support a democratic transitional government in areas as diverse as reformulating textbooks, looking at the education system from top to bottom, and looking at the sewer system. Every possible aspect that we could imagine, maybe you all could imagine some others, but every one that we could.

Just a parenthetical point—the regime and some other people in our country and elsewhere have chosen to interpret those comments [in the Commission's Report] as indicating that we are trying to prescribe Cuba's future. Every single one of those recommendations says, "If Cuba desires," "If a free Cuba desires," and we desire to cooperate in that way. These are the things that we can do. So to my way of thinking, laying out for Cuba, for Cubans now, how the United States would be prepared to support a democratic transitional government in Cuba in these very concrete areas does provide an agenda for the future.

The question is, "What can the United States do now?" That was one of the first questions. What can the United States, together with Latin America, do? In the report's first chapter, "Hastening a Democratic Transition," there are six core tasks identified, and I'll just go through them now, because we tried to think these things over, and we think we've hit on some central themes that need to be emphasized.

We need to limit the regime's ability to manipulate U.S. humanitarian policies, which is another way of saying a cutting off of resources to the regime. Illuminate the true nature of the Castro regime, a public affairs focus. Build an international consensus for change, and that goes to the rest of [Dr. Gómez's] question on how we loop in the European Union and Latin America to help us. Increase support to civil society, another of the professor's questions. And finally, breaking the information blockade, which other speakers have alluded to, and undermining the regime's succession strategy.

If 20 percent of the report is on hastening [a democratic transition] and three of the recommendations have to do with limiting travel and remittances, probably 99 percent of press commentary and other discussion of the Commission Report is focused on that, because it affects real people. My view has been and continues to be that there is a continuum between permitting unlimited travel and unlimited remittances by Cuban-Americans and Cubans living in the United States and permitting no remittances and no travel, and we've been in both places. We've been at no travel and no remittances for the majority of the time of the Castro regime; that is a fact. We were at unlimited travel and unlimited remittances right up until this Commission Report came out. Let me say this among the family here: there were no effective controls on travel by Cuban-Americans and Cubans living in the United States to Cuba. You can argue now that we hit it wrong, that we hit the wrong place on that continuum, that it went too far, and there are people who make that argument. But the goal here is to limit the regime's propensity to take that money and squeeze out the humanitarian impulses and turn those into

greenbacks and feed them back into their own system.

We estimate, just looking at travel and remittances only, in the first post-Commission Report year, we will have denied the regime US\$375 million. That is a lot. All in all, with all the measures it would end up being about \$0.5 billion that we would have denied the regime, including travel, remittances, and others. To my way of thinking, these measures are already having their effect, and we are seeing it now in Cuba. Will it move us toward that which we want, a democratic transition? We don't know, but it is part of an integrated strategy. We tried to think the whole thing through, and we will press on with this and will look for additional ways to prevent more funds from flowing to the regime and supporting that structure.

How do we help Cubans develop a civil society? There are some people in this room right now who are involved in that effort by providing books and materials and laptops. One of the things we did, which was a matter of tremendous frustration to me, although Otto [Reich] was always pretty frustrated with it as well, was that the regime could get Pentium 5 computers donated by the Chinese government, but we could send only computers that had been designed in the mid-1990s. We actually had to go on e-Bay and find obsolete computers that we could then send down to the opposition. There are people thinking about how to get more material to oppositionists on the island. But if we want to be frank about this, we have to talk about the totality of U.S. efforts in this area. The reality is that if an individual spends a couple of years working for one of the recognized opposition groups or works for a couple of years observing the human rights situation in Cuba, he or she will qualify for a refugee visa. I'm not judging these people; in fact, to my thinking, they are behaving in a completely rational manner. I suspect if I were in their shoes the same thing would occur to me. But another way of viewing it is that we are systematically stripping away the fruit of the dissident community, and I think it's a worthwhile question to ask ourselves, whether that makes sense when you put it in totality of our overall strategy.

Since we are being frank here, I think we also need to talk about the role of the European Union and of Latin America. There is a strong effort on the part of many EU nations to weaken sanctions substantially. They have a principled argument for doing it. The argument is that the sanctions that are in place haven't worked, it makes more sense to do things that would work, and so we are going to change things. I don't contest their logic; I think their logic makes sense on a certain level. But the problem is that to change these sanctions now would dishearten the opposition and would strengthen the hand of the hardliners in the regime; they would declare this a victory. One of the things that many in the European Union know is that Perez Roque met with the Spanish ambassador in June 2003, after the new measures had been put into place by the EU, and Perez Roque told the Spanish Ambassador, "You Europeans will come crawling back on your knees to Cuba." Something like that is happening now. I don't question their logic. I don't question their principles, but from the viewpoint of the hardliners in the regime, this is what's happened.

Latin America is a very difficult equation, and I look to you all to help us figure this out. How is it that Foreign Minister Bielsa [of Argentina], Foreign Secretary Derbez [of Mexico], and President Lula da Silva [of Brazil] have visited Cuba in the last ten months, and all have refused to meet with the opposition or even mention the opposition? If you want to talk about disheartening, that is disheartening. The conclusion to that, and the way I'll wrap this up is, it

really depends on us. That is the conclusion that I have reached after four years of doing this. It really depends on the United States, the United States government, and what we choose to do, and it depends on you all. You all have played a productive role in the past, and you need to continue to do so in the future. You need to continue to do the things that you are doing to remind the world of what's going on in Cuba because if you don't do it, nobody will. Thank you.

**Sergio Díaz-Briquets:** I want to add my voice to what has been said to thank the Czech Republic and the University of Miami for organizing this event. I do have a number of notes, and I was thrown a curve by [Dr. Gomez] as well, but my comments, I believe, address all those points, except that I wish he had been clearer in what he wanted us to discuss here. He said, "Strategies to unleash or to accelerate the transition," and I think those are a little bit different. But along those lines, I also have a commentary. Many people here are discussing the Chinese example, and to what extent can we push that example? Because it comes to mind that there are other examples of transition countries that are perhaps more relevant to Cuba that no one has mentioned, for example, Cambodia, the former Kampuchea [which may be] a potential model for Cuba, which for me, quite frankly, is scary. I think most of the comments I have here have been addressed, and the fourth, which surprisingly enough was discussed by Kevin Whitaker when he talked about what has been done, but this goes back to the Clinton years; is the issue of calibrated responses. I think if we look into the future to try to see a transition, then we have to think in those terms. Is there going to be any movement, whether with Fidel alive or Fidel dying, and what is going to be our response? The second point, and I share this with Jorge Mas Santos and Otto Reich as well, is not to underestimate the importance of information. I think that whatever we can do to make the people of Cuba understand what the broader world is all about, to really understand what is at stake and how to help Cuba move along, that would be quite an interesting endeavor and a major achievement.

I think also a couple of the speakers before me mentioned exit strategy. We have to think in terms of exit strategy, like Otto [Reich] mentioned before me. There are many people in Cuba that would be more amenable to facilitate change, and it might be painful for us, because there has been a lot of pain and a lot of suffering, but we need to offer an exit to many people who want to come to us.

I think the issue of working with other countries has been addressed very clearly, and this meeting itself is a great example of what we ought to pursue. I believe there is a wonderful tradition that has been ignored by the United States primarily, but also by practically every Western democracy, that is contrary to whatever criticism we may hear, which is that we have to support the emergence of civil society. We have to support those who are so courageous and who are willing to pay a price, so we must continue with that, and there is no question about it.

In terms of analytical work, I think that's very important. We need to understand and we need to communicate to the people of Cuba, now and in the future, how we can deal with the enormity of problems that we are going to have to address. There is a lot of room for demagoguery, and we need to understand what options we have available to us.

The issues that I am really here to talk about are two. First, the criticisms that Kevin Whitaker brought along regarding the Commission Report, and I think I am going to try to take a balanced approach. I believe that the exceptionality of Cuban migration has to be taken

into account. Cubans cannot claim to be fleeing a totalitarian regime and seeking refuge and then turn back and travel to Cuba six months later to visit their relatives. Clearly, that is untenable, and if that were to be the case, then I guess the refugee programs and all that is going on [in that regard] would have to go by the book. I am not going to go much into that, but at the same time, I think that a real point is how we need to think about that issue, in terms of what we understand to be how we can weaken a totalitarian state. And a totalitarian state is characterized by control by definition, by the inability of people to obtain degrees of freedom to do what they wish. And, in that sense, I think we also have to take into account that in any policy decision, there are benefits, and there are costs. And this is really the point that I think is important to address, the question of the remittances. Otto Reich mentioned it, that we want to increase the tolerance, and Jorge Mas Santos has discussed bringing families together, and I would pose that nothing has done more to bring families together than the crisis of the 1990s, where this community had an enormously humanitarian response. In the cases of many of us here, we had not even been in touch with relatives who didn't even want to talk to us for twenty years, and we put it all behind us, and I believe we have undermined the system by supporting that assistance.

Finally, a very practical issue that every policy maker confronts. There is no sense in trying to enforce unenforceable laws. There is no way that any group or any government anywhere in the world can really interfere with effective links between families. Right now, I am sure there must be an underground economy here in Miami to find ways to get euros, to go through the Bahamas, and so on. All that we are doing is really giving a weapon of public relations to Castro for very minimal gain. With that I will finish my presentation. Thank you.

**Frank Calzón:** I would like to add my voice to everything that has been said, thanking Ambassador Palouš and the Czech people. I would also like to say, following the very good example of the Czech Republic, there are others who have been extremely helpful. And [I am] one of those that has been saying for a very long time to the Cuban-American community that we should not exaggerate our influence or our success. I have seen it in Washington when many things happen and there is a message here in Florida, and the message somehow changes when it gets to Washington, and I think that is one of the problems that we have had.

Let me start by mentioning a couple of things. I found it intriguing that this morning several people said that Cubans are not Poles. And then I heard several people say that basically Cubans are Chinese, so I don't know what that means. I think Cubans are Cubans. On the issue of a peaceful transition, I have always been one of those who has talked about a peaceful transition, but if a peaceful transition means that the Cuban regime remains in power. . . . This is a regime that is not peaceful; this is a regime where right now there is violence being committed against the Cuban people in prisons and elsewhere. So I think we ought to put some analysis into this. Of course, we all favor a peaceful transition, but if the option is no transition or a transition that is not quite peaceful, I think we want to end the war that the Cuban government has been waging against the Cuban people for more than forty years.

Now, listening to some of the things that have been said, and what Dr. Gomez asked us to talk about, I'm going to try to do something a little different than what exactly was asked. I'm going to try to focus on the Cuban-American community with what I call the free Cubans,



because not all free Cubans are Cuban-Americans, and when you go to Spain or France or other places, there are other Cubans living in exile. There are other free Cubans working very hard also on behalf of a free Cuba.

What I'd like to do is turn the question around, because sometimes by doing that things become a little clearer. If the question was put: How can we help to delay, how can we help prevent a quick transition, peaceful or otherwise, and what is it that we should do to delay that transition? And by asking that question, maybe we will come across some things we are already doing, not only to hasten the transition, but some things we are doing right now to prevent that transition. I basically did a list, so I'm not going to spend a lot of time explaining it, but I'm sure we could answer questions.

I think the first thing we would do is discourage dialogue among opposition leaders in Cuba by transferring the exile differences and the passions of exile back into the island, so that the island becomes more and more a mirror of the differences we already have outside the island.

Two, I think if you want to delay the transition to democracy in Cuba you would discourage dialogue and discussion among opposition leaders and organizations outside of Cuba, by claiming that some people are agents of Mr. Castro or by claiming that others are merely agents or servants of Washington.

Three, if you want to help delay the transition to democracy in Cuba, you will go to Cuba and participate in the orchestrated meetings that Mr. Castro organizes once in a while in which he brings *la inmigración* Cuban exiles and the nation, meaning the Cuban government.

Four, you would encourage others, and you yourself would try, to have secret meetings with Cuban government officials, in New York or elsewhere, pretending that you, an exile, represent the Cuban people and that the people in Cuba, like Vladimiro Roca, like Oswaldo Payá, like the Archbishop of Santiago de Cuba, are secondary. The ones that should be discussing matters are we that are here. That is one way of delaying the transition.

I would also think that if we wanted to delay the transition we would ignore the message of President Havel, who says, "Live in truth." Tell the truth. So if you want to delay the transition, make all kinds of promises. Tell Cubans in Cuba that you will be sending thousands upon thousands of dollars to help, and then do not do that. That is one way of delaying the transition.

Another way of delaying the transition is to contribute to the mistrust among Cubans by claiming that those in Cuba or in exile that you disagree with are simply agents of the regime or *tontos útiles*. It is not a question of disagreeing; it is a question of saying, "I don't merely disagree with you, but everything you have to say is totally unacceptable."

If you want to delay the transition to democracy in Cuba, you should continue to frame the debate about Cuba only around U.S. sanctions, only about the embargo, and ignore the sanctions and the embargo that Castro has placed on the Cuban people and the sanctions and embargo that Castro has placed on the productive capacities of the Cuban people.

If you want to delay the transition to democracy in Cuba, you will continue to say there are many problems and look for one solution, when in fact there are many problems and many solutions. We keep referring to the Czech example, but there are other examples that also should be taken into account. So it's not a question of forcing one solution to whatever problem there is in Cuba. The issues should be, "Let's look at how they did it, how they succeeded, how they failed, and what we can do about it."



Finally, I think if you want to delay the transition, do not take advantage of Castro's failures and weaknesses, because after all, whenever Castro makes a mistake, there are people that say, "He knows what he's doing. It's not a mistake." He's in charge of everything all the time, so he makes no mistakes. And, furthermore, do not do what he does, which is sometimes he uses the strength of the opposition to turn it against ourselves. And one good example of that is the Payá case. Here you have a movement in Cuba that has become a great tool of dividing the opposition, of dividing the Cuban community, because he has determined that strength of the opposition that can be used against him can be turned around in his favor.

Finally, I think the other thing we can do is to take credit for everything that we do and everything that other people do. Continue to talk about what your organization does and what you have done. Don't give credit to the other people that are doing things. Don't go out of your way to say, for example, I know that in the past several years Directorio [Directorio Democrático Cubano, an human rights exile group] has been active in Latin America and Europe. Try to ignore what everybody else does. Don't give credit to the Dutch human rights organizations or the Spanish human rights organizations or the Swedes that are currently helping us, and simply concentrate on how you can get credit and how you can get your picture with the next senator or next congressman. Thank you very much.

**Andy S. Gómez:** Before we turn to the commentators, I would like to call on Ambassador Palouš to give some remarks, as he has to leave.

**Martin Palouš:** First of all, thank you, everybody, for all your kind words I have had the opportunity to hear today. I can promise that the Czech Republic remains committed to this cause, with a slight disagreement with what Kevin Whitaker has said about the European Union situation; you should not forget that the Czech Republic is part of the EU. That Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, and other countries that have had to come through the same experience; we have a voice, and we will use it in a very prudent manner. So don't believe that it is only the U.S. government and yourselves who have to do it. We will be doing it with you, and, hopefully, we will see you soon. I have to go now. Thank you.

**Andy S. Gómez:** Thank you. Let me also thank Alan Becker, Consulate General of the Czech Republic in South Florida. Thank you, Alan, for your participation. Very well. Let's get to the commentator portion.

**Orlando Gutiérrez:** First of all, I'd like to thank the University of Miami for inviting me to this conference, and I think today's discussion has been very informative. I'll go right to the point with my comments on the different proposals for strategies to accelerate transition. I think that in the first place, speaking from the Cuban-American community, we have to go from a passive/reactive stance regarding what happens in Cuba, waiting for transition, to a proactive stance. In other words, the word transition was very politically correct in the early '90s because transition was taking place in the world, but I think in Cuba what is more important than transition is liberation. There will be no transition unless we liberate Cuba. It depends on Cubans to liberate Cuba. And I think that through the efforts of Cubans inside

the island and Cubans in exile, we have come to see which are the main pillars and which are the keys to achieve a change in Cuba. And I think there are fundamentally three that we have seen.

One, we need to have sustained popular mobilization against the regime. The regime cannot withstand the sustained popular mobilization of the Cuban people. Whenever they have faced outbreaks of public protests, of marches, in the past fifteen years, the regime has trembled.

Number two, this sustained popular mobilization will force regime division. A key to transition in all transition countries was that the communist regimes split and divided amongst themselves. I think the only way to do that is to have sustained popular mobilization throughout the island.

The third pillar of liberation lies in national reconstruction. There needs to be a coherent program for national reconstruction of all the opposition. Because in the end, there will be one democratic opposition with different groups and different leaders, as we have seen in other transitions, against post-communists, who all of a sudden have a new discourse and a new style but are essentially the same oligarchs that have been oppressing our people for forty-five years.

I think that these three pillars of change, sustained popular mobilization, regime division, and national reconstruction, fundamentally need two things from the outside world. One, active international solidarity, and although I agree with Kevin that there has been backsliding by Mexico and by Spain on sanctions toward Cuba, it is also true that there has never been a worldwide movement for democracy in Cuba as there is today. Today there is an international consensus on democracy in Cuba, and there are many people from different spheres of life, from different levels, who are actively seeking democracy in Cuba. And I think the conference in Prague, the conference in Rome, and this conference are examples of that.

The other area in which I think we can contribute to these three pillars of liberation inside Cuba has to do with us as exiles. The people of Cuba often have two ways of looking at Cubans outside the island. One, in the abstract, they see us as a state, and they see us as a Cuba that is not Castro's Cuba. Then they see us individually as their cousins, their family members, their brothers and sisters. I think it is important that we work toward, as an exile community, having very clear-cut answers for the very pressing issues that Cubans on the island have. And I know there are some issues that we will never be able to resolve until there is free access to Cuba, until there is a Constitutional Assembly, but there are other issues that we must have consensus on, and I think that this consensus on key issues, together with greater political coordination and greater political unity among us, is key to convincing Cubans that after Castro there isn't chaos, but instead, that Cubans can build a better future for themselves and that Cubans can achieve peace and stability for democracy.

**Andy S. Gómez:** Thank you, Orlando.

**Ramón Colás:** [*Translated by CTP Staff. Original Spanish text follows.*] I will be a little different here because I will speak in Spanish. I would like to begin mentioning something closely related with what happened only two weeks ago in Rome. We could not intervene there; we base these commentaries in three proposals and we proceed to analyze the impact

that this event had, especially for the internal dissidence in Cuba. We consider that seven or eight important aspects can be presently taken into account.

There is a principle for non-violent, pacific struggle, which is known as the non-collaboration with the regime. I think that this is the opportune moment to promote this attitude from within the country and this will provide more space for dissidents in the island. This is important, because in the measure that internal opposition in the island has resources, in that same measure it can proceed with absolute independence, and it can make a direct impact in the community.

Allow me to refer an anecdote. On August 22, when I went from San Juan to visit a person at his house, a soldier was sent to be there. I then went back to the house of my wife's parents. Two days later, an act of harassment took place fifty yards from this house. The man who dared to direct the children –because the ones who spoke against me, against my family as agents of the CIA and of the North American empire were children– had a very sick mother, and the medicine she needed could not be found in any hospital in Cuba, in spite of his connections. So he asked for help to a Cuban that had relatives in the United States. This Cuban, who was my friend, seized the opportunity to ask me: “Colás, this man needs this medicine; could you get it for him?” Because the internal dissidence had medicines, supplied by different exile organizations. But they did not have that one. Dr. Jesús García, a physician who endured 24 years in jail, had this medicine and sent it to me to a town that before was called Francisco Guayabal, and it's now Amancio. I gave the medicine to my friend, and he in turn gave it to the person in need –who, by the way, has my same name: Ramón Arriana. And the medicine helped his mother to recover. When, two weeks later, he met his friend, he said: “Listen, thank you very much, your medicine was a great help”. But my friend said: “Do not thank me, thank Ramón Colás, because he was the one who got the medicine”. This brought forth an enormous change in this man. When he saw me in the street, he glanced sideways right and left, and then greeted me: “How are you?”

I think that this is the way in which we can favor the peaceful struggle within Cuba: by providing resources. Remember that this can bring forth not only independence from the regime, but also an impact in the community. Especially now, when the regime has lost its capacity to act in sensitive areas of society: it does not have medicines, it does not have food, it does not take care of the elderly nor of the children; here, dissidence can become a real power.

In the second place, we have considered that the Cuban issue needs to achieve a multilateral effect: it must be internationalized. This will enable us to break or overcome the myth of the differendum that supposedly exists between Cuba and the United States. In this regard, it would be interesting to achieve this profile in solidarity or this multilateral effect at the international level in a way similar that what is being done by the United States. If the Embassies from European and Latin American countries open themselves to the dissidence, offer information and back their concerns, they would give the image that change can be achieved from the opposition; I believe that we would be able to break down that myth yet present in some European and Latin American minds, who believe that the United States is responsible for the Cuban tragedy. I see work with intellectuals and the left in Latin America as essential. In Latin America, whenever people speak about Cuba, they do it generally in positive terms. But we have not been in those places where there is absolute silence, and

where the Havana regime is supposedly supported. And the left has been left today without any arguments to defend the dictatorship of Fidel Castro from the intellectual and philosophical standpoint; they cannot do it due to the immorality of Castro's political system and also due to the lack of credibility of the international left. We can speak about issues as simple and basic as human rights: What is the situation of access to information? What is the state of freedom of movements within a country? In a recent visit to Argentina, we had an enormous impact when we spoke about the situation in Cuba. I spoke about the virtual library, but political issues arose and then Argentines started to question, to doubt, all information they had regarding the regime in Havana.

In Latin American countries it is believed that we, the Cuban exiles, represent an irrational ultra-right and that no dialogue is possible with us; we will not have play any role in Cuba, and even if we could have a role, it would create a bigger problem. But in fact we do not visit those countries, and when we do, we relate precisely with those political tendencies that are akin to our convictions.

In the fourth place, presently, many talk about a critical, political dialogue with the regime in Havana, particularly in Europe. It is possible that it eventually takes place—for example, Spain under the Socialist People's Party will advance in this direction. We have to understand that this is coming, even though it has not reached Latin America yet. If it indeed takes place or if political contacts are re-established, we consider—and we express it to the authorities with which we speak—that the regime would have to be conditioned in several ways. In the first place, it would have to provide unconditional freedom for all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience. Respect for human rights in Cuba; acceptance of the United Nations deferral for all those in death row in the country. Acceptance of what the democracy activists demand, in accordance with one of the constitutional principles of the regime—the one that states that once ten thousand Cubans expose their differences with the regime, an answer must be provided, as a sign of allowing space for minorities. And we have always noted that a critical political dialogue with the regime in Havana is very difficult, because Cuban authorities are declared Communists, and they neither change, nor dialogue with the people, nor with the minority that wants change.

In the fifth place, and this is important for us who speak frequently of “transition” to understand, totalitarian regimes in their final phase evolve into a mafia, and they tend to go into exile. This can be overcome working in projects that do not need to be necessarily political; they can be supported by religious organizations or fraternal organizations like the Masons. Nowadays there is a perception—and I just spoke with persons who arrived yesterday from Cuba—that the regime lately has tried to isolate itself, which is a symptom of its despair, and for us a signal that its disappearance is close at hand.

There is a very important issue, and it can be clearly seen in this meeting. Of all the Cubans who have spoken here, I am the one who has arrived most recently and also I am the only black Cuban here. I am a minority here, whereas in Cuba I belonged to the majority of the population. This problem can not be ignored during the transition process. The black population is fundamental in the Cuban nation, and to separate this fact from the transition seems dangerous to me. Why? Since 1959 the racial problem was not discussed. It is there, wrapped in silence. However, Cuba never had a situation of racial discrimination as the one

it has today. A simple fact, confirmed by my wife and myself: in Havana, out of every hundred cars that circulate with private plates, only five are driven by blacks. In the province of Las Tunas, out of more than a hundred establishments selling in dollars, only 25 have black employees, within a population in which more than 60% is black. Why do I say that we have to speak about racial issues in the transition process? Because blacks in Cuba make part of the largest marginal sectors of society.

The regime waves a banner boasting that it liberated the black people, but the fact is that we do not have participation within the political process—of the 14 Party Provincial Assemblies none are black; of the 14 First Party Secretaries only two are black. Blacks do not have a presence. This makes me very happy, because it can also be interpreted as a refusal of blacks to participate in the political spheres. But if we start to make efforts to pay attention to these marginal sectors of the population, the Cuban blacks, we are going to break down several myths, particularly in the eastern part of the island. Around 45% of the Cuban population live in the Oriental province; this means that five million Cubans live in Oriente. And in the provinces of Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo, more than 75% of the population is black. We are not working there. We have to touch, we have to reach these sectors, we have to tell them that democracy is the best opportunity for any society. But we are not working there, and blacks are unattended. In reality, all the population is unattended, but especially the blacks. There is no Embassy, no Consulate, no diplomatic see, no foreign press, no umbrella to protect these sectors.

I also believe, and this was spoken about in Rome, that we as exiled Cubans can send a very important message for the transition: the fact that we have to build a coalition, a concentration that sends messages both to the dissidence as to the *nomenklatura*. We speak about Fidel Castro, and we do not know if around Fidel Castro there are people who are trapped in the system and need a change. Anyway, we send them signals, even though these people do not want to get involved with anything. Remember that in Europe, as we all know, Communists evolved into the democratic process; exactly the same thing will happen in Cuba. And if we build a coalition—whatever name it takes, it does not matter—that can secure adherence of the internal dissidence, we will consolidate the unity both for the internal dissidence process and also within the *nomenklatura*. And I believe that the worst thing we can do here is to select those dissidents that can build inside Cuba the agenda that matches our own. All of them must receive our help. Dissidence is the best expression of change, and represents the will of all Cubans. So I think that we can support a coherent opposition process.

I will end by mentioning what took place on March 18<sup>th</sup>. It was not a chance occurrence. It was not only the Varela Project. I believe that the March 18<sup>th</sup> repression was caused precisely by the coalition created with all the members of the Assembly to Promote Civil Society. The Havana regime dreads organized opposition, is afraid of a coalition among all the opposition organizations. And if we do it here, we send a positive message. In Rome I was lucky to speak with a great Cuban, highly committed to the situation in Paris. And he urged us here to create a coalition, an strategic consensus, because this would send a positive message for the members of the dissidence and for those sectors of the *nomenklatura* who want a change, who want a reform, and even for some radicals that would veer toward the dissidence. All this can at the same time bring an increase of self-esteem, for them but also for us who live in freedom. It would be the best message that we can send those who struggle in Cuba.



I want to finish with something I always mention when speaking about Cuba. Because we speak about Cuba sometimes just as a concept, we speak about the Cuban people as an abstraction. In Cuba I have people very close to me, my eight siblings and my parents. My mother celebrated her 78<sup>th</sup> birthday last month. I who have been able to see a free world, to travel, thank God, through different countries, as a Cuban exile, am envied for being in a nearby world that can't be seen. Then, we speak about democracy without knowing or without understanding that democracy has a principle to me more important than participation or discussion: and it is responsibility. If we assume a position of responsibility in relation to the Cuban tragedy, and if at the same time we aim to comply with what Martí asked for, the triumph is secure, because the system is collapsing, and there is an absolute urgency for a change. Cubans have a thirst for freedom; these are no small words, they thirst for freedom. My father and my eight siblings work now with the dissidence. And they will be able to provide a diagnosis of the situation such as has been lived by the Cubans here. This is the moment, and if we do not achieve an intelligent strategy, with the support of the United States and that of other countries, trying to achieve a multilateral effect, the tragedy can last a few years more. It all depend on us. So we have to take courage, because Cubans hope for that day to arrive soon. Thank you.

[Original Spanish text: *Voy a parecer diferente aquí porque voy a hablar en español. Y además, voy a empezar por contar algo muy relacionado con lo que ocurrió hace apenas dos semanas en Roma. Nosotros no nos pudimos intervenir y basamos estos comentarios en tres propuestas y luego después analizamos el impacto que tuvo ese evento, comenzando con la disidencia interna en Cuba, consideramos que son siete u ocho aspectos importantes en estos momentos.*

*Hay un principio de la lucha pacífica no-violenta que se llama la no-cooperación con el régimen. Yo creo que esto es el momento conveniente para promover eso desde el interior y que va a permitir un paso solidario espacio para los opositores en la isla. Y esto es importante porque en la manera que la oposición interna en la isla tenga recursos, va a mostrar independencia absoluta del modelo que puede tener un impacto directo en la comunidad.*

*Voy a hacer una anécdota. Permítame. El día 22 de agosto cuando fui de San Juan de la casa a ver a uno en su domicilio y me enviaron un militar de estar allí regresé a la casa de los padres de mi esposa. Dos días después, hicieron un acto de repudio a cincuenta metros de aquella casa. El señor que se animó a dirigir a los niños, porque eran niños que hablaron, en contra de mi familia y de mí como agentes de la CIA y del imperio norteamericano, tenía su mamá muy enferma, y la medicina que su mamá necesitaba no la encontró en un hospital de Cuba, a pesar de sus relaciones. Y pide ayuda a un cubano que tenía familia en los Estados Unidos de América. Este cubano era amigo mío tomó la oportunidad para decirme: “Colás, este hombre necesita esta medicina, tú se la puedes conseguir?” Porque la disidencia interna en ese caso tenía bastante medicina que enviaron las diferentes organizaciones del exilio. Y no la tenía, realmente esa no la tenía. Pero el Dr. Jesús García un medico que sufrió 24 años de cárcel tenía esa medicina. Y me la hizo llegar a un pueblo que se llamaba Amancio, antes se llamaba Francisco Guayabal. Yo le di el medicamento a mi amigo, y él se la hizo llegar al señor, quien por cierto tiene mi propio nombre: Ramón Arriana. Y la medicina ayudó a que su mamá se recuperara, y cuando él, después de dos semanas se encontró con su amigo, dijo, “oye, muchas gracias, como me ayudó tu medicina,” él le dijo: “ no me*



*des las gracias a mí, da las gracias a Ramón Colás, quien fue quien te consiguió la medicina.” Eso fue un cambio enorme para aquel hombre. Cuando me veía en la calle, miraba a los lados y me decía “como estás?” Creo que eso es la forma que podemos favorecer también este movimiento pacífico dentro de Cuba: con recursos. Recuerden que esto puede provocar no solamente la independencia del régimen sino también un impacto dentro de la sociedad. Sobre todo ahora, que el régimen ha perdido la capacidad para actuar en lugares sensibles para la sociedad: el régimen no tiene medicina, el régimen no tiene alimentos, el régimen no atiende a los ancianos, el régimen no atiende a los niños, y allí, la disidencia se puede convertir en un poder real. En segundo lugar, nosotros hemos considerado que el tema de Cuba tiene que lograr un efecto multilateral: hay que internacionalizar el tema cubano, creo que se ha hablado aquí acerca de eso, y eso va a permitir, en primer lugar, a romper o superar el mito del diferendo que supuestamente existe entre Cuba y los Estados Unidos. Y en ese sentido sería interesante que el perfil de solidaridad o ese efecto multilateral que se pudiera lograr al nivel internacional estuviera al nivel de hacernos campeones en diferentes lugares de lo que hace los Estados Unidos. Si las embajadas europeas y latinoamericanas se abrieran a la disidencia para ofrecer información, para que estos dos encabezaran sus inquietudes y pudieran verse, dábamos un mensaje de que el cambio es posible desde la oposición, yo creo que nosotros romperíamos ese mito que aún en algunas mentalidades en Europa y América Latina insisten que el responsable de la tragedia cubana es los Estados Unidos. Creo que como resultado del anterior es vital el trabajo con la intelectualidad y la izquierda latinoamericana. En América Latina, cuando se habla de Cuba, por lo general, hablando bien es como hablar. Pero nosotros mismos no nos hemos movido a esos lugares donde hay silencio absoluto y donde supuestamente se respalda el régimen de La Habana. Y la izquierda, que no tiene un argumento hoy para defender la dictadura de Fidel Castro del punto de vista intelectual y filosófico, no lo pueden hacer por la inmoralidad del sistema político de Castro y también por el descrédito que tiene la izquierda internacional. Esto incita temas tan sencillos y básicos como son los derechos humanos: ¿Cómo es el problema del acceso a la información? Cómo es el problema de las libertades de movimiento dentro de un país? Nosotros recientemente visitamos a Argentina y tuvimos un impacto enorme porque cuando hablamos de la situación cubana, yo que soy defensor de la biblioteca virtual, no hablaba de un tema político, sin embargo, mi presentación sobre la biblioteca virtual hacía que el tema político saliera a la población y que los argentinos se cuestionaran, entonces, desde la duda de toda la información que tenían anteriormente con relación al régimen de La Habana.*

*Yo creo que Latinoamérica es sensible, señores, porque se cree en esos países que nosotros los cubanos exiliados somos representantes de una ultra derecha irracional con la que no se puede ni hablar, y que no vamos a tener ningún papel dentro de Cuba, y que el papel que pudiéramos tener dentro de Cuba es para crearle un problema mayor. Y la otra cosa es que nosotros no vamos a esos sitios. Y cuando vamos, lo hacemos precisamente acercándonos a aquellas tendencias políticas que se corresponden un poco con nuestros pensamientos.*

*En cuarto lugar, se habla en estos momentos de un diálogo crítico político con el régimen de La Habana, sobre todo en Europa. No se ha alcanzado todavía en América Latina, y un nuevo político tal como parece que va a suceder, porque los españoles dirigidos en estos*

momentos por el Partido Socialista Popular, se mueva hacia esa dirección, parece que lo van a realizar, y tenemos que comprender que eso viene en camino. Pero si por alguna razón se puede producir o se va a dar un reestablecimiento de contactos políticos nosotros planteamos, y así lo decimos a unos autoridades con quienes nos entrevistamos, de que había que condicionarlos a varias cosas. En primer lugar, la libertad incondicional de todos los prisioneros políticos y de conciencia. El respeto a los derechos humanos en Cuba y la situación por parte de La Habana de relación de las Naciones Unidas; que simplemente es urgentemente en el país la moratoria para todos los condenados de la pena de muerte en el país. Que se acepte la demanda de los activistas por la democracia en Cuba, en contra del principio constitucional del régimen, que sostiene en su Constitución de una vez que diez mil cubanos plantea su diferencia con el régimen debe darse respuesta como una forma de darle espacio a la minoría. Y siempre hemos advertido que un diálogo político crítico con el régimen de La Habana es muy difícil, porque las autoridades cubanas se han declarado de comunistas, y no se mueven, no dialogan con el propio pueblo, ni con esa minoría que quiere el cambio.

En quinto lugar, y esto me parece que es importante que nosotros lo entendamos, como hablamos mucho de “transición,” que los regímenes totalitarios en su fase final en su existencia evolucionan en mafia y tienden a exilarse. Y la forma en que esto se puede superar trabajando es en proyectos que no tienen que ser necesariamente políticos; que se pueden hacer desde proyectos religiosos o de organizaciones fraternales como el caso de los Masones. Y en estos momentos lo que se percibe, pienso yo, y he hablado con unas personas que acabaron de llegar de Cuba ayer, que el régimen ha tratado últimamente de aislarse, y eso es el síntoma mayor de su desesperación y es el síntoma, también, que está diciendo a nosotros que el régimen está al desaparecer. Hay algo muy importante, y que esta reunión me parece que lo identifica muy bien. De todos los cubanos que hemos hablado aquí yo soy el que llegó hace muy poco pero además soy el único cubano negro acá. Soy minoría aquí, en Cuba he sido mayoría. Y esto es un problema de que no puede escapar en la transición. Los elementos circunstanciales de la nación cubana tienen el negro como una parte fundamental de ella, y separar esto de la transición me parece que es peligroso. Por qué? En el año 1959, no se discutió jamás en el país el problema racial. Eso está allí, y yace en el silencio. Sin embargo, Cuba nunca había tenido una situación de discriminación racial como la de ahora. Dato sencillo, hecho por mi esposa y por mí: en La Habana de cada cien automóviles que circulan con chapas privadas, cinco son conducidos por choferes negros. En la provincia de Las Tunas, de más de cien establecimientos que venden en divisas, solamente 25 negros trabajan en ellos en una población donde más de sesenta por ciento de la población es negra. Y por qué digo que tenemos que hablar de temas raciales en el proceso de transición? Porque los negros en Cuba forman parte de los grandes sectores marginales de la sociedad. Sin embargo, hay una bandera por parte del régimen que nos liberó, pero sin embargo no tenemos participación dentro de ese proceso político. De 14 Asambleas Provinciales del Poder Popular, ninguno es negro. De 14 Primer Secretarios del Partido, solamente dos son negros, así que no tenemos presencia en el proceso político, lo cual me alegra muchísimo, que se pudiera interpretarse también como un rechazo de los negros a ese sector, o sea el esfera político. Pero si nosotros empezamos a dirigir en estos momentos un trabajo de atención a estos sectores marginales de la población, a los negros cubanos, nosotros vamos a romper

varios mitos, sobre todo en la zona oriental de Cuba. La provincia Oriental, señores, tiene el 45% de la población total de Cuba. En Oriente viven alrededor de 5 millones de cubanos. En las provincias de Santiago de Cuba y Guantánamo, más de 75% de la población es negra. Allí nosotros no estamos trabajando. Hay que tocar, hay que llegar a estos sectores, hay que decirles que la democracia es la mejor oportunidad que pueda tener cualquier sociedad. Pero no estamos trabajando allí y son lugares donde los negros están desamparados: todo el pueblo, pero sobre todo los negros. No hay embajada, no hay consulado, no hay sede diplomática, no hay prensa extranjera, no hay ninguna sombrilla que proteja a estos sectores.

Creo también, y de esto se habló en Roma, que nosotros del exilio podemos enviar un mensaje muy importante para la transición y es el hecho de que tenemos que crear, señores, una alianza, una concentración que envía mensajes a la disidencia pero también a la nomenklatura. Nosotros hablamos de Fidel Castro, y no sabemos si alrededor de Fidel Castro hay personas que están atrapadas en ese sistema y necesitan cambio. Pero sin embargo, nosotros enviamos señales para que se muevan, y lo más importante es que esta gente no se quieren implicar en nada. Recuerden que en Europa, y todo el mundo nos sabemos, los comunistas se evolucionaron al proceso democrático, en Cuba va a pasar exactamente lo mismo, y si del exilio nosotros concentramos una alianza, o como se llama, el nombre no es importante, que permita buscar una coherencia por lo cual la disidencia interna se adhiere dentro del país vamos a lograr consolidar la unidad dentro del proceso de la disidencia interna y también dentro de la nomenklatura. Y creo que si algo grave podemos hacer desde acá es cuando seleccionamos los opositores para que editen o edifiquen la agenda en Cuba que se corresponda a los de nosotros. Hay que ayudarlos a todos. La disidencia es la mejor expresión del cambio y representa a la vez la voluntad de todos los cubanos. Y en ese sentido creo que hay que, desde aquí, apoyar un discurso coherente de la oposición.

Voy a terminar con lo del 18 de marzo. No fue casual. No fue solamente el Proyecto Varela. Para mí, la represión del 18 de marzo se debe justamente a la alianza que se creó dentro de todos los miembros de la Asamblea para Promover la Sociedad Civil. El régimen de La Habana le tiene temor a una oposición organizada, le tiene temor a una alianza entre todas las organizaciones opositoras. Y si nosotros lo hacemos desde acá, el mensaje es positivo. En Roma, tuve la suerte de conversar con un gran cubano, muy comprometido con la situación en París, y él nos hacía una llamada a nosotros de acá tratando de crear una alianza, un consenso estratégico, porque eso es un mensaje positivo para miembros de la disidencia y para esos sectores de la nomenklatura, que quieren cambio, que son reformistas y algunos radicales que se moverían en el sentido de la disidencia. Y todas estas cosas pueden ir acompañados del aumento de la autoestima, incluso de nosotros acá que vivimos en libertad. Sería el mejor mensaje que nosotros les enviamos a las personas que luchan dentro de Cuba.

Yo quiero terminar con esto, y siempre tengo que decirlo cuando se habla de Cuba. Porque hablamos de Cuba y a veces vemos un concepto abstracto, hablamos del pueblo como una abstracción, y en Cuba tengo un pueblo muy cercano que son ocho hermanos y mis padres. Mi mamá cumplió 78 años el mes pasado, y yo que veo un mundo libre y que he viajado, gracias a Dios, como un cubano en el exilio, por diferentes países del mundo siempre me envidian por estar en un pueblo cercano que no pueden ver. Entonces hablamos de democracia sin conocer y sin saber o interpretar que la democracia tiene un principio que para mi es más

*importante que la participación o la discusión: es la responsabilidad. Si nosotros asumimos posiciones de responsables con relación a la tragedia cubana y a la vez nos orientamos al servicio de lo que pedía Martí, el triunfo está allí, porque el sistema colapsa, y esto no puede esperar, hay urgencia total para lograr ese cambio. Los cubanos tienen sed de libertad, no son palabritas, tienen sed de libertad y ahora con la disidencia trabajan con eso ocho hermanos con mi padre. Y darán un diagnóstico de la situación de Cuba tal como ha vivido el cubano de aquí. Esto es el momento, si no consensuamos de un estratégico inteligente con el apoyo de los Estados Unidos, y con el apoyo de otros países tratando de lograr un efecto multilateral, la tragedia puede durar unos cuantos años. Todo depende de nosotros, así que animemos, que los cubanos esperan para que ese día pronto llegue. Gracias.]*

**Fredo Arias King:** Where there is a formula for a transition, I think everyone involved in transitions will tell you that when the communist regime collapses, there is a certain formula that you have to follow: step one, step two, step three. But for liberation, and this panel is about how to liberate your country from a communist dictatorship, there really is no easy, cookie-cutter formula approach. But I will cite a couple of Tyrannosaurus Rexes and a Velociraptor of transition, and that would be Mart Laar, the former Prime Minister of Estonia, which, as you know, was a most successful post-communist transition, but he was also involved in the liberation of Estonia. Mr. Philip Dimitrov, former Prime Minister of Bulgaria, also was involved in the liberation of Bulgaria. And Marek Kapusta, who was responsible for the overthrow of three dictators, is from Slovakia. He organized a campaign against Vladimir Meciar in 1998, and he trained the Yugoslavs that overthrew Slobodan Milosevic, and they, in turn, trained the Georgians that overthrew Eduard Shevardnadze. So these three have basically given us a formula, which they call the “shotgun approach,” because, as they say, you never know from which side the glass will break, and the dictatorship will shatter into a million pieces. So their formula is basically to just keep trying a little bit of everything, and maybe the thing you least expect will be the one that shatters the regime.

So, how did these people do it? Basically, the first out of six points that we will mention today is to make fun of the regime. A lot of times we take these dictators very seriously when they are in power, and when they fall, we realize that they were just a bunch of buffoons. Look at Nicolae Ceausescu and how powerful he looked just a few hours before he was overthrown, and then he was shot like a dog by his own people and repudiated by everybody after that. Make fun of the dictator while he’s still in power. *Otpor*. *Otpor* means “resistance” in Serbo-Croatian, and it was the name of the organization that overthrew Milosevic, headed by a very good group of people, and they were experts at making fun of Milosevic. It’s very hard for the dictator and his regime to counteract humor and parodies. It’s very easy to repress *samizdat* and put people in prison, but humor is very hard to repress.

Two, organize people around nonpolitical things, such as an environmental or historical preservation campaign, for example. This is what Mart Laar suggested when he was here in Miami, as long as you organize people outside of the official channels. Because once they put their signature on a piece of paper to preserve a monument or a piece of history or for an environmental cause that doesn’t directly challenge the regime per se and, therefore, has a chance to survive, then they are going to put their signature on something more political later on. You embolden them. Once they put their signature on an environmental issue, you better believe

that later they are going to put their signature on the Varela Project and add to those 30,000 brave souls in Cuba.

Three, find a symbol that's catchy, cool, sexy, and everybody knows what it means. It's also very hard for the regime to counter, once it spreads, a sort of fashion statement. In Yugoslavia, they had the fist [and the slogan], "He's gone." In Mexico, we in our campaign for Vicente Fox had the "*¡ya!*" which as you know in Spanish means both "enough" and "It's time." It is very hard for the regime to counter that. In Slovakia, they had a hand, which means either "Stop it," or "I want to participate." And how can the regime say "no" to a hand or a symbol like that? It's very hard for them. In Mexico, we also used a red card, like in soccer when you want a player to go, and the referee says that a player has committed a fault, so people would pull out a red card whenever the regime candidate would show up. In Prague, as you know, in 1989, the 17<sup>th</sup> of November, they would take out their keys and start shaking them, because in Czech, the shaking of keys means that it is time to go. But it is very hard to stop that. You can't arrest someone for shaking keys.

So, fourth, a proposal of what will come after. Formulate a proposal of what will come after so that people will not be so afraid of making that jump, because sometimes people will not jump out of faith. And don't forget that words like "freedom" and "democracy," unfortunately, outside of this room and outside of a few other groups are really empty words for a lot of people who are just trying to survive, but people are more receptive to the idea of change. You don't have to tell people exactly how that change will look; it's just change. *Alianza por el Cambio* [Alliance for Change] we used to call it in Mexico, and all the opinion polls showed that the reason why the PAN [National Action Party] won in Mexico was because it changed its name to *Alianza por el Cambio*. We didn't have to explain what that change would be, and I personally have been very disappointed with it, but everybody bought into it. The proposal of what will come after should include the destruction of that myth that social conquests will be eradicated, that there will be some tradeoff between freedom and health and education. I think Chile and Costa Rica have proved that completely. Estonia, the Czech Republic, and Poland have the best health care systems in the post-communist world and have proved that wrong, but the proposal should include these things.

Fifth, of course, take advantage of cleavages in the nomenklatura and the ruling elite. You never know when somebody will be just itching to shoot Mr. Castro just so they can take power, and we would like to encourage those people within the regime. A lot of times that is the only chance you have.

Sixth, international presence, as some people here have mentioned. Recently, I've been trying to help the little country of Moldova in Eastern Europe, which is the most forgotten country in the world, and they had zero friends in Washington, zero friends in the European Union, but we've been cultivating those friends, and finally little Moldova is receiving some attention in Washington outside of the State Department. But you don't have that problem because you have Frank Calzón in Washington, you have Directorio [*Directorio Democrático Cubano*] in Latin America, and you have Carlos Alberto Montaner in Europe, so you have friends all over the world. Our hearts go out to you, best of luck and thank you very much.

**Andy S. Gómez:** I'm going to give the panel one last chance to add anything, and I'm going to start with Kevin Whitaker.



**Kevin Whitaker:** It is the nature of man to err, and I think I made a mistake back there. Let me tell you what I had in mind and what I failed to note in the contributions of the Czech Republic and Poland and other nations. And I'll admit to having a bit of a siege mentality at times; I know you all will forgive me that. It's just a call to action. I think that what those people do is incredibly important. And I agree with Orlando Gutierrez, that for the first time ever there is an international community concerned with the importance of encouraging change in Cuba. I would never diminish their efforts. I wanted to absolutely make that clear and on the record, that what countries around the world are doing is absolutely essential to the overall effort.

**Otto Reich:** Change will come from within Cuba. It must come from within. We on the outside—and this includes the United States and the citizens of every country interested in freedom in Cuba—governments interested in freedom in Cuba can play a supportive role. But the leadership role has to come from within the people of Cuba. We should not pick winners and losers. We should just support people who believe in the values that we believe in, like freedom. Later on, when there is a democracy, everybody can make a case for their own political party, and six hundred political parties will emerge, like in all good Latin American countries, but that's better than one party.

Also, as for the role of the United States, we didn't talk about that very much, but it is important. I agree with Kevin that too many "Old Europe" countries, to use the term coined by our Secretary of Defense, are crawling back to Cuba.

The United States is the 800-pound gorilla, as we say. And without access to the U.S. market, to U.S. financing, to U.S. tourists, the next government is just going to continue down the same slide. So we should withhold that, because frankly, this is a war. Castro has declared war on the people of Cuba, and until now he has defeated them, and in order to defeat him, we have to use our resources, and our biggest resource is our wealth. We should use that to negotiate with the successor government, if that is what it is, that precedes the transitional government, so that they understand that they have to become a democracy before they can participate in this market.

**Jorge Mas Santos:** In that context, I would like to talk about perception versus reality. I think it is extremely important what the Cuban exile community has done in terms of perception internationally about the struggle for a free Cuba, and significant strides have been made in the last decade on that front. More importantly, we must also talk about democracy. Cuba's culture has not experienced a democracy in any generation. In terms of the lessons of democracy, we have to start at home. Today we have heard messages of tolerance, and I want to echo what Ambassador Reich said about change coming from within Cuba. I wholeheartedly agree with that. I think it's important that we nurture the opposition and dissident movement, because they are on the island and they are fighting and confronting the regime every single day. But many times that is considered by some sectors of this community as blasphemy. And that is wrong. Many times here, it is very popular to pick the dissident of the month, the opposition member of the month. And that is also wrong. We should support every man and woman who in good faith and with a good plan wants change and transition in Cuba.



Obviously, we know the agenda of the regime and their security services, using disinformation, using division, and planting people here in exile and in organizations on the island, but that is part of this war. And we cannot shun and criticize the dissident movement because we may or may not agree 100 percent wholeheartedly with their positions. The day we can talk about specific policies and changes and models of democracy is what we need to achieve. We need to get rid of Fidel and Raúl Castro, and none of us know what is going to cause that. We don't know what is going to make that regime fall. We have to try every effort, every single project, every single person, because we do not know. If we knew, we would not be sitting here. That is a message that is important for those of us who lead people in this community. People should not be crucified because they are not my favorite dissident or our favorite opposition group. I have said on numerous occasions publicly that after the fall of Fidel and Raúl Castro, everyone has to have a space at the table. It doesn't matter their past, unless they have the blood of the Cuban people on their hands. And for that, there has to be a justice system and the rule of law: there cannot be immunity for those that have murdered and taken the Cuban people as their victims. We embrace everybody who comes here to Miami who left the regime. And it will be no different in a free Cuba, sitting around a table, because there I am confident and I am sure that democratic ideals will prevail over any types of thoughts of the continuation of a regime that we do not want over our people, and that is the strength of a true democracy: diversity of opinion. And those are, I think, important points that need to be reiterated over and over and not to allow Fidel Castro to be effective in utilizing division and hatred to somehow continue to separate the Cuban people.

**Sergio Díaz-Briquets:** I just have two points. To facilitate the transition, it seems to me that we ought to encourage whatever measure that allows for the dissidents or the average citizen to get away from the grip of the totalitarian state. That passes through family relationships, which would be a counterpoint to the ideologies that have been forced upon the Cuban people for forty-five years. And tied to that as well is the question of the information focus. I think that the people of Cuba do not understand the world that they live in; neither do they understand what a better world would be like. So I think it is up to us to begin to show them that.

## **Questions and Answers**

**Q:** Quick question for Kevin. This is a conference on transition. You gave a very good presentation on the transition report [Presidential Commission Report]. The transition report calls for a coordinator of transition. Can you please give us some hope as to what is going on regarding the coordinator?

**Kevin Whitaker:** I can tell you what the latest information on that is. Assistant Secretary Noriega and Dan Fisk have interviewed some people on this. I don't think it has gotten to the point where there is a good marriage between the qualifications of the person and the needs of the job. We have done things in my office, like try to figure out how many people will be needed to work for [the coordinator], the administrative details, so that there would be the right amount of support for his position. We are not in a position to name anybody yet, but it is on the agenda. This is something we were directed to do, and we will do it.

**Q:** I have heard that 30 percent of the Cuban population are pensioners. The mail system in Cuba doesn't work properly. How do people get their pension checks? And two, it takes a letter from Miami about six weeks to get there. What is the administration doing in that respect? What recommendations are being made? Because communication is vital.

**Kevin Whitaker:** This is an easy one for us, because we get to blame everything on the Cubans, which is my specialty. It's all the Cubans' fault. It really is in this case. This comes back to 1992, when we said that we wanted to resume direct mail service, and the Cubans said no. So you really can't send things from here to there. They can send things from there to here. We have repeatedly raised this with the Cubans, and they just don't give us any answer at all. So this has got to be at the top of our agenda, but at the same time, if the regime won't let us do it. . . .

As I've said, direct mail service has been on the agenda for more than a decade, and the Cubans haven't let us do it. There are really clever people who think up new ways every day to get things on the island. It's a cat and mouse game. You know, the regime actually x-rays every package that arrives in Cuba. Think about that. Every single package that goes through the mail from any country and comes into Cuba gets x-rayed, because they are looking for contraband or food or whatever they are looking for. That's the reality.

**Otto Reich:** The point here is, if the government of Cuba is going to cut off communications, we need to find some imaginative ways to get information onto the island. And a lot of people do, and people at this table who represent a number of organizations do it all the time. We have to be smarter than they are. We know that Castro is going to try to block it. When we had Radio Martí, he jammed Radio Martí, so we had to change some of our [tactics] and finally got TV Martí up in the air. We had to use a military aircraft because of the lawyers. I'm with Shakespeare: "The first thing we should do is kill all the lawyers," with all due respect. We finally got TV Martí on the air, and what Castro is doing; since he can't jam it, is turning off the electricity. We have to work around that.

For example, there are commercial radio and TV stations all over the Caribbean. Maybe some groups can raise some money and buy some commercial time on radio stations in Jamaica, Haiti, Turks and Caicos, and other nations and broadcast truth. But it has to be truth. Not propaganda, nothing about revenge, please, I think we've had enough bloodshed in Cuba. Yes, the people at the top, there will have to be some commission to deal with crimes, but I worry when I turn on a radio station here, and I hear a lot of talk about revenge. It worries me. But we do have to get the truth to Cuba, and I think there are ways of doing it.

**Q:** To be enthused about a change and for the risk that it is going to involve for the Cuban people to break with the system and to demonstrate their lack of cooperation with the system, I think part of it has to do with the fact that they have to see that the change that they are looking forward to is a real change. We are all talking about peaceful [transition], and I want to echo Frank Calzón's words about a peaceful transition, a peaceful change. I think it is wonderful, but the war against Castro began in 1959

[*Translated by CTP Staff. Original Spanish text follows.*] The question is to Ramon Colas: Regarding point number 4, you speak of a dialogue with the government and this worries me because of what I just said, because if the Cuban people don't see a real change but only a

modification of the same they won't be motivated to take the risk involved in confronting the regime. I would like for you to clarify a little what this type of dialogue would imply.

[Original Spanish text: *La pregunta es para Ramón Colas: En el punto número cuatro, Ud. habla de diálogo con el gobierno, y eso me preocupa por lo que me acabo de decir porque si el pueblo cubano no vea un verdadero cambio y simplemente una modificación de lo mismo, no los va a motivar al riesgo que conlleva enfrentarse al sistema. Quiero que aclares un poquito que es lo que implica ese tipo de diálogo?*]

**Ramón Colás:** I am not speaking about a dialogue of the opposition. I am speaking about a political dialogue that in this case the Spanish government is interested in having. They are speaking to try to maintain a critical political dialogue with the regime in Havana. This is the position that they use. They are free to do so. We are suggesting that if they decide to dialogue it should be with conditions, because we know the Cuban government does not move, does not speak to the people, does not speak to the dissidents, does not speak to anyone. If they want to take that step, it must be with conditions. In exchange for that dialogue, whatever the result may be, in the space that the dissidents have, the doors of the European embassies should be opened to the dissidents and maintain in some manner the space that the U.S. has given to the opposition movement on the island.

[Original Spanish text: *No estoy hablando de un diálogo de la oposición. Estoy hablando de un diálogo político que quiere hacer, en este caso, el gobierno español. Ellos están hablando por hacer mantener el diálogo crítico político con el régimen de La Habana. Eso es una posición que ellos manejan. Ellos son libres de hacerlo. Nosotros estamos planteando que si ellos se deciden hacer un diálogo, debe ser condicionado, porque sabemos que el régimen cubano no se mueve, no habla con el pueblo, no habla con la disidencia, no habla con nadie, y si ellos quieren dar ese paso, tiene que estar condicionado. A cambio de ese diálogo, viene el resultado que sea, en el espacio que tiene la disidencia, que sea abrirles las puertas de las embajadas europeas a la disidencia y de mantener, en alguna medida, el espacio que había dado los Estados Unidos al movimiento opositor en la isla.*]

**Jorge Mas Santos:** I'd like to address that issue of change and of fear, and we talk here of a peaceful transition—it is what we all want, it is what we all aspire to, and it is our message that needs to reach the Cuban people. It is no secret that our organization throughout the years has been accused of many things by the regime in terms of violent methods. We have always said that the Cuban people are free to use all the tools available to them to liberate their country and to rid themselves of this regime. That does not mean that we do not advocate for a peaceful transition; that is what is important because none of us would like to see bloodshed.

But in terms of instilling faith and eliminating the fear of the Cuban people to initiate that change, what do we have to do? This has obviously been a challenge because it has not been successful for forty-five years. I am a very big believer that Radio Martí's principal mission was to strip away the fear of the regime from the Cuban people. By talking to them about the real world, the future, alternatives, the message: What is freedom? What is democracy? How do you put two cents in your pocket? The issue of symbols is important, the *cacerolazos* in Havana. Unfortunately, in Cuba there are no car keys, because there are no cars, and if there

were, they would be immediately impounded, but symbols are important, and I know that during the struggle and during all these years, symbols have been utilized. But I recall, and I was just the observer of this conversation, when officials of the former Soviet Union and the KGB came to Miami to meet with Cuban exile leaders in 1992. And the head of the KGB told my late father that Cuba has adopted a perfect system. They took the best systems and tactics that were developed in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and threw in some Latin flavor. He does not care for the welfare of his people; the repressive system is perfect: the block system, the *chivatos* [informants], the repression, the jailings. So how do we strip fear away from these people? The situation on March 18<sup>th</sup>—people were jailed for that, signing the Varela Project. They will jail some people, not jail others; he uses these tactics. How do we counter that? None of us has a perfect answer; none of us knows where that will come from. We need to make every effort, use every method available, [and accept] any assistance in order to spur this on. I think we need to be aggressive. With the mail service, it's important that Fidel Castro and the regime say "no," that it is not us saying "no," so that the Cuban people realize that mail is not getting in because of him. The same with humanitarian assistance, the same if he is provoked with something that happens, so the Cuban people realize the true nature of his regime, because many live in fear; many live a lie. And that's why it's important for us to expound the truth, that we talk about the realities of the world, and, again, this is a very difficult challenge. There is no model like what has happened in Cuba. None. How do we rebuild the island? There are sufficient human resources and capital among the Cuban exiles alone to make the economic rebuilding and the political rebuilding models very easy. The most difficult challenges will be the social and moral rebuilding of Cuba. Those are going to be our true challenges. But how do we strip away fear from the Cuban people to initiate change? I think in any one of these forums or conferences, that is a central issue. How do we do that? None of us has a solution, but we need to try to achieve it.

**Q:** I'm from Venezuela. I came here to learn about your discussion about what seems to be the end of a period in Cuba, and hopefully it is. We in Venezuela are beginning this period. We are starting to organize ourselves. We are a people that are not a part of the old paradigm; we are the new people. And I want to ask you guys a question; we are debating which way we go. Do we go peacefully, or do we take other measures? We've looked at what Cuba's gone through—has peace worked? We've looked at the six years that Venezuela has gone through, frauds, and you know what's been happening. Last Sunday, they murdered a very good man, a lawyer, who was fighting peacefully. So we are now sitting, questioning ourselves as to whether this can be resolved peacefully. I have my doubts. I come from a military background, my father was a general in the Venezuelan Air Force, my uncles are in the military, and I know it doesn't sound pretty, but I believe at this point that the situation in Venezuela is going to be very difficult to resolve peacefully. And I don't want to be here forty years later, talking about a transition in Venezuela. So I wanted to get your opinions.

**Otto Reich:** I've gone on a lot of television shows, and people have said, "How can you say that Hugo Chávez is a danger when he hasn't executed anybody, when he hasn't shut down any radio and television stations?" And a whole list of things that he hasn't done. And my answer is, "I should not have to be grateful to someone for not violating someone else's

human rights.” The fact is that Chávez is attempting to build an authoritarian regime, not yet a totalitarian, but he definitely has authoritarian tendencies. And I think he has to be confronted. I can’t tell the Venezuelan people how to do it. For one thing, because I think that they have gone out in the streets and have proved that they are willing to defend their rights. I do believe, and this is my own personal opinion, that Chávez lost the referendum of August 15<sup>th</sup> massively, and he committed a massive fraud and that the Carter Center made a massive mistake, because President Carter has spent twenty years—and he has done some very good work, by the way, in some countries—but he did not want to admit that he had an election stolen from right under his nose, and I think that’s what happened.

Now, I think the world has changed certainly since forty-five years ago. Remember, Fidel Castro started out very violently; his first actions were intended to intimidate all opposition by executing hundreds and hundreds of people. I have to argue with my American friends that say, “Oh, but if all the Cubans had stayed in Cuba and stood up to Castro, it would have been different.” If more Cubans had stayed in Cuba, there would have been a lot more dead people. And that would have been the difference. And all of them on one side, because Castro was not going to stop killing until he had consolidated power. Chávez has not yet done that. The people who ask me that question are correct in that respect.

I don’t think the Venezuelan people should be the ones to cast the first stone. There are a lot of instruments available to them that were not available to the people of Cuba in 1959 and the next few years. For one thing, there is no Soviet Union he can go running to. He’s got his own money; that is one big difference. Castro didn’t have any money, but [Chávez] took over a very rich country, in relative terms.

I think the Venezuelan people should organize peacefully. We’ve talked a lot about the term “peaceful.” It doesn’t mean passive; they can be very active, as, in fact, they have been when they hit the streets. The violence came from the government, and you can expect the violence to come from the government. But then, I think that the rest of the hemisphere, led by some countries—ironically some of the smaller countries that have the biggest courage—will have to make a decision as to whether to stand by and let Chávez stamp out democracy or stand with the people of Venezuela.

You also have to do a lot of work internationally. And you can use the experience of the Cuban diaspora that has not given up after forty-five years, and probably will never give up. And that is not something that we hope, obviously, for Venezuela, but what I would urge is to do something. Don’t be the first to cast the first stone, and I know that there have been a lot people killed already. There were people killed on April 11, 2002. I saw them live on television in my office in the State Department as they were shot, and I believe they were shot by people working for the government of Venezuela. There has been no investigation by the government, and I believe that is one of the reasons.

So, you have to use a lot of instruments, but you are not fighting an equal battle: Chávez has the guns. So I would be very careful about espousing violence against somebody who has a monopoly on the guns.

**Andy S. Gómez:** Please join me in thanking our panelists for their wonderful presentations today. We have come to the end of this conference, so let me, on behalf of my colleague, Jaime Suchlicki, and all of us at the University of Miami, thank you for attending.

## **Appendix:** Statements by Cuban Activists

- *Gustavo Arcos Bergnes*
- *José Ramón Moreno Cruz*
- *Martha Beatriz Roque Cabello*
- *Anonymous*
- *Vladimiro Roca*



## **DOCUMENTO PREPARADO PARA EL SEMINARIO**

### ***TRANSITION FROM COMMUNISM: LESSONS LEARNED, CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR CUBA***

Omni Colonnade Hotel  
Coral Gables, Florida  
9 de noviembre de 2004

## **COMITE CUBANO PRO-DERECOS HUMANOS**

### **PUNTOS DE VISTA DESDE CUBA**

Por **Gustavo Arcos Bergnes**, Secretario General del Comité Cubano pro Derechos Humanos

#### **1. LAS CONDICIONES EN LAS QUE LLEVAMOS A CABO NUESTRA LABOR**

Las condiciones de trabajo de nuestro movimiento pro democracia y derechos humanos desde dentro de la Isla, como es conocido, siguen estando bajo todo género de agresiones y de represión generalizada, como es consustancial a un régimen estalinista. Sin embargo, nuestro activismo contestatario cuenta con el respaldo y la simpatía de una parte considerable de la población.

Existe un amplio sector de la ciudadanía que manifiesta esa solidaridad de manera discreta, ayudando, por ejemplo, a los familiares de los prisioneros políticos, tanto moral como materialmente. Otro segmento menor del pueblo, visita nuestros hogares, intercambia ideas con nuestra membresía opositora y, coincide con la necesidad de una transición hacia la democracia, recibe nuestras publicaciones de derechos humanos y difunde oralmente nuestros criterios en defensa de las libertades públicas.

Para ganar este ámbito de aceptación en la sociedad cubana, de nuestros programas y pensamiento opositor frente al totalitarismo, han debido transcurrir muchos años, décadas, desde que iniciamos la resistencia cívica, a cara descubierta y a voz en cuello, contra la opresión.

En estos momentos consideramos que, a la hora en que comiencen algunos aspectos de apertura política en el país, la disidencia cubana contaría con un considerable apoyo popular.

En resumen, ha sido la perseverancia hasta el infinito en nuestras convicciones y en nuestras acciones, a favor de un estado de derecho democrático y del respeto integral de los derechos humanos, la que ha posibilitado que las condiciones del trabajo se hayan afianzado un mínimo y que los alcances de nuestra labor en el activismo civilista se hayan extendido y crecido en influencia.

#### **II. LAS CONTRIBUCIONES QUE HACEMOS PARA LA TRANSICION A LA DEMOCRACIA**

Opino que la mayor contribución llevada a cabo por nuestra parte consiste en haber demostrado ante

los cubanos que, a pesar de la brutal represión empleada contra el civilismo opositor dentro de la Isla, somos capaces de propiciar un proceso de cambios políticos, económicos y sociales similares a las transformaciones efectuadas en los países de la Europa Central y del Este que derrotaron al comunismo.

Además, desde el presidio político, hasta con nuestra presencia diaria en la vida política del país, hemos obtenido el reconocimiento internacional acerca de la legitimidad de nuestras denuncias sobre las violaciones de los Derechos Humanos por parte de Fidel Castro y, en cuanto al rigor de no pocas propuestas para el comienzo del proceso democratizador, que han sido elaboradas por diversas agrupaciones disidentes.

### **III. LOS DESAFIOS PARA EL FUTURO DE NUESTRA LABOR PRO DEMOCRACIA Y DERECHOS HUMANOS**

Creo que la continuidad de la resistencia pacífica, pero muy activa y creadora, en el activismo opositor y humanitario, que hemos logrado por tantos años, ante los encarcelamientos y las peores adversidades provocadas por el terror gubernamental, sistemáticamente desatado contra nosotros, representa el mayor reto que debemos afrontar y vencer todos los días.

El no dejarnos conducir por triunfalismos pueriles y reconocer las descomunales dificultades que tenemos que seguir afrontando continuamente, son otros aspectos capitales para el éxito final de nuestros propósitos y proyectos a favor de la democracia.

### **IV. INTERCAMBIOS CON EUROPA CENTRAL Y DEL ESTE**

La colaboración directa con los protagonistas del desmantelamiento del comunismo en Europa, al igual que con los activistas cívicos de todas partes, es esencial para continuar el enriquecimiento de nuestras tareas. Existen numerosos proyectos en marcha en tal sentido, pero creemos que es preciso seguir fomentando esta concertación de voluntades.

Ciudad de La Habana, Octubre 24 del 2004.

***TRANSITION FROM COMMUNISM: LESSONS LEARNED, CHALLENGES  
AHEAD FOR CUBA***

Omni Colonnade Hotel  
Coral Gables, Florida  
9 de noviembre de 2004

Preparado por **José Ramón Moreno Cruz**

José Ramón Moreno Cruz es ex profesor de Geografía y Ciencias Naturales del Instituto Superior Pedagógico Félix Varela. Estudioso de la problemática social, forma parte del grupo de Estudio del Movimiento Cubano Reflexión. Director de programas de radio y discjockey, fue expulsado de ambas instituciones en la década del 90. Defensor de los derechos humanos desde 1999, actualmente se desempeña como periodista independiente.

ESCENARIOS DE LA TRANSICIÓN

PREÁMBULO

Cuando en los juicios sumarios ocurridos en la Primavera Negra de Cuba del 2003 el opositor pacífico y bibliotecario independiente Omar Pernet Hernández fue interrogado por el fiscal sobre la validez de sus actividades pro-democracia, el valiente hombre respiró serenamente, y delante de las cámaras de televisión instaladas en la Sala de los Delitos Contra la Seguridad del Estado del Tribunal Provincial de Villa Clara y en presencia de toda aquella pléyade de comunistas no se amilanó para decir: “Queremos transición, no sucesión con los hermanos Castro en el poder.”

En otro contexto, en 1989, después de 28 años de construido, el Muro de Berlín dejó de separar la hermosa ciudad capital y a los alemanes por antojo comunista, para poner fin a una etapa vergonzosa en la historia de los germanos. En la noche del 9 de noviembre de ese año, los propios soldados abrieron las barreras para permitir el abrazo de personas que jamás se habían conocido. En los festejos hubo mucho llanto de alegría. Fue el ícono que dio fin a la Guerra Fría, la noche que cambió al mundo; el símbolo principal de la separación entre Occidente y el Oriente, entre el capitalismo y el socialismo, había caído. Berlín volvió a ser Berlín.

Antes habían existido fugas de alemanes democráticos a través de las fronteras, mientras que las manifestaciones del movimiento de oposición en ese país del bloque soviético, por primera vez eran impresionantes, exigiendo y criticando públicamente. Las estructuras de poder se tambalearon porque, sin el auxilio soviético, no hubo represiones violentas como había ocurrido en Hungría y Praga. Los órganos de gobierno en esta “Revolución de Terciopelo” se colapsaron, Eric Honecker renunció nueve días después como Presidente de los Consejos de Estado, y antes del año, la Alemania quedó reunificada.

Gracias a las reformas introducidas a mediados de los 80 en la URSS por Mijaíl Gorbachov, paulatinamente llegó la democratización a los países de Europa del Este. El 3 de octubre de 1990 en una sesión extraordinaria de la Asamblea Popular, se aprobó la adhesión inmediata de la RDA en el contexto político, económico, monetario y constitucional de Alemania Federal.

Los juicios sumarios a 75 luchadores pro-democracia en Cuba ocurrieron 14 años después de la caída del Muro de Berlín. Ahora que el mundo libre conmemora el decimoquinto aniversario de tan histórico hecho, y aún en el nuevo milenio, Cuba continúa amordazada y triste, donde una cortina virtual, conformada por aguas, la aísla del mundo cual si fuese la mayor cárcel del globo terráqueo, dividiendo a los cubanos de ambos lados del Estrecho de la Florida, de la misma forma que lo hiciera el Muro durante casi tres décadas.

## DESARROLLO

Es importante tener en cuenta la lección de los demócratas alemanes, por su valía y resultados. También las experiencias de los polacos, húngaros, checos y de otras fuerzas que provocaron el cambio en regímenes totalitarios deben pasar de mano en mano de los cubanos dignos, quienes han escogido la lucha cívica no violenta para exigir sus derechos.

Después del Glasnost y la Perestroika de Gorbachov, las fuerzas democráticas acorralaron con su pujanza a los viejos dogmas marxistas para fomentar estados de derecho en las ex repúblicas soviéticas, pero también en Rumanía, Bulgaria, la RDA, Polonia, Hungría y Checoslovaquia, aunque han tenido que dismantelar el viejo aparato represivo para emprender el camino de la democracia, atados a constituciones totalitarias.

En el caso cubano la transición pudiera aparecer de manos de la vigente Constitución de 1976 con sus reformas, incluido el revocatorio, lo que ayudaría sobremanera a los posibles reformistas del actual régimen en sus ansias de poder político. Unos pocos aferrados al pasado opinan que debería aplicarse en momentos de tránsito la Constitución de 1940, ajustada y reducida, en el rescate de la conciencia jurídica de la República, como lo propuesto por los firmantes del documento “La Patria es de Todos” a finales de la década pasada. Personalmente preferiría la segunda de estas variantes, aunque de su contexto real, queda muy poco.

Aunque Cuba transita por la *etapa post totalitaria* más por impotencia que por diseño, los luchadores prodemocracia intramuros debemos identificar *las fases de la lucha cívica no violenta* en el escenario actual de Cuba ya en el contexto del nuevo milenio. Pienso que es muy importante actuar como portador de cambio al trabajar en la pluralización de la sociedad, para que los “loci de poder” en la sociedad cubana, se distancien del control del estado o emerjan más allá del control del estado; así las instituciones ganan autonomía o independencia, en un proceso vivo que toma lugar en una sociedad activa, que lentamente adquiere dinámica plural con un sinnúmero importante de actores.

El segundo estadio es la liberación de los individuos e instituciones que no sólo se distancian del régimen, sino que rompen su dependencia de él o cesan por completo su cooperación. La liberación es un proceso en marcha que toma lugar en sectores de la oposición y la sociedad civil emergente. Por último, es en la democratización donde se construyen los espacios públicos dentro de la sociedad, para no sólo preocupar al régimen, sino establecer reglas de compromiso de los actores sociales bajo el desarrollo de políticas culturales basadas en la paz, el diálogo, el debate, la crítica y el estado de derecho.

Aunque son estadios independientes, en la dinámica plural cubana *la pluralización, la liberación*

y la democratización tomarán lugar simultáneamente en algunos sectores, como estrategia multidireccional para el Cambio.

Pero la Metodología de la Transitología valora los posibles “*escenarios del cambio*” y los posibles “*agentes del cambio*”. Para el caso cubano pudieran ser agentes endógenos o exógenos, incluso combinados, aunque pudieran existir agentes reformadores dentro del esquema del gobierno. Los posibles escenarios pueden ser variados.

Las tendencias que dominan en el contexto contemporáneo dentro de la sociedad cubana, apuntan a largo plazo hacia la transición, pero a corto plazo, parece ser la sucesión. Al valorar el esquema de la sucesión debemos analizar los factores necesarios para que se produzca un salto hacia una transición democrática, después de un período más o menos largo de reacomodo, recirculando a los elementos del poder y algunos elementos de tendencias reformistas o heterodoxas, los que pudieran tomar posesiones claves para desde arriba promover un proceso de sucesión que al final pudiera convertirse en una transición con todas las de la ley. No es secreto para nadie el franco proceso de retroceso que enfrenta en la actualidad la cúspide de poder, con la sustitución de uno de los ministros más poderosos, considerado por muchos como una pieza de enlace entre los militares y la parte moderada de la nomenclatura.

El instinto natural o la tendencia del régimen es buscar la sucesión por dos esquemas; la radical sería con la desaparición física de Fidel Castro o que éste comience a delegar funciones debido a su incapacidad parcial. Pero no olvidemos que a pesar de la crisis de erosión que tiene el régimen, aún mantiene el control de todas las esferas de la sociedad, aunque las pugnas por el poder comenzarán cuando la generación histórica deje de pelear por el mismo. Ellos tienen leída la cartilla, pero tienen como nadie, sus intereses.

Coincido con el politólogo camajuanense Joaquín Cabezas de León al discrepar con algunas personas y personalidades en relación con los verdaderos objetivos que pudieron mover a la alta dirección del país para tomar las medidas de marzo del 2003. Pudiera parecer que fueron medidas tomadas de forma apresurada, pero si se analizan pormenorizadamente las estrategias de lucha de Castro, soy del criterio que las mismas fueron tomadas para prolongar su existencia, su gobierno y sistema. Los golpes que recibió la oposición interna a partir de la llamada “Primavera Negra de Cuba”, debilitaron no sólo a la disidencia como estructura política, sino también a la emergente sociedad civil. Una vez más la soberbia gubernamental lanzó el mensaje al mundo de su pobre voluntad de cambio.

Por otro lado, las posibilidades de un golpe de estado son mínimas, porque los puntales del triángulo del poder están conformadas por el Partido Comunista, el MINIT y la FAR, aún cohesionadas en torno al poder, a pesar de las contradicciones entre sus principales sujetos de jerarquía, pero no tienen la capacidad de estructurarse como grupos alternativos dentro de la cúspide de poder. Además sería oportuno señalar que desde 1989, cuando se descabezó el MINIT, Raúl Castro ubicó a militares que lo siguen (Raulistas) en lugares neurálgicos de la vida militar y la sociedad. Además creó el aparato de Control Interno dentro del MINIT y la Contrainteligencia Militar, para vigilarse unos a otros, especialmente a los que ostentan mandos reales.

Según muchos politólogos, con Raúl en el poder se perdería el carisma del régimen y estaríamos abocados a un régimen posttotalitario. Cuando Fidel Castro desaparezca de la vida política se producirá un vacío de carisma, que ni Raúl podrá llenar. Las estructuras, aunque erosionadas, aún siguen intactas, razón por la que en la sucesión, no se producirían cambios profundos en la forma de gobierno. Estarían intactos el PCC, las estructuras militares y los organismos que conforman las correas de transmisión del Estado. Esos elementos hacen muy difícil la presencia de una explosión social, aunque

nada es predecible en materia de movimientos sociales abruptos. Si existiera una estructuración de base social con liderazgo, eventos sociales y económicos de gran intensidad sobre la población, como es el caso de los apagones, pudieran desembocar en una gran explosión, pero el gobierno lo sabe y por eso, prefiere paralizar las grandes industrias consumidoras de electricidad, a pesar de los trastornos económicos, para afectar lo menos posible al sector residencial. Una explosión social puede ocurrir con el trabajo acumulado de grupos independientes que, conscientes de que buscan la liberación, pueden ser protagonistas de manifestaciones espontáneas; pero hoy por hoy, el estado tiene controlada a la población. Por eso soy del criterio que pudiera ocurrir, pero luego de un proceso acumulativo a largo plazo.

En reciente polémica con Cabezas de León, sobre la situación actual del país, especialmente de las paupérrimas condiciones energéticas que han estado estremeciendo a la sociedad y economía cubana de punta a punta, retrocedí ante sus argumentos porque nunca supuse que el cambio podía estar tan cerca.

Él afirma que de continuar la frecuencia y crudeza de los apagones, éstos se podrían convertir en el resorte principal y punto de catarsis para la caída de la dictadura. Eso significa que la nomenclatura cubana deberá buscar con toda celeridad y en corto plazo soluciones para resolver la situación de los cortes del fluido eléctrico, porque la población está cansada del mismo discurso y da muestras evidentes de desobediencia civil cada vez que le perturban aspectos tan sensibles como la alimentación de los hijos y las actividades del hogar.

Para lograr presionar al gobierno, como lo hicieron desde adentro las fuerzas democráticas de Europa del Este, la oposición en Cuba tiene que convertirse en una fuerza que sea capaz de presionar desde las mismas entrañas al régimen que cercena la vida política, económica, social y cultural del país. La tendencia de la nomenclatura no es la de pactar con las fuerzas internas, porque no se han creado las condiciones debido a la misma naturaleza del poder y por muchos otros factores, sino el de dialogar con EUA, porque sabe que allí están los recursos y el mercado necesario para favorecer positivamente el sustento del poder totalitario. Por ello creo muy oportuna la política del gobierno de ese país, enunciada en el dictamen de la Comisión de una Ayuda para una Cuba Libre. También apoyo las sanciones de la Unión Europea en el endurecimiento de las relaciones comerciales y la potencialización a la sociedad civil cubana.

La piedra angular de los grupos prodemocráticos y la sociedad civil estriba en que se conviertan en verdaderos núcleos portadores del cambio, porque la élite actual tiene más capacidad de maniobra y podrían reacomodarse mejor. Por eso es importante nuestro trabajo en el desarrollo de las estructuras horizontales de la sociedad, para fomentar los verdaderos núcleos portadores del cambio. La presión desde abajo propicia la creación de zonas de conflictos dentro la sociedad, y si no existen, la élite actual no tiene necesidad de buscar esquemas, ni dialogar. Por eso, aunque resulta complejo, es necesario articular a la sociedad civil y a los grupos prodemocracia para que se conviertan en catalizadores y hagan al esquema de sucesión el camino más espinoso y comprometido. De ahí la importancia de la rearticulación de la oposición para que se convierta en alternativa social, comenzando desde abajo. A diferencia de los países europeos, la oposición cubana actual, es un haz de luz, un destello, pero no una fuerza capaz a corto plazo para volcar el sistema del país.

Todo apunta a la preservación del régimen de forma intacta, aunque después de la desaparición del escenario político de Fidel Castro, sería insostenible, debido a las condiciones estructurales, tanto nacionales como internacionales, que no lo van a permitir. Entonces intentarán reacomodarse en el



poder, buscando válvulas de escape que pueden apuntar a aperturas económicas mediatizadas, y en última instancia podrían buscar esquemas de participación a algunos segmentos de la oposición tolerada, como la de algunos grupos opositores, pero sería única y exclusivamente si la oposición es capaz de crear zonas de vulnerabilidad con presiones internas. La oposición tiene en este minuto un propósito único: articularse en un movimiento significativo, creando fuerzas alternativas sociales, económicas, y políticas dentro del país y de esa forma tratar de presionar desde adentro al régimen.

Lo que hizo presionar las estructuras de poder en Europa del Este, además de las circunstancias internacionales, fue el catalizador de la presión permanente que existió en las estructuras democráticas de Polonia, Hungría, Checoslovaquia entre otros países ex comunistas. Al producirse la reestructuración de las nuevas élites, valoraron la realidad, tomando conciencia de que debían reformar sus políticas.

En Cuba, Fidel pudiera delegar responsabilidad como lo hizo China sin abandonar el control del partido y las fuerzas armadas, aspecto fundamental para él, porque no debemos olvidar que Fidel es el Comandante de las Fuerzas Armadas. Las aperturas económicas pudieran existir, pero no con la misma intensidad que en el este asiático. Debido a las presiones internas y externas, a veces han coqueteado, pero no acaban de implementar las aperturas necesarias, y sin embargo lo que verdaderamente han hecho es radicalizarse más.

Al diálogo van a concurrir cuando vean agotados sus esquemas y sientan la necesidad de preservarse como clase política con intereses económicos. Puede ser que hasta se reacomoden bajo la influencia de las estructuras de poder de los moderados, reformistas o los heterodoxos.

Otro evento que puede ocurrir en el escenario de la transición está dado por la diferencia de edad entre Raúl y Fidel, que no es grande, e incluso muchos afirman que Raúl está enfermo. Pudiera venir una nueva élite de poder que comience a sacar sus cálculos, por ser más jóvenes, intentando reacomodarse en las nuevas estructuras e ir al diálogo, pero antes dialogarían con EUA como tendencia de siempre, porque piensan que ese país tiene más influencia sobre Cuba que el poder que tiene la incipiente sociedad civil y la oposición.

Globalmente, la situación cubana es un paquete de naipes rodando sobre un tapiz donde convulsamente chocan las ideas y zigzaguean, para sancionar a la isla a cada momento. Dentro, el hambre, la miseria, la asfixia, la fatalidad de vivir en un país como éste, la dura realidad circundante y la decepción, hacen mella en el cubano de hoy. A pesar del deterioro abismal en sus relaciones internacionales, factor que influye, pero no determina, lo importante para el poder es mantener el control interno. En crisis pueden lanzar un grupo de medidas como las que se vio obligado a realizar a principios de la década del 90, la mayoría en contra de su voluntad y de los propios principios del sistema, porque lo importante fue y será, salvar la revolución y el socialismo.

Las transiciones son procesos sociales que se hacen complejos porque sobre ellos existen multiplicidad de factores, de tipo cultural e histórico, que en el caso cubano pudieran gravitar. No tenemos una fuerte tradición democrática como otros vecinos del continente, existe la cultura del miedo enraizada en los estratos más pendulares de sociedad, y se denota un desinterés generalizado hacia lo político y lo social. Esas razones apuntan hacia una transición democrática en un proceso complejo, demorado y difícil. Todo depende de que las fuerzas democráticas puedan imponerse y construir una perspectiva democrática a nivel nacional, convertidas así en el sujeto portador del cambio.

No existe una democracia igual a la otra; la aplicada en Francia es diferente a la Suiza porque existen principios y valores que rigen el accionar de un gobierno democrático, pero la democracia, por

encima de todo, es una cultura, y las culturas no tiene dogmas fijos, petrificados, sino que evolucionan para dar solución a los intereses en conflicto.

Los cambios hacia la democracia responden a un conjunto de factores que pueden acelerar o retardar la puesta en marcha de sus valores. Desde la cúspide después del cambio, en la extinta URSS con Gorbachov, se favoreció el camino hacia la democracia con otras voluntades. La democracia se construye permanentemente, por lo que desde ya, en la etapa posttotalitaria con Castro aún en el poder, se están construyendo sus valores cívicos. Es necesario crear las “islas alternativas” con el sujeto social del cambio, porque pudieran existir mutaciones para instaurar una seudodemocracia o algo parecido a una democracia regida por un gobierno autoritario.

En un proceso de cambio deben tomarse medidas de forma colegiada entre los diversos grupos, incluidos los agentes reformadores que están dentro del gobierno. Sería hermoso hacer un gran llamamiento reconciliatorio, o sea, un diálogo político entre todas las partes en la búsqueda del apoyo internacional, tratando que el proceso de liberación y democratización se realice con la mayor profundidad y con la injerencia cada vez menor de la violencia social.

He ahí la importancia del Programa de Diálogo propuesto por el Comité Ciudadano Gestor del Proyecto Varela, herramienta de trabajo que propone el estudio de las posibles variantes en que pueden producirse los cambios en el campo social, político y económico, en temáticas repartidas en nueve capítulos dentro del Programa Transitorio, que abarcan la Salud, la Educación, el Gobierno, la Economía, el orden público, las Fuerzas Armadas y la Vivienda, entre otros. Con el Diálogo Nacional el pueblo podrá elegir lo que considera correcto para su futuro, aprobándolo o no en un proceso democrático llamado Referendo. La propuesta tiene enemigos, también críticos y recelosos, y hasta personas que piensan que todo este trabajo es innecesario, pero con el esfuerzo de sus seguidores, el tiempo dirá la última palabra, porque el diálogo corre por las calles de Cuba en la actualidad, donde se conforman los Círculos de Diálogo.

La muerte de Fidel, según Alcibiades Hidalgo, es la más esperada del milenio. Raúl sabe que tiene limitaciones, a diferencia de Fidel Castro, quien tiene carisma y se ha convertido en un mito. La historia de un país nadie la puede borrar. La historiografía cubana tuvo un vuelco a partir de 1959, cuando se articuló un discurso que borró lo positivo e interpretó la historia de otra perspectiva.

Las Fuerzas Armadas constituyen la fuerza política-militar más importante en el proceso de transición, por sus características propias y debido a la experiencia en otros escenarios mundiales. En un momento traumático va a ser muy difícil para los militares apuntar sus armas hacia el pueblo, especialmente los más jóvenes que ostentan alta graduación.

Dentro del accionar de Fidel Castro no se conciben elecciones libres. Estamos en presencia de un personaje complicado y apocalíptico, pero si las elecciones llegaran promovidas por herederos del sistema, pudiera darse la posibilidad de la unión en un esquema parecido a la UNO de Nicaragua. A esa hora si la oposición se fragmenta en dos grupos, una tercera fuerza política reformadora desde la perspectiva castrista estaría en ventaja para acomodarse en el poder. Allí existen políticos de experiencia, que saben manejar las masas, que han creado lealtades políticas y compromisos, candidatos en potencia a la mesa electoral.

Por otro lado, si existiera un colapso de la dictadura, las fuerzas prodemocracia tendrían la ventaja como elementos de participación en un proceso de democratización más profundo, pero a mediano y a largo plazo, lo que se percibe es un proceso de sucesión con sus variantes, que pudieran desembocar en un proceso de transición dentro de una base real que tiene Fidel Castro en la población, descono-

cida por los impulsos de la doble moral. Nadie sabe exactamente lo que pudiera pasar, porque se desconoce cómo piensa la gente, por lo que pudiera pasar que tenga una base social más grande que lo que nosotros conocemos.

En la sociedad cubana contemporánea gravitan factores socioculturales que alejan a la población cada día más de la política, debido a la misma satanización de la cultura política, expresada sobre todo en lemas apocalípticos. No existen números para contabilizar a la oposición, pero tenemos conciencia de que por múltiples de factores, el pueblo se ha desentendido de la política, quizás por la cultura del miedo, la fuerte tradición cultural expresada en que la política es satánica y que el pueblo sabe que no vale la pena, después de haber vivido casi medio siglo, dentro de esta experiencia traumática, que no trascendió ni en los países donde primero floreció y luego se afianzó.

Existen diferentes escenarios con sus potenciales agentes de cambio, pero sería apresurado hablar de triunfadores desde ahora. Nosotros tenemos ideas pero no sabemos la situación real del país porque intramuros todo es virtual y sólo se habla de éxitos. Pudiera ocurrir otra explosión social como la 1994 porque las penurias y el agobio están generalizados y es probable que la ciudadanía no se deje morir de hambre. Si ese momento llega, sería difícil controlar a la gente, a pesar de todo el andamiaje del estado.

Se hace más que importante, necesaria, la búsqueda de instrumentos de trabajo con elementos reformistas con voluntad de mutaciones y opositores de manera inteligente, como fórmulas de transición que nos permitan ir consolidando las estructuras democráticas para arribar a las primeras elecciones libres postcastristas, después de consolidar las estructuras del tejido social. La transición más que institucional es un problema cultural y social, por lo que se debe ir preparando desde ahora, para luego recoger sus frutos. Los grupos prodemocracia tienen figuras dentro del país que por su accionar e historia han acumulado la experiencia necesaria, incluso en lo político están dotados de experiencias institucionales, para representar una fuerza política alternativa. También en el exilio existen personas suficientemente calificadas y entrenadas en materia democrática que pudieran estar presentes a la hora de la constitución de un nuevo gobierno de transición. Todo depende de cómo se desarrollen los escenarios de la transición y de las habilidades de los políticos para llegar a la población, de una parte y la otra, así como de los mecanismos, porque no se descarta que un futuro presidente en una Cuba postcastrista pueda ser un heredero reformado del sistema. Las experiencias en las transiciones europeas, así lo demuestran. Todo depende de la inteligencia de la oposición portadora de las ideas más genuinas de cambio, en lanzar una política reconciliatoria que beneficie a los cubanos todos. Pero si en medio del proceso de tránsito se cometen errores, puede ser que los reformadores desde la óptica comunista sean hábiles, y capaces de crear otras perspectivas.

Como ventajas tenemos que existe una poderosa e influyente comunidad cubana en el exterior, entusiasmada en regresar a reconstruir al país económica y socialmente. En España la transición se produjo de un sistema autoritario a uno democrático, pero dentro de un esquema de economía de mercado, donde la poderosa clase media se convirtió en elemento compensador de la balanza. En los intramuros cubanos existe una minoría convertida en poderosa clase dominante que tiene el control de todos los recursos, mientras la gran mayoría está sumida en la miseria. Este fenómeno provoca la desnivelación de la balanza. Sería el momento oportuno para que entren a jugar su papel los cubanos exiliados, porque al residente en la isla hay que instruirlo como agente económico en las relaciones de la economía de mercado.

En este país se borró el concepto de la propiedad privada y se perdió la ciudadanía por completo;

aspectos donde pudieran gravitar los cubanos emigrados con especial interés. Ellos traerán la cultura de la economía de mercado y los principios de la democracia, pero encontrarán a un país diezmado en lo político, detenido en lo económico y dentro de esas condiciones se encontrarán presionando las fuerzas castristas sobrevivientes. Por eso la transición hay que verla como un proceso paulatino, que desembocará en un nuevo proyecto de la nación cubana, bajo los preceptos y perspectivas de una modernización intensiva.

A largo plazo, una de las mayores preocupaciones en el proceso de tránsito es cómo se produciría la reestructuración económica del país, porque todo depende de los modelos que se apliquen, ya que no existe un modelo único.

Pensamos que después del cambio muchas personas involucradas actualmente en las tareas políticas, pudieran dedicarse a otros menesteres, especialmente en la proliferación de los nichos económicos encaminados a desarrollar la pequeña y la mediana empresa, porque trabajar en el fomento de la economía del país, es fomentar también la democracia. Otros se dedicarán al trabajo en organizaciones no gubernamentales desde diferentes perspectivas, para de esa forma ir forjando lo que necesita el país en el proceso de democratización, o sea, accionar con los sujetos de cambio y la cultura de la democracia.

A algunos actores sociales de hoy les interesa asociarse a grupos empresariales del exterior, especialmente en negocios e inversiones familiares. Se sabe que la gran mayoría de los exiliados no van a querer regresar, pero sí les va a interesar la búsqueda de mercados e ingresos, aprovechando a sus familiares en la isla, las habilidades y las tradiciones adquiridas en los pequeños negocios.

En la diáspora existen organizaciones empresariales que se encargarán de localizar los diferentes nichos económicos para el salto económico del país. En la Cuba del mañana tendrá un peso vital la industria turística, más que la azucarera, cuyos mayores valores están en los derivados del azúcar. En el turismo, el propio Estado ha creado una enorme infraestructura que se heredará y ha desarrollado habilidades empresariales en ese sector. Cuba es privilegiada por su posición geográfica, ventajas comparativas por la cercanía al mercado norteamericano, donde están los capitales internacionales, más la preeminencia de contar con los empresarios cubanos que allí se han forjado.

En segundo lugar nos preocupa cómo crear la cultura de la democracia en el país, sus instituciones y el papel que jugarán los sujetos de la democracia, así como el fomento del tejido social que tanto fortalece a la democracia. Recordemos que la democracia parte de un sujeto y de las estructuras institucionales.

Otra de las grandes preocupaciones se enmarca en los valores humanos y cómo rescatar la moral perdida en estos años, especialmente en la juventud. Posiblemente se necesite un programa de educación cívica y moral, aplicable con urgencia para recoger los frutos a largo plazo. Un elemento a tener en cuenta lo constituyen los posibles ajustes de cuenta, porque es mucho el daño institucionalizado por décadas. Digamos por ejemplo que muchas personas en los Círculos de Diálogo no están de acuerdo con el perdón que enuncia el Programa Transitorio. La mayoría pide juicios y sangre, aunque hay otros sectores que no lo creen necesario, porque existe y ha existido el odio manipulado. Cuba tiene una experiencia muy interesante que data de finales del siglo XIX y principios del XX, cuando muchos españoles que participaron en las guerras de independencia contra los mambises se quedaron a vivir en la isla y aquí fomentaron familias, sin que existieran revanchas y muestras de odio. Creo que ese ejemplo debemos tenerlo en cuenta los cubanos de hoy y del mañana.

Conozco a muchos presos políticos, hermanos de lucha e ideas, que a pesar de las barbaries

cometidas sobre sus personas, no albergan odio en sus corazones. Recuerdo una carta escrita por José Miguel Martínez Hernández desde la prisión de máximo rigor La 26 Kilo 8 en Camaguey a los pocos días de la ola represiva, donde el bibliotecario independiente y activista del Proyecto Varela, procedente de Quivicán, provincia Habana, me escribía: “Hoy formamos parte de un pueblo que quiere cambiar, sin odio ni rencor en los corazones, a un país que inició la lucha pacífica, que no se detendrá hasta la victoria. Nuestra lucha es la rebeldía de la alegría; la de un soldado que atraviesa el campo de batalla con una flor en la mano. Por eso triunfaremos, llenando de posibilidades a hombres y mujeres, niños y ancianos, los que no tendrán que buscar más allá de sus fronteras la libertad para vivir sin doble moral. Será la Patria ‘Con todos y para el bien de todos’, como dijera nuestro Apóstol José Martí”. Como Martínez Hernández, existen en Cuba millones de personas cansadas de odio, rencores y sangre.

En el futuro, muchos presos políticos de hoy pudieran gobernar este país. Ellos son líderes naturales porque se han forjado en el fragor del combate ideológico y las angustias de la cárcel. También en el exilio existen personas capacitadas para estos menesteres. Muchos son inteligentes, tienen visión de futuro y si tienen intereses políticos, ahí tendrán el camino esperándolos, tal como sucedió con Václav Havel y Lech Walesa, a raíz de la caída del Muro de Berlín.

En el futuro habrá muchas lecturas del castrismo, pero nadie podrá borrarlo de la memoria de los cubanos, porque ésta es la forma de gobierno que más ha estado en el poder, razón más que suficiente que nos obliga a ser inteligentes y pragmáticos en la búsqueda de fórmulas oportunas al trabajar con las propuestas de la Memoria Histórica, porque si se presiona desde ahora, los círculos de poder actuales se pueden atrincherar aún más. Pienso que si vamos a olvidar con odio, más importante es olvidar construyendo.

Lo fundamental en la construcción de la democracia debe ser el intento de salvar las nuevas generaciones, aunque estemos cansados de monumentos y mártires, porque si hay mártires es porque hay muertos; el país necesita ciudadanos y empresarios y no más héroes. Lo importante es la política de diálogo, espíritu tolerante y reconciliatorio bajo la perspectiva de reconstruir el país. Gracias a Dios la más reciente generación de cubanos tiene ambición de vivir y no sed de venganza.

En el futuro pretendo conciliar los intereses de la nación con los personales. Quisiera trabajar como portador del cambio en el trabajo periodístico, dedicándome por entero al trabajo de la radio, quizás alejado un tanto de la política, pero contribuyendo con las potencialidades de la prensa radial al desarrollo y consolidación de la democracia.

Ahora intento ser un ente promotor de la democracia y los derechos humanos. Defiendo los derechos humanos universalmente reconocidos, ayudo a los presos políticos y sus familiares, y trabajo en vertientes culturales, entre otras acciones encaminadas a contribuir a la creación del andamiaje de la democracia. Pero también me desvelo y en mis noches de insomnio, sueño.

Sueño con ver a los niños felices, sin la obligación de repetir frases manidas en las escuelas y actos. Que adquirieren sus conocimientos alejados de toda propaganda eclipsante de la realidad y puedan crecer saludables, resguardados de la enajenación que existe hoy en nuestras calles. Observo las sonrisas cuando tienen entre sus manos hermosos juguetes y pienso que no han perdido la fantasía de Los Reyes Magos. Sonríe al ver que las familias han recuperado su verdadero papel como núcleo epicéntrico de la sociedad, poseen niveles decorosos de vida y que se acabaron los conflictos por el espacio entre paredes. He soñado observando a esa familia reunida junto a la mesa dándoles las gracias a Dios por los alimentos que han logrado proveerse con su esfuerzo colectivo y dándole término a las separaciones forzosas así como las divisiones políticas y geográficas innecesarias y que Cuba ha recuperado

su condición de país de inmigrantes.

Sueño con el nuevo amanecer que ilumina a mi pueblo, para que con alegría y optimismo, cada cual salga de su hogar a realizar los empeños cotidianos; que se realizan acciones encaminadas a eliminar la desnutrición en las personas, especialmente de la tercera edad, a quienes se les garantiza una vejez segura: He soñado que no existe discriminación y todos nos sentimos iguales como personas, gozando de los mismos derechos, donde se ha restablecido la igualdad jurídica y existe un verdadero estado de derecho en un país que recupera la disciplina ciudadana y donde se vela por el respeto al prójimo.

Me desvelo pensando en las posibles acciones para eliminar la carestía de la vida y los bajos ingresos de los cubanos, que obliga hoy a practicar la cultura de la subsistencia y realizar actos indecorosos a la mayoría de los cubanos. Sueño con la satisfacción de las necesidades materiales y culturales de los ciudadanos, la exclusión turística ultrajante que nos hace extranjeros dentro de nuestra propia tierra. Me preocupa la atadura asfixiante que no permite el desarrollo de libertades y las potencialidades individuales, discriminados por la élite gobernante que dice pensar por todos, y observo a los obreros organizándose en sindicatos libres para luchar por sus derechos.

He soñado con estudiantes que eligen las carreras de su predilección y que se acaba la discriminación por motivos políticos o religiosos; la tesis que la universidad es sólo para los revolucionarios es inconsistente, con su tendencia a dividir y marginar. Una enseñanza politizada y el adoctrinamiento sectario y obligatorio es reemplazada por materias de profundos contenidos cívicos y patrióticos con elevados valores morales; sueño con que los padres determinen el tipo de educación que reciben sus hijos y que cada persona pueda practicar libremente sus creencias religiosas.

Sueño con que podamos pensar por nosotros mismos y que se acaba la vigilancia de organizaciones que no respetan la libre expresión de ideas y de la asociación voluntaria en un entramado de instituciones que fortalezcan una verdadera sociedad civil, para así liberar la creatividad personal como fuente inspiradora de ingresos y desarrollo social. He visto en mis sueños cómo los presos políticos salen de sus encierros y que los jóvenes no van a la cárcel por sacrificar animales u otros delitos menores, obligados por las necesidades apremiantes de la familia y que se eliminan las torturas, las penas y los tratos crueles, inhumanos y degradantes del sistema carcelario de la isla. Sueño que no se violan los 30 artículos de la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos, y se ha eliminado del código penal la pena de muerte.

Son una constante en mis sueños las ciudades corroídas por el tiempo, los techos que se hunden encima de sus moradores, edificios destruidos y la escasez de pintura y pobre ornato. Imágenes de calles oscuras y apagones generalizados, la suciedad de las calles y la falta de agua potable. He visto hogares que salen de las penurias con la modernización y cuyos habitantes disfrutan de elementales condiciones de vida.

Sueño con los campesinos que regresan sonrientes de la jornada de trabajo, conscientes del sudor derramado sobre el surco. Y que tanto él como el resto de los ciudadanos son verdaderamente dueños de sus propiedades, riquezas y medios de trabajo; no se pierden los derechos de herencia y se respeta a la naturaleza y el equilibrio ecológico. En mis sueños he observado a nuestros campos reverdecidos y en plena explotación, adornados de la hermosura de la Palma Real así como otros árboles de maderas preciosas que han desaparecido del entorno por la tala indiscriminada y por la introducción de otras especies que nada tienen que ver con nuestra geografía.

Sueño con la necesidad del libre acceso a la telefonía, a la televisión satelizada y a la Internet,



como medios de comunicación propios del siglo XXI y la reinserción de Cuba en el concierto de países de Latinoamérica. Con el orgullo de ser cubanos, viajamos libremente por el mundo sin permiso gubernamental. He soñado con el regreso a los postulados de la Constitución del 40 a la que le realizamos las modificaciones necesarias y que se elimina el ultraje de montar un camello y que he dejado atrás a mi bicicleta porque me he visto sobre un timón de un modesto automóvil moderno. He soñado con la celebración de festividades olvidadas y con elecciones libres y partidos antagónicos de una sociedad plural, democrática y floreciente.

En fin, sueño siempre con la libertad.

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## DOCUMENTO PREPARADO PARA EL SEMINARIO

### *TRANSITION FROM COMMUNISM: LESSONS LEARNED, CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR CUBA*

Omni Colonnade Hotel  
Coral Gables, Florida  
9 de noviembre de 2004

por

**Lic. Martha Beatriz Roque Cabello**  
**Ciudad de La Habana, 24 de octubre de 2004**

### UN FUTURO DEMOCRÁTICO

No es un dislate afirmar: “que en Cuba se llevará a cabo –más temprano que tarde– una transición a la democracia, cualquiera que sea el escenario social y político que se presente”. Claro está la mayoría de los que esto esperan –me atrevo a asegurar– preferiría que este cambio fuera totalmente pacífico y que su duración se extendiera, solo, hasta el menor tiempo posible.

Las experiencias de las ex dictaduras socialistas de Europa y algunas otras puntuales como el caso de España, son una sabia fuente en la que hay que beber; pero no se puede olvidar que cada país tiene sus propios problemas, producidos por las dificultades que el régimen totalitario crea durante su estancia en el poder y en particular la condición insular de Cuba, es un factor único que la diferencia de todos los casos anteriores.

Estudiosos de la situación socio-económica cubana –de dentro y fuera del país– han teorizado bastante sobre el momento de la transición, pero es indiscutible que cada escenario debe tener un proceder diferente y en la práctica, los que tengan a su cargo esta etapa crucial para el futuro desarrollo del país, se verán necesitados de efectuar un estudio minucioso en el momento preciso en que se produzca.

Este análisis incluye las condiciones políticas, –como es natural– en primer término, pero no puede prescindir de la evaluación de la situación económica y social.

Hay factores sociales que sería importante no dejar de tomar en cuenta, por la forma en que se han deteriorado durante estos años. En particular los jubilados y la población de algunos municipios muy afectados por la eliminación de la actividad económica principal: la zafra azucarera. Estos grupos sociales sufren más –en comparación– que el resto de la población.

Lo anterior implica que no sería recomendable un cambio, de forma brusca, de algunas de las condiciones que existen en la actualidad en el país. Por ejemplo: los retirados, mal viven, de los alimentos que se venden por la libreta de racionamiento, pues las míseras retribuciones no les permiten

otra cosa. Su canasta básica no incluye cualquiera de los comestible que se venden a altos precios en moneda nacional –como alternativa, (según el gobierno)–, ni mucho menos productos que se ofertan en la red de tiendas en divisas.

En general la forma de vida de este estrato de la población, que no tiene acceso a ningún centro de trabajo donde pueda “resolver” el día, como la mayoría de los cubanos, se puede calificar de “paupérrima”. Una pensión o un retiro, giran sobre los 100 pesos cubanos, al cambio actual (26x1) significa alrededor de 4 dólares mensuales.

Para ellos habría que pensar en consideraciones especiales, porque no sólo desde el punto de vista económico habría afectaciones, sino también desde el punto de vista político, ya que la democratización del país pondría a este grupo social en desventaja con el resto y esto crearía ya sectores contrarios a la apertura. Y no es que quieran seguir viviendo en la situación que tienen actualmente, pero tampoco desearían un grado mayor de necesidades.

Sólo para poner un ejemplo de lo que en la actualidad sucede, se puede hacer referencia a los retirados del Ministerio de las Fuerzas Armadas, que en su mayoría combatieron en las guerras patrocinadas por el Gobierno Cubano en África y América Latina. A pesar de que son privilegiados de la seguridad social, pues algunos están retirados con jubilaciones de hasta 400 pesos, en estos momentos se discuten plazas de parqueadores, vigilantes y porteros; en lugares vinculados con la divisa, como tiendas y hoteles. Se ven precisados a mejorar esa remuneración, olvidando los altos grados que ostentaron en su servicio a la “Revolución”, pues entre ellos se encuentran quienes llegaron en la oficialidad a mayores y hasta teniente coronel.

Habrà que tener en cuenta, también, que para el año 2025, la Población Económicamente Activa en el país, estará muy envejecida, por lo que se va a tener que pensar en soluciones, algunas de ellas, quizás, vinculadas a la edad de retiro.

La involución tan acelerada que ha tenido y tiene la actividad socio-económica en el país en los últimos 5 años, permite pensar que “cualquier idea acerca de la transición y su forma de llevarla a cabo, tiene que ser modificada constantemente, sobre la base de la realidad objetiva que vive el país en ese momento determinado”. O lo que es lo mismo hay que acercar más la teoría a la práctica.

Claro está, existen problemas acumulados durante estos 45 años, que no hay que pensar dos veces para acometer de inmediato su solución, o al menos un plan general para que se agilice ésta. Algunos de ellos vinculados con situaciones económicas y otros con desviaciones sociales que no podrán solucionarse en el transcurso de una generación, pues se han desvirtuado: la ética del cubano; el amor a la familia, a los símbolos patrios, a la cubanía y hasta a los propios patriotas de la nación, como Martí y Maceo, ya que sus nombres han sido insertados en la propaganda comunista y como tal, se han torcido sus verdaderas ideas.

Hay que elaborar una efectiva estrategia social, para que el cubano aprenda a vivir en democracia, conozca que puede expresar sus ideas políticas, perteneciendo a un partido u otro, el que mejor entienda conveniente. Dejar atrás formas de vida corruptas, como la xenofilia y el jineterismo (prostitución), –sólo para ejemplificar– que amenazan con exterminar los sentimientos de amor patrio que primaron siempre en nuestro pueblo.

La captación de capitales para la inversión y el financiamiento para la puesta en marcha de programas de emergencia social, en fin, la obtención de dinero fresco, será una prioridad en el momento del cambio. El apoyo internacional a la democratización del país no se debe hacer esperar, con mucha agilidad hay que recurrir a todas las fuentes, que durante estos años se han manifestado en posición de

ayuda al restablecimiento de la democracia en Cuba.

También, entre otras urgencias generales, que se han estado acumulando durante tanto tiempo, se da por descontada –pues es bien conocida– la necesidad de integración de Cuba a todas las instancias internacionales a las que pueda tener acceso, buscando el restablecimiento de una imagen de credibilidad del futuro sistema político.

La infraestructura social está prácticamente destruida. Los servicios de electricidad, agua, alcantarillado, gas, etc.; requieren de fuertes inversiones para que resuelvan los problemas de la población.

Un poco más atendida, –por la inversión extranjera– se encuentra la telefonía. No obstante existen limitaciones provocadas por la fuerte influencia política que ejerce el gobierno en el modo de vida del cubano promedio. Si usted apoya el sistema, tiene derecho a tener teléfono, si no cumple con los requerimientos de las organizaciones pro-gubernamentales como: los CDR (Comités de Defensa de la Revolución) y la FMC (Federación de Mujeres Cubanas), no podrá disfrutar de la instalación de una línea telefónica, aunque esté sobrando en la cuadra donde vive.

También las vías de desarrollo de las comunicaciones están muy restringidas para la población, Tener en una hogar Internet, es un privilegio de altos funcionarios y un delito para el resto de la sociedad. Por lo que, este factor de desarrollo nacional, que indiscutiblemente apoyaría el aprendizaje por parte del pueblo cubano de lo que es la democracia, es algo importante a priorizar. En una etapa de transición los cubanos deben estar abiertos al mundo y deben tener oportunidades que antes le fueron vedadas, para que entre otras cosas sirva de apoyo a la nueva política de instauración de la democracia.

Los Ministerios del Interior y las Fuerzas Armadas, tienen un número importante de efectivos sobre las armas, son entre otros, grupos sociales –que en estos momentos de crisis– resultan más que privilegiados, como otras fuerzas represivas, no públicas. Es de suponer, como un acto sabio, que aquellos que hayan tenido responsabilidades y participación en los hechos abusivos para el mantenimiento del poder, deberán ser juzgados por los tribunales competentes, pero el resto de estas fuerzas tiene que ser integrada a la sociedad.

Desde el punto de vista político se haría necesario valorar que cantidad de hombres necesita un país como el nuestro sobre las armas, si la respuesta fuera “ninguno”, sería más positiva para esta etapa, pues haría posible que el resto de los que han servido como militares, pudieran incorporarse a la actividad productiva, que estará necesitando estas fuerzas en tareas inmediatas como la construcción, el restablecimiento de la producción agrícola y ganadera; y la pequeña y mediana iniciativa privada.

Si la transición se produjera en momentos como éste que estamos viviendo, se encontraría una cantidad considerable de industrias paralizadas, recursos humanos sin ser utilizados, en sus casas sin hacer nada, recibiendo su salario, que los convierte en parásitos sociales y los educa a ellos y a sus hijos en un facilitismo ficticio, sobre la forma en que se obtiene el dinero para subsistir, contribuyendo así a torcer aún más, los rumbos de la moral de los trabajadores. Los que permanecen en sus puestos de trabajo, asisten a una jornada laboral disminuida, oficialmente, en 30 minutos diarios –desde el 25 de octubre de 2004 hasta el 28 de febrero de 2005– al igual que el horario de la educación a todos los niveles.

La preocupación de la “batalla de ideas” opaca la existencia de cualquier otro problema que no sea la politización de la vida diaria del cubano promedio y no permite ver más allá de la propaganda, el hostigamiento y la prepotencia gubernamental, lo que ha acelerado la actual crisis, que se ha extendido hasta la industria eléctrica y el abastecimiento de agua, entre otros problemas estructurales, ya que el

transporte urbano e interurbano ha caído en niveles tan bajos, que su última perspectiva negativa, sería desaparecer totalmente.

Por otra parte el gobierno está afectado por la enfermedad de su máximo responsable, sin dar sobre ello ninguna información que se pueda considerar fidedigna sobre la situación existente y solo transmitiendo para dentro del país: “que no pasa nada”; claro este mensaje no es el mismo que reciben los que, en el exterior, tienen otras informaciones.

Cabría preguntarse: ¿qué camino se irá a tomar?, ¿qué soluciones se preparan?. Pues podrían ser diversas las vías que se usen para tratar de salir de esta difícil situación. Entre ellas no se puede descartar: mantener el inmovilismo actual. Pero como una posibilidad existente, está la puesta en vigor de la Ley No75 de 21 de diciembre de 1994, “Ley de la Defensa Nacional”, que establece para casos de contingencia la creación de un grupo de 5 generales unidos al Presidente y al Vice Presidente Primero, para formar un gobierno de emergencia.

Aunque guardada en una gaveta y de ningún conocimiento popular, esta Ley ha sido creada precisamente para tener un punto de escape en un momento de complicación de la situación nacional. Simplemente está ahí y pudiera ser la que dominara el escenario nacional en el momento de la transición.

Es por eso que resulta imprescindible, que los que tengan a su cargo la ejecución de este período tan importante de cambio para el futuro del país, hayan realizado los estudios correspondientes de la situación existente desde el punto de vista social, económico y político y no se lleven por ninguna teoría, aunque es esencial usarla en la práctica, pero la evaluación del escenario que prevalezca, es sin duda lo que permitirá conocer el camino a tomar.

No se puede hablar de la transición como algo dogmático, este proceso debe ser todo lo cambiante y amoldable posible a las situaciones que se irán presentando en la medida que transcurra el tiempo. Los que tanto daño han hecho al país, no tendrán una frontera para huir a tierras cercanas, en su mayoría estarán ahí, esperando por la justicia, la que debe saberse aplicar en una medida consecuente.

Presentes en la mente de los indicados a realizar el cambio, deben estar todas las recomendaciones que se han hecho por los especialistas, para que no permitan -por ningún concepto- afectar políticamente el proceso. El futuro democrático de Cuba, depende, en primera instancia, de la inteligencia de aquellos que deban diseñarlo.

*TRANSITION FROM COMMUNISM: LESSONS LEARNED, CHALLENGES  
AHEAD FOR CUBA*

Omni Colonnade Hotel  
Coral Gables, Florida  
9 de noviembre de 2004

**EL MOVIMIENTO SINDICAL INDEPENDIENTE DE CUBA  
ACTUALIDAD Y DESARROLLO**

***I) INTRODUCCIÓN***

Hace algún tiempo se viene aceptando como un hecho la crisis que sacude al sindicalismo mundial como un actor más dentro de la sociedad, lo que lesiona sin duda los legítimos derechos e intereses de los trabajadores y de sus organizaciones.

El caso de Cuba no escapa a esta crisis. La Central de Trabajadores de Cuba (CTC), fundada en 1939, fecha en que se realizó su primer congreso y convertida a partir del año 1960, en un apéndice del Partido y el gobierno, es considerada hoy en día por la mayoría de los trabajadores cubanos la organización de masas más comprometida con el gobierno, utilizada por éste para instrumentar y llevar a la práctica las indicaciones que emanan del Partido Comunista.

La profundización desde hace algunos años de la crisis económica, política, social e ideológica, unida a la falta de libertades y de representatividad de los genuinos intereses de la clase obrera por parte de la CTC, el alejamiento acelerado de ésta de las problemáticas fundamentales que afectan a los trabajadores, su inmovilismo y compromiso con el gobierno, unido a los cambios acontecidos en la Europa del Este después de la caída del Muro de Berlín, han sido sin dudas las causas que compulsaron el surgimiento y ulterior desarrollo del Movimiento Sindical Independiente.

En los últimos años el crecimiento del sector independiente sindical es notable no solamente en términos de número de organizaciones y actividades, sino también por los sectores representados, el crecimiento en la membresía, la calidad de las actividades, y la evolución de su reconocimiento, nacional e internacional, lo cual sin dudas constituyen las **fortalezas y oportunidades** que presenta este proyecto.

Sin embargo, existen todavía una serie de **retos y desafíos** para la consolidación de un sector sindical representativo, democrático, activo, y con amplia representación y credibilidad internacional.

Los dirigentes y activistas de este movimiento, que vienen jugando un papel determinante en la oposición pacífica y civilista al gobierno totalitario de la isla, han sido blanco desde el inicio del mismo de provocaciones, golpizas y encarcelamientos en un esfuerzo desesperado por parte de los órganos represivos del régimen de ahogarlos y silenciarlos



## **II) EL MOVIMIENTO SINDICAL INDEPENDIENTE DE CUBA**

Los derechos humanos laborales y sindicales, son definidos por la OIT como:

**“el conjunto de prerrogativas, históricamente conquistadas y reconocidas como inherentes a la dignidad de la persona y esenciales para el desarrollo humano integral, vinculados al mundo del trabajo, para garantizar condiciones laborales mínimas y en especial, el derecho a la libertad sindical.”**

El Estado cubano continúa prohibiendo la creación de sindicatos independientes, lo cual no sólo viola sus obligaciones internacionales, sino también sus propios principios, consagrados en la Constitución de la República y el Código del Trabajo, ya que éstos establecen el derecho de reunión y asociación de los trabajadores, aunque de forma muy ambigua y declaran que las organizaciones sociales "gozan de la más amplia libertad de palabra y opinión, basados en el derecho irrestricto a la iniciativa y a la crítica". Por supuesto más adelante precisa que éstos no pueden ser ejercidos "contra la existencia y fines del Estado socialista, ni contra la decisión del pueblo cubano de construir el socialismo y el comunismo".

Los juegos de palabras muy usuales en la legislación y documentos elaborados por el gobierno ponen al relieve que en Cuba no puede existir el derecho de libre asociación y de crear sindicatos independientes, ya que estas organizaciones evidentemente no estarían supeditadas a los intereses del Estado patrón, ni guiadas sus funciones por el Partido Comunista.

### **Retos y desafíos del Movimiento Sindical Independiente**

Debemos especificar que estos desafíos, son adicionales a los que normalmente nos impone el régimen y están dados en nuestra opinión por:

- No se ha logrado extender el movimiento a todos los sectores económicos, a los diferentes segmentos poblacionales y a todas las provincias.
- No se ha podido lograr un proceso de radicalización en la toma de decisiones y acciones que debe ir dando el sindicalismo independiente como parte activa de la oposición interna, para forzar cambios hacia a la democracia.
- Ha existido en ocasiones falta de liderazgo, experiencia, capacidad movilizativa y recursos materiales y financieros para enfrentar tan complejo proceso en el enfrentamiento al régimen.
- La labor divulgativa aun es insuficiente, hay que lograr que se conozca internacionalmente lo que hacemos como movimiento, por los trabajadores cubanos y cómo nos enfrentamos a las políticas gubernamentales.
- La solidaridad internacional de sindicatos hermanos es pobre y solo las confederaciones internacionales han asumido una posición firme, ante las violaciones que comete el gobierno.
- La capacitación sindical es insuficiente, se debe trabajar en función de fortalecerla, para entrenar dirigentes sindicales capaces de influir en la comunidad y en los colectivos obreros, con una verdadera capacidad de liderazgo, esta labor en la actualidad esta muy lejos de

cumplir con su objetivo, aun cuando contamos con un Centro de Capacitación y 10 subse-des.

- Proceso lógico de cansancio y agotamiento ante las posibilidades reales de cambio, lo que ha contribuido que en los últimos cinco años el 60 % de los fundadores del movimiento sindical se encuentren en el exilio y otra buena parte en prisión. El gobierno utiliza muchas veces toda su presión para sacarnos del país o nos amenaza con la cárcel, lo que sin duda hace que el movimiento se debilite y pierda experiencia, aunque a veces gana en dinamismo, nuevas ideas y ejecutivos jóvenes llenos de deseos de ejecutar cambios en el país asumen tareas de dirección dentro del sindicalismo.
- El gobierno cubano como mecanismo de control ha infiltrado agentes de la Seguridad del Estado, en nuestras organizaciones, lo que constituye sin dudas, una violación mas del convenio 87. Hemos podido conocer que dentro de la policía política, existe una Sección llamada Organismo de Masas, que es la encargada de realizar todas las tareas de espionaje, penetración, intercepción de comunicaciones, captación y análisis de la información sobre la temática sindical y de proponer acciones al gobierno y al Partido Comunista, para contra restar el trabajo independiente.

### **Estadísticas que reflejan la política de hostigamiento del gobierno contra el Movimiento Sindical Independiente, en los últimos 18 meses.(Fuente Estadísticas Movimiento Sindical Independiente)**

- 6 dirigentes sindicales, continúan en prisión y soportan condenas injustas, viven en condiciones infrahumanas y degradantes, en celdas tapiadas, llenas de insectos y roedores y en un ultimo intento de quebrar la resistencia de los sindicalistas los han trasladado a celdas con presos comunes los cuales son utilizados por agentes de la seguridad del estado para que los hostiguen.
- 16 acciones de abusos, golpizas, negación de prestación de servicios médicos contra estos sindicalistas independientes encarcelados.
- 1 dirigente sindical se encuentra con licencia extra penal, sometido a un máximo régimen de limitación de movimiento y libertad de expresión, condicionado a regresar a prisión si viola lo reglamentado por la Seguridad del Estado.
- 60 acciones de golpizas, amenazas, detenciones y negación de empleo a sindicalistas independientes.
- 73 trabajadores de diferentes sectores de la economía que han sido expulsados por sus opiniones políticas, su enfrentamiento a la administración y al partido comunista.
- 27 acciones reportadas de represalias contra trabajadores por cuenta propia, los cuales conforman el creciente, pero hostigado sector informal.
- 85 acciones de la policía política en la interceptación y desconexión de llamadas telefónicas, violación y decomiso de correspondencia, así como de literatura sobre el tema sindical y laboral.

## **Logros obtenidos por el Movimiento Sindical Independiente de Cuba en los últimos años:**

- Existe una Confederación Obrera Nacional Independiente de Cuba (CONIC), que agrupa a un total de 92 organizaciones sindicales de todo el país y de diferentes sectores económicos. Estas organizaciones han coincidido en metas y estrategias comunes de enfrentamiento al gobierno y se aprecian avances en el trabajo de unidad.
- La creación del Centro Nacional de capacitación Sindical y Laboral, cuya labor esta dirigida a elevar la capacitación de los dirigentes sindicales para educar a los trabajadores cubanos en los derechos laborales y sindicales internacionalmente reconocidos y en la organización de sindicatos libres, cooperativas de trabajadores y otras formas de libre asociación para que de esta forma puedan defender de mejor manera, los derechos que de forma diaria son violados por el gobierno. Sus objetivos esenciales están dirigidos ha promover la labor de educación obrera y sindical, a través de talleres, conferencias, cursos directos, distribución de Normas Internacionales e intercambio con funcionarios de la OIT, sindicalistas del mundo libre y académicos.
- Se cuentan con 6 bibliotecas independientes especializadas en la temática sindical y laboral y que cuentan con los principales ejemplares de libros en materia de educación obrera.
- Se han elaborado y puesto a disposición de organizaciones sindicales internacionales y de la OIT, un Reporte Anual de las Violaciones laborales y sindicales que comete el gobierno de Cuba. Este trabajo lo venimos haciendo, por cuatro años, de forma consecutiva.
- El Movimiento Sindical ha desarrollado doce cursos básicos de capacitación en diferentes modalidades, con la participación de 250 dirigentes y trabajadores.
- Contamos con un Instituto de Investigaciones Laborales que ha desarrollado una excelente labor de captación de datos y denuncias para ser enviados a la OIT, a la vez que ha realizado investigaciones sobre diversos temas vinculado a la realidad sindical y laboral.
- La agencia sindical de prensa Lux InfoPress ha enviado hacia al exterior como promedio anual 900 despachos con noticias, denuncias y artículos sobre la realidad de los trabajadores cubanos.
- Se ha multiplicado la labor de afiliación con la peculiaridad que nuestros afiliados no necesariamente tienen que romper con su afiliación con la oficialista CTC, en aras de preservar al trabajador de despidos por cuestiones políticas.
- Desde el exterior y a través de nuestros representantes internacionales, hemos recibido literatura de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo en materia de capacitación sindical, así como la revista Lux que se edita con un 90% de informaciones procedentes de nuestra agencia sindical de noticias Lux InfoPress.
- Nuestra labor también es apoyada con transmisiones radiales, donde nuestros sindicalistas tienen la oportunidad de denunciar al mundo, a través de esas ondas radiales las violaciones que comete el gobierno y es de un valor incalculable al ser en muchos casos realizadas las denuncias en la voz, de las propias víctimas o de sus familiares y amigos.

### III) CONCLUSIONES

Hoy más que nunca, se observa un avance del Movimiento Sindical en Cuba, con metas y objetivos de trabajos precisos y definidos, también se observa por primera vez en 44 años, como sindicatos de diferentes vertientes ideológicas han convergido en la necesidad de señalarle al gobierno cubano la falta de libertad sindical y la necesidad inaplazable del respeto a los más elementales derechos universalmente reconocidos.

Es imprescindible fortalecer la labor de solidaridad con los trabajadores y sindicalistas cubanos, a través de campañas internacionales y acciones coordinadas e inteligentes, fundamentalmente en Europa con organizaciones como la Unión de Sindicatos Europeos y la Confederación Internacional de Organizaciones Sindicales Libres y con organizaciones sindicales del desaparecido campo socialista de Europa del Este y en América Latina coordinar esfuerzos con la ORIT y la CLAT.

Para la 93 Conferencia de la OIT, en Junio del 2005, estamos trabajando en función de elaborar un reporte bien detallado de las todas las violaciones en materia laboral y sindical que ha cometido Cuba en los últimos años y coordinaremos esfuerzos comunes con organizaciones amigas, para que acompañen nuestras denuncias en materia de Libertad Sindical.

## DOCUMENTO PREPARADO PARA EL SEMINARIO

### *TRANSITION FROM COMMUNISM: LESSONS LEARNED, CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR CUBA*

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9 de noviembre de 2004

por

**Vladimiro Roca**

La Habana, 5 de noviembre de 2004

### Criterios sobre algunos de los posibles escenarios de salida a la crisis del pueblo cubano

Desde inicios de los años 90, pero con más fuerza a partir del año 1999, en cualquier conversación o polémica sobre el tema cubano, en medios nacionales o extranjeros, casi siempre deriva hacia el tema de si habrá transición, sucesión, rebelión militar, explosión social, etc., y se trata de prever las posibles salidas que pueda tener el problema cubano.

Creo que la recurrencia del tema demuestra, quizá, el deseo y la ansiedad de muchos de los involucrados en ver ya a una Cuba libre, a los cubanos luchando por el desarrollo económico, político y social del país con el esfuerzo, las habilidades y los recursos de todos aquellos que así lo deseen, sin más freno que el que impongan las normas de convivencia social y las reglas democráticas de un Estado de derecho bajo el imperio de la ley y la división de poderes. Demuestra, creo yo, la impaciencia de la comunidad mundial de democracias, deseosas de que termine la larga pesadilla de la nación cubana y su absurdo y tenebroso gobierno totalitario.

Voy a tratar de la manera más objetiva posible de ofrecer, desde mi óptica personal, un análisis de los posibles escenarios y sus posibilidades de producirse, aclarando de antemano las limitaciones del análisis por la falta de información en algunos de los aspectos que se analizarán. Además es un ejercicio de predicción que hago por las solicitudes que he recibido, pues no me gusta predecir (no soy profeta) y me gusta hacer análisis basados en datos y observaciones directas.

#### **Situación general**

**Gobierno cubano.-** (Analizado por sus hechos y no por sus dichos): gobierno de corte totalitario unipersonal; ideología oficial: el marxismo (aunque por la práctica se parece más a la ideología del fascismo); la economía está subordinada a las decisiones políticas de la alta dirigencia del Partido y el gobierno (principalmente de Fidel Castro); donde, contrario a lo que dicta el marxismo que ellos dicen seguir, la economía no responde a la “satisfacción cada vez más plena de las necesidades siempre crecientes de la población”, sino a los fines de mantener en el poder a una elite escogida. Esta subordinación de la economía cubana es la causa principal que impide un desarrollo estable y sostenido del crecimiento económico y social del país, por cuanto no permite la actividad privada y reprime cualquier tipo de iniciativa personal que no cuente con el beneplácito del gobierno, y si la permite es en forma muy

limitada y con gran cantidad de exigencias que le permitan mantener el control social, ya que para Castro la economía es una actividad que se utiliza en función de la política y el control social.

Un hecho que ilustra la afirmación anterior es, por ejemplo, la llamada batalla de las ideas en que se ha enfrascado el gobierno en los últimos tiempos: gastan enorme cantidad de recursos en la organización de las tribunas abiertas y las movilizaciones populares “voluntarias” para tratar de demostrar el apoyo que tienen, al tiempo que en las sesiones de la asamblea legislativa (Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular), los diputados dedican las pocas jornadas que duran las mismas en hacer énfasis de como el avance en la cultura eleva la calidad de vida de la población; sin tomar en cuenta la enorme cantidad de problemas sin resolver que afectan directamente el nivel de vida de la población como son: la alimentación, la vivienda, el transporte, la salubridad, el bajo poder adquisitivo de la moneda nacional, la miseria de los salarios promedios; entre otros, cuestiones que podrían tener un nivel de respuesta mejor si el gobierno autorizara la iniciativa privada en dichas actividades, pero esto traería como consecuencia una mayor independencia económica de la población y por tanto, pérdida de control para el gobierno.

Por su pésima e ineficiente gestión económica el gobierno tiene al borde de la desaparición la producción azucarera; la producción de alimentos alcanza sólo niveles de subsistencia; los ingresos por turismo no alcanzan para cubrir las pérdidas de las producciones anteriormente mencionadas y, sobre todo, los gastos del enorme, ineficiente e improductivo aparato de gobierno y propaganda desplegado para ocultar todas las deficiencias y errores que se cometen a diario y resaltar los llamados logros revolucionarios.

**Sociedad.-** La sociedad cubana se caracteriza en estos momentos por las diferencias existentes entre las distintas capas sociales, que a grandes rasgos se pueden dividir en cuatro grupos o estratos: la nomenclatura subdividida a su vez en alta, baja y media; la clase militar que se subdivide en miembros de las fuerzas armadas y miembros del ministerio del interior; personas que tienen ingresos en dólares ya sea por recibir remesas de familiares en el exterior o porque trabajan en empresas mixtas, turismo o centros vinculados con la circulación de divisas y por último la mayoría de la población cubana que no tiene acceso a los dólares o tiene acceso en forma limitada de acuerdo a diversos negocios casi todos al margen de las draconianas leyes del gobierno cubano.

La sociedad cubana está sometida a un férreo control a todos los niveles por parte del aparato represivo a través de los órganos especializados de la policía política, las organizaciones políticas y de masas y una amplia red de informantes (chivatos), que además son utilizados en las operaciones de acarreo de personas en las movilizaciones que organiza el gobierno para demostrar el “apoyo popular” con que cuentan.

## **Posibles escenarios**

### **Transición**

Este es el escenario más deseado por la mayoría de las personas involucradas en el tema cubano, tanto para los factores activos y pasivos como para los observadores, y analistas internacionales y que, a su vez, tiene mayores obstáculos para su realización y parece muy lejana en el tiempo.

En primer lugar el propio gobierno cubano, y sobre todo Fidel Castro, es el principal obstáculo para que el pueblo cubano inicie una transición pactada hacia la democracia y el bienestar. El peso fundamental de esta oposición recae en el gobernante cubano que para nada desea un cambio que altere o modifique su influencia y control en las decisiones de todas y cada una de las esferas de la vida económica, política y social del país; tendencia que se refuerza, lejos de disminuir, con el enveje-



cimiento de Castro.

Por otra parte está el miedo a los cambios de una capa importante de la “nomenclatura”, sobre todo la alta, que se mantiene indecisa por las posibles consecuencias que en su bienestar futuro pudiera tener un cambio en el equilibrio actual en las esferas de poder. Este segmento de la nomenclatura considera que un cambio en el equilibrio podría tener como consecuencia un ajuste de cuentas contra ellos y sus familiares según la propaganda abierta y solapada que propaga el gobierno. Son personas con una visión objetiva de la economía que comprenden que sin un buen desempeño de la misma es bastante difícil mantener los privilegios que disfrutaban por mucho tiempo; pero temen más a un cambio, pues creen que perderían mucho más.

Los factores más activos a favor de la transición son: una parte significativa de la oposición tanto interna como externa y los gobiernos de la Unión Europea y América Latina. El gobierno de los Estados Unidos de América a pesar de que declara estar a favor de una transición hacia la democracia en Cuba, mantiene medidas en el aspecto económico y militar que se alejan bastante de la intención que declaran favorecer.

El factor fundamental para lograr la transición hacia la democracia en Cuba es el pueblo cubano. Para lograr esta movilización es necesario encontrar un lenguaje común con el pueblo y, sobre todo, entender las condiciones materiales y espirituales de cada segmento de la población para poder llegar a cada uno con las propuestas y perspectivas que estimulen su movilización en función de los cambios, sobre todo abrirle la visión hacia el futuro que ha perdido y que comprendan que solo los cambios van a garantizar la solución de la mayoría de los problemas actuales.

Las cuestiones fundamentales a tener en cuenta sobre las condiciones materiales y espirituales son: dependencia laboral del único empleador que existe; terror patológico hacia la omnipresencia estatal y su policía política; un gran porcentaje de la población sobrevive gracias a las cosas que obtienen en forma “ilegal” en sus trabajos, lo que le crea un complejo de culpa muy bien explotado por el gobierno bajo la condición de hacerse el de la vista gorda con esas “ilegalidades” siempre y cuando los involucrados cumplan con las llamadas tareas revolucionarias; la pérdida de la autoestima y dignidad, etc.

Las fuerzas armadas es casi seguro que apoyarán o, al menos, se mantendrán al margen de las acciones de una transición hacia la democracia, ya que el ejército no ha tenido vínculos directos con la represión. No se puede esperar lo mismo de una parte importante de las fuerzas del Ministerio del Interior, pues ellas son las encargadas de forma directa de la represión, a pesar de que existen miembros, tanto de fila como de los mandos, que han mantenido una actitud apartada de la represión.

## **Sucesión**

Esta opción es la que parece tener mayores preferencias en las esferas de gobierno, incluso parece que es la que estaría dispuesto a propiciar el gobernante Castro (aunque no hay evidencias palpables), entre otras cosas porque le permitiría pensar que su obra continuará en el futuro de Cuba y sería para él la confirmación de la “justeza” de su accionar en la historia de nuestro país. Según algunos analistas nacionales y extranjeros existen señales de que la sucesión ya ha comenzado y que la misma favorece a Raúl Castro, a pesar de algunos comentarios surgidos, sobre todo en los medios del exilio de Miami, de que Castro estaba favoreciendo al otrora poderoso ministro del Interior, Ramiro Valdés por varias apariciones de este en algunos actos oficiales, incluso haciendo uso de la palabra en el acto central por el 26 de julio del pasado año y notables ausencias del hermano. Estos análisis se basan en el reforzamiento de la presencia cuadros militares en las principales ramas de la economía, sobre todo en el turismo y que Castro encomendó a su hermano el control y centralización de todas las actividades

relacionadas con el turismo, además que cuadros provenientes de las FAR, ocupan las carteras de los ministerios de Azúcar y Transporte,

Una parte de la población considera bien una sucesión si la misma trae mejores condiciones de vida y posibilidades de desarrollo personal, quizá por no tener que seguir abandonando el país en busca de una vida decorosa que el actual gobierno le niega. Este segmento ve como culpable de los males que afectan al país al gobernante cubano y creen que si deja a su hermano al frente del gobierno las cosas podrían mejorar para bien de todos.

Por el momento es la opción que parece tener mayores posibilidades por el apoyo con que cuenta entre la nomenclatura. Hay algunos que piensan que la sucesión podría ser la mejor vía hacia la transición, pues consideran que sin Castro es difícil continuar manteniendo un sistema económicamente ineficiente y tan represivo, por lo que creen que los que sucedan al gobernante iniciarán reformas económicas y de apertura que al final llevarán al país hacia la democracia en un período de tiempo relativamente corto.

### **Rebelión militar**

Es un escenario posible, aunque, según mi modesta opinión, muy difícil de que se produzca por los privilegios de que disfruta la clase militar con el actual sistema y que no creo que cambiará sustancialmente en los próximos años como para impulsar a los militares a levantarse contra el status quo imperante.

En caso de producirse un levantamiento por parte de los militares recibiría el apoyo mayoritario de la población e incluso de gran parte de la nomenclatura.

### **Explosión social**

En la actualidad este escenario comienza a cobrar cada día más vigencia por las manifestaciones de protesta ocurridas contra los largos apagones de los meses de verano, sobre todo en los populosos municipios de Cerro, La Lisa, Marianao, Centro Habana, 10 de Octubre, Arroyo Naranjo, entre otros. Las manifestaciones de protesta fueron desde la aparición de carteles contra el gobierno, pasando por los toques de cazuela, lanzamiento de botellas a las calles y el apedreamiento de tiendas recaudadoras de divisas. Algunos analistas opinan que fueron estas protestas las que terminaron con los apagones, aunque el gobierno haya recurrido a la destitución del ministro de la Industria Básica como chivo expiatorio y que a partir del nombramiento de la nueva ministra hayan disminuido sustancialmente los mismos.

### **Conclusiones**

Aunque no se han analizado otros escenarios, no quiere decir que no se puedan producir, como es la posibilidad de una invasión armada por parte de Estados Unidos, salida a la que apuestan algunas personas, tanto del interior como del exterior, esta opción, creo yo, que está motivada por la ansiedad que provoca la larga estancia de Castro en el poder y quizás a persistentes sentimientos de revancha o desquite. La condición que con más seguridad, según mi criterio, pudiera hacer realidad este escenario sería un éxodo masivo de cubanos por mar hacia Estados Unidos que sería tomado, según ha declarado el propio gobierno estadounidense, como un acto de guerra contra el vecino país.

Según mi punto de vista, la sucesión y la transición o una combinación de ambas son las opciones que más posibilidades tienen de hacerse realidad en estos momentos. Esto no quiere decir que no puedan producirse otros escenarios, incluso los menos deseados, ya que en política las predicciones son muy riesgosas, pues lo que quizá ahora no es posible mañana lo sea y que el incidente más insignificante podría actuar como detonador que acelere la solución de la crisis.

## About the Participants

(In order of Presentation)

### **President Václav Havel**

President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Havel delivered a video greeting, the conference's first presentation.

Václav Havel, born October 5, 1936, is a world-renowned playwright and human rights activist. He became the president of Czechoslovakia in December 1989. His literary brilliance, moral ascendancy, and political victories served to make him one of the most respected figures of the late 20th century and led his country to be one of the first Eastern European nations to be invited into NATO.

### **Dr. Jaime Suchlicki**

Jaime Suchlicki is Emilio Bacardi Moreau Professor of History and International Studies and Director of The Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami. He was the founding Executive Director of the North-South Center. For the past decade, he was the Editor of the prestigious *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*. He is the author of *Cuba: From Columbus to Castro* (2002), now in its fifth edition, and editor with Irving L. Horowitz of *Cuban Communism* (2003). He is also the author of *Mexico: From Montezuma to NAFTA* (2001). Dr. Suchlicki is a highly regarded consultant to both the private and public sectors on Cuba and Latin American affairs.

### **Mr. Alan S. Becker, Esq.**

Alan S. Becker is a founding shareholder of the Law Firm of Becker & Poliakoff, P.A. Mr. Becker oversees the firm's litigation, government relations, and international practice areas. He is a member of the Bar of the Czech Republic, the first practicing attorney in Florida to be licensed there.

He began his legal career in the Office of the Attorney General and as an Assistant Public Defender (1969–1972). From 1972–1978, Mr. Becker was a State Representative in the Florida Legislature. As a member of the legislature and the Florida Law Revision Council (1975–1976), he was the principal author and/or sponsor of much of Florida's housing legislation, including the Condominium Act, as well as the Florida Corporation Act, Mechanic's Lien Act, Evidence Code, and more.

Mr. Becker serves as Honorary Consul General for the Czech Republic for Florida. He is a member of Enterprise Florida, Board of Directors; former board member of the Florida International Affairs Commission (FIAC), and served as Secretary on the FIAC Executive Committee. An active member of the Board of Directors of the Beacon Council, Miami Dade County's economic development agency, he chairs the Beacon Council's International Committee. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the Florida Council of International Development and the Board of Directors of the Florida Atlantic University Foundation. He

was awarded the Global Achievement Award by the Florida Council of International Development.

### **The Honorable Martin Palouš**

Martin Palouš was appointed Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United States by Czech President Vaclav Havel in the summer of 2001.

Born in Prague on October 14, 1950, Mr. Palouš received a RNDr. degree (Doctor of Natural Sciences) in chemistry from Charles University, Prague, in 1973 and went on to study philosophy and social sciences, graduating in 1977. He has also studied law (1996–1999).

Mr. Palouš was one of the first signatories of Charter 77 and served as spokesman for this dissident human rights group in 1986. A founding member of the Civic Forum (November 1989), he was elected to the Federal Assembly in 1990 and became a member of its Foreign Affairs Committee. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia as advisor to Minister Dienstbier and was Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs from October 1990 to October 1992.

Mr. Palouš has held a number of teaching positions at Charles University since 1990. He became a member of the Faculty of Social Sciences (Foreign Relations Division) in 1994 and served for some time as the Faculty's Vice-Dean. In 1993, he joined the Centre for Theoretical Studies, a research center run jointly by Charles University and the Czech Academy of Sciences, headed by Ivan M. Havel. He has lectured extensively in the United States. Until 1998, Mr. Palouš was also active in various nongovernmental organizations, including serving as Chairman of the Czech Helsinki Committee and Co-Chairman of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly. In October 1998, he became Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Palouš is the author of numerous publications, including the chapter on the Czech Republic in the European Commission publication, *Democratization in Central and Eastern Europe*; "Totalitarianism and Authoritarianism," in *The Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace and Conflict* (1999); and "Between Idealism and Realism: Reflections on the Political Landscape of Postcommunism," in *Between Past and Future: The Revolutions of 1989 and their Aftermath* (2000). He also translates the works of Hannah Arendt.

Mr. Palouš is married to Pavla Palousová. They have two children, Michal (born in 1986) and Johana (born in 1989).

### **The Honorable James C. Cason**

James Cason, a career Foreign Service Officer with extensive experience in Latin America, has been Chief of Mission at the United States Interests Section (USINT), Havana, Cuba, since September 10, 2002. Prior to assuming his duties in Havana, he worked in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs as Director of Policy, Planning and Coordination.

He previously served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Kingston, Jamaica, and Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Prior to these postings, he was Political Advisor to the Commander of the U.S. Atlantic Command (USACOM) and to NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic (SACLANT). Mr. Cason also served at U.S. Missions in San Salvador, El Salvador; La Paz, Bolivia; Panama City, Panama; Montevideo, Uruguay; Milan, Italy; Maracaibo, Venezuela; Lisbon, Portugal; and as the Guatemala Desk Officer at the

Department of State.

During his long career with the Department of State, Mr. Cason has won a variety of awards, including six Meritorious Honor Awards and a Superior Honor Award. He has also received the Joint Chiefs of Staff Best Essay Award and the Defense Intelligence Agency's Writing Award. Earlier in his career, he graduated with distinction from the National War College. He received the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff's Joint Meritorious Service Medal. He is a Minister Counselor in the Foreign Service.

Mr. Cason has a B.A. in International Relations, with a major in Latin American Studies from Dartmouth College, and an M.A. from The Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. Mr. Cason was a Fulbright Scholar in Uruguay.

Mr. Cason comes from New Jersey. He and his wife Carmen have two sons, William, a Navy Ensign and an aspiring naval aviator, and James, currently an executive with an Internet software firm in Brazil.

### **Mr. Ivo Sanc**

Ivo Sanc was born in 1955. He graduated from Charles University in Prague with a degree from the Faculty of Sciences in Geology. From 1980 until 1991, he worked as a researcher at the Institute of Raw Mineral Materials in Kutna Hora, studying the physiochemical methods of the investigation of minerals. In 1991, Mr. Sanc was appointed director of the Institute. In 1994, he was elected Mayor of the town of Kutna Hora. From September 1999 until November 2002, Mr. Sanc worked for the United Nations in Kosovo as Municipal Administrator of Gjilan Municipality and then as Municipal Administrator of Prishtina, the capital city of Kosovo. In 2003, he worked as an advisor to the Council of Europe for the reform of public administration of Kosovo. Currently, Mr. Sanc is the Councillor of Kutna Hora Town, Czech Republic, where he works as an expert in the use of renewable energy.

### **Mr. Teodor Marjanovic**

Teodor Marjanovic is a journalist who was the Foreign Desk Head for *Respekt Weekly* in Prague from February 2001 to July 2004. He was Producer for the Czech Section of BBC World Service in London and Prague from August 1998 to January 2001. From August 1996 to July 1998, Mr. Marjanovic was the Foreign Desk Reporter for *Mlada Fronta Dnes Daily* in Prague.

Mr. Marjanovic earned a master of arts degree in Philosophy from the University of Vienna, Austria, in 1996 and a bachelor of arts degree from the Department of Philosophy at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia in 1994. Born on November 27, 1969, in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, Mr. Marjanovic is a citizen of the Czech Republic and Slovenia. He is married and has two children.

### **Dr. Irving Louis Horowitz**

Irving Louis Horowitz is Hannah Arendt Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Political Science at Rutgers University. Among his works are *Taking Lives*, *Three Worlds of Development*, *Beyond Empire and Revolution*, and the Bacardi Lectures on Cuba, published as *The Conscience of Worms and the Cowardice of Lions*. He is also the editor, with Jaime Suchlicki, of *Cuban Communism*, now in its 11<sup>th</sup> edition.

### **Dr. Michael Radu**

Michael Radu is Director of the Center on Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism and a Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia and a Contributing Editor of *ORBIS*. He is the author or editor of nine books on revolutionary groups and organizations in Africa and Latin America, Third World politics, and international relations. He has taught at the University of Pennsylvania, Rutgers University, and the University of the Witwatersrand. Dr. Radu is the author of numerous scholarly articles on world politics.

### **Dr. Vendulka Kubálková**

Vendulka Kubálková (JUDr, doctorate in International Law, Charles University, Czechoslovakia, 1969, and Ph.D. in International Politics, Lancaster University, England, 1974) is Professor of International Studies at the University of Miami, Assistant Provost for university-wide International Studies, and Director of UM's university-wide M.A. program in international administration, <<http://miami.edu/MAIA/>>. Dr. Kubálková is 2005 Vice-President of International Studies Association, South. She has held appointments in England, New Zealand, and Australia and, as Senior Fulbright Professor, at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, and Berkeley. She is the lead coauthor, author, editor, or coeditor of seven books, of which one has been translated into Chinese and Spanish and published as an e-Book. She is author of a forthcoming study to be published by CTP, "What Has Gone Wrong with Transitions in Post Communist Eastern Europe: Lessons for Cuba."

### **Dr. Brian Latell**

Brian Latell is a Senior Associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. He also teaches at the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. He has been an adjunct faculty member there since 1978 and offers courses on Cuba, Latin America, U.S.–Latin American Relations, and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Dr. Latell served as National Intelligence Officer for Latin America from 1990 to 1994. His work as a Latin America specialist for the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Intelligence Council began in the 1960s. He also served as a U.S. Air Force intelligence officer. His last government position (1994–1998) was Director of the CIA Center for the Study of Intelligence, where he was concurrently the Chairman of the Editorial Board of *Studies in Intelligence*, the journal of the intelligence profession. He retired from government service in 1998. Dr. Latell was awarded the CIA's Distinguished Intelligence Medal. He is also the recipient of the Helene M. Boatner Award and Georgetown University's Silver Vicennial Medal. He serves on the board of directors of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers.

Dr. Latell has published extensively on Cuba, Mexico, other Latin America subjects and on foreign intelligence issues. He coedited *Eye in the Sky: The Story of the Corona Spy Satellites* (Smithsonian Press, 1998).

### **Dr. William Ratliff**

William Ratliff received his Ph.D. in Chinese and Latin American histories from the University of Washington in Seattle. For more than thirty years he has been a research fellow and Curator for the Latin American Archival collection at the Hoover Institution, Stanford



University. He has taught at Stanford, San Francisco State, and Tunghai University (Taiwan) and conducted seminars at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, the Institute of International Relations (East Berlin), the Austrian Defense Academy (Vienna), the U.S. Air Force War College, and universities in Mexico, Central and South America. He has published commentaries in all major American and many Latin American newspapers and been interviewed on the Online NewsHour with Jim Lehrer. He has published a dozen books and many policy studies on Latin America (especially Cuba), China, legal reform, and comparative development in Asia and Latin America. He has visited Cuba as a journalist since the twenty-fifth anniversary of the revolution (when he was one of three to interview Fidel Castro) and led three Stanford University tours of Cuba, most recently during the arrests, “trials,” and executions in Havana in early 2003.

### **The Honorable Alcibiades Hidalgo**

Alcibiades Hidalgo, born in Camagüey in 1945, is a Cuban journalist, editor, and ex-diplomat who currently resides in the United States. He graduated from the School of Journalism at the University of Havana in 1974 and was publisher of several Cuban magazines and director of the Editorial de Ciencias Sociales of the Cuban Book Institute.

As an international press correspondent, he reported the first years of the Lebanese civil war, the rising in Iraqi Kurdistan, the fighting in the Western Sahara, and other conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, as well as the Ethiopian-Somalian war of 1978, where Cuban troops were involved. As a Special Correspondent and analyst he covered the events in Poland after the rising of the Solidarnosc Union movement and the last Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

After 1981, he was Chief of Cabinet (political affairs) for Army General Raúl Castro in the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party. He was a member and spokesman for the Cuban delegation in the negotiations leading to the withdrawal of its forces in Angola and the independence of Namibia. In Namibia, he headed the Cuban Diplomatic Observer Mission that supervised withdrawal from South Africa and the elections that led to the independence of the country under the United Nation’s supervision. A member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, in 1991 he was named First Vice-Minister of Foreign Relations and subsequently Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations in New York.

### **Mr. Carlos Saladrigas**

Carlos A. Saladrigas is a Cofounder and Chairman of the Board of Premier American Bank, which provides banking and financial services to small and mid-sized businesses in South Florida. Additionally, he is a member of the board of directors of Progress Energy (NYSE:PGN), a Raleigh-based, Fortune 250 diversified energy holding company and of Advance Auto Parts, Inc. (NYSE:AAP), the second largest retailer of automotive parts in the United States. He also serves on the Hispanic Advisory Board to Frito-Lay and PepsiCo, Inc.

A CPA and CMA, Saladrigas holds an associate’s degree from Miami-Dade Community College; a bachelor’s degree in business administration, cum laude, from the University of Miami; and a master’s degree in business administration, with honors, from Harvard University. A high school dropout, he completed college by attending night classes.

Mr. Saladrigas currently chairs the Cuba Study Group, a group of prominent Cuban-American business and professional leaders seeking a more effective and multilateral U.S. policy that fosters a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba, respectful of Cuba's sovereignty. Through extensive public opinion polls, the Cuba Study Group has been able to show that the large majority of Cuban-Americans favor a more rational U.S.-Cuba policy, a peaceful transition to democracy, and a shift in leadership from Miami to the internal opposition in Cuba. The group was formed in the year 2000 by Mr. Saladrigas and fellow Cuban-American entrepreneur, Carlos M. de la Cruz, after they tried unsuccessfully to negotiate a solution to the Elián González crisis in 1999 at the behest of the U.S. Attorney General. Both men were in the González household negotiating when law enforcement officers stormed the house. That event changed the inner core of Cuban Miami, and the experience convinced them that new approaches were needed to address Cuba policy issues.

Born in Cuba in 1948, Mr. Saladrigas came to the United States in 1961 as an unaccompanied minor through Operation Pedro Pan, a plan organized to allow children to escape communist rule in Cuba. He and Olga Maria León were married in 1968, and they have four children.

### **Mr. Hans de Salas-del Valle**

Hans de Salas-del Valle is a Research Associate with the Cuba Transition Project (CTP) at the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, University of Miami. Mr. de Salas-del Valle monitors contemporary Cuban affairs with a focus on the domestic and foreign policies of the Castro government. He reports on current political and economic developments on the island as a regular contributor to and editor of *Cuba Focus*, the Cuba Transition Project's monthly electronic newsletter. Prior to joining the CTP's research staff in February 2002, Mr. de Salas-del Valle managed international trade and investment projects in East Asia and Latin America from 1997 to 2000. A graduate of the University of Miami, Mr. de Salas-del Valle holds a bachelor of arts degree (cum laude) with a concentration in Latin American Studies.

### **Ms. Martha Beatriz Roque Cabello**

Martha Beatriz Roque is an economist who formed a coalition of opposition groups known as the Assembly to Promote Civil Society. She is the founder and director of the Cuban Institute of Independent Economists.

On June 17, 1997, along with three other Cuban dissidents – Felix Bonne, Rene Gomez, and Vladimiro Roca – she released a document called *La Patria es de Todos* (The Homeland Belongs to All). It urged the Cuban government to hold democratic elections, liberalize the economy, and improve human rights. In July 1997, the four were detained. They were formally charged with sedition in September 1998. After a brief trial in March 1999, they were all convicted of sedition. Martha Beatriz served three years. Martha Beatriz had begun a liquid fast to protest the incarceration of political prisoners in Cuba when she was once again arrested on March 20, 2003 and sentenced to 20 years.

### **Mr. Vladimiro Roca**

Vladimiro Roca, an economist, was born in Havana in 1942. He is the son of Blas Roca, a renowned intellectual who helped found the Cuban Communist Party and participated in

the drafting of Cuba's 1940 and 1976 constitutions.

Roca trained as a pilot in the Soviet Air Force and served in the Cuban Air Force for ten years. He graduated with a degree in international economic relations from the Cuban Advanced Institute of International Relations. Roca has published several articles analyzing the Cuban socioeconomic situation. He is currently president of the Cuban Social Democratic Party, an independent political organization that works to make Cuba a multiparty democracy.

On June 17, 1997, along with three other Cuban dissidents – Felix Bonne, René Gómez, and Marta Beatriz Roque – Roca released a document, *La Patria es de Todos* (The Homeland Belongs to All). It urged the Cuban government to hold democratic elections, liberalize the economy, and improve human rights. In July 1997, the four were detained. They were formally charged with sedition in September 1998. After a brief trial in March 1999, they were all convicted of sedition. Roca received a five-year sentence.

### **Dr. Andy S. Gómez**

Andy S. Gómez is the Special Assistant to the Provost and Senior Fellow at the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami. Prior to serving in this capacity, Dr. Gómez was the Dean of the School of International Studies and is also Professor of Education at the University of Miami. He served as Undersecretary of Education and Chief of Staff for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts between 1991–1994.

Dr. Gómez received his undergraduate degree in International Affairs and political science from the University of Miami. He holds a master's degree in Public Administration from Florida International University and received a master's degree in Education and Ph.D. from Harvard University. In addition, he serves on the Advisory Board of the *Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy*. Dr. Gómez' research and publications focus on the role education can play in transitional governments.

### **The Honorable Otto Reich**

Otto Reich was appointed as Special Envoy for Western Hemisphere Initiatives on January 9, 2003, and was responsible for the coordination of policy initiatives, ranging from the US/Mexico Partnership, the Andean Regional Initiative, the Caribbean Third Border Initiative, and the New Cuba Initiative. Prior to holding this position, Ambassador Reich served as the Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs.

From 1989 to 2001, Ambassador Reich was in private practice, advising U.S. and multinational clients on government relations, market access and strategic planning as a partner in the Brock Group, and later as President of his own consulting firm.

From 1986 to 1989, Ambassador Reich served as Ambassador to Venezuela, for which he received the highest awards of both the State Department and the Republic of Venezuela. As Special Advisor to the Secretary of State from 1983–1986, he established and managed the inter-agency Office of Public Diplomacy for Latin America and the Caribbean at the Department of State, which received the Department's Meritorious Honor Award.

From 1981–1983 he was Assistant Administrator of USAID in charge of U.S. economic assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean. In 1991 and 1992, as a private citizen and at the request of President George H.W. Bush, Ambassador Reich served as Alternate U.S.

Representative to the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva.

Ambassador Reich served in the U.S. Army from 1967–1969. He received a bachelor's degree in International Studies from the University of North Carolina and a master's degree in Latin American Studies from Georgetown University.

### **Mr. Jorge Mas Santos**

Jorge Mas Santos is Chairman of the Board of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), a nonprofit institution founded in 1981, dedicated to the promotion of a free and democratic Cuba. The CANF provides information on the political, economic, and social status of the Cuban people, both on the island and in exile.

As Chairman, Mr. Mas directs the CANF's general programs in support of freedom, democracy, and human rights for Cuba and an end to Fidel Castro's dictatorship and spearheads the institution's policy of working with Congress in support of a bipartisan consensus on a strong U.S.–Cuba policy. Since its creation, the CANF has been successful in passing important legislative initiatives, which include Radio & TV Martí, U.S. government broadcasts of uncensored news and information to the Cuban people; the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992; and the Cuban Liberty & Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996.

Among his civic and community activities, Mr. Mas is a member of the University of Miami President's Council and is on Nova Southeastern University's Board of Trustees. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of First Union National Bank. His charitable work and contributions benefit children's and religious charities, including Junior Achievement and Legatus; his local parish; the United Way; and the League Against Cancer, which recently inaugurated a chemotherapy wing named after Mas family patriarch Jorge Mas Canosa.

An experienced public speaker, Mr. Mas has appeared on national television programs, including One on One with John McLaughlin, Frontline, Dateline NBC, and the Early Morning show with Bryant Gumble, among others. He has presented testimony before the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the U.S. Senate's Foreign Relations Committee. Mr. Mas graduated from the University of Miami with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration in 1984 and a master's degree in 1985.

### **Mr. Kevin Whitaker**

Kevin Whitaker has been coordinator in the Office of Cuban Affairs since September 2002. Prior to this assignment, he served as deputy in Cuban affairs, deputy for Mexican affairs, and as political counselor in Nicaragua. Mr. Whitaker's other assignments over his twenty-five-year career include serving as desk officer for El Salvador and France, as well as working as political officer in Jamaica and Honduras. During his career, Mr. Whitaker has focused on relations with Latin America, and in particular on Central America and the Caribbean.

Mr. Whitaker is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and has been awarded the Department of State's Superior Honor Award twice and its Meritorious Honor Award three times. In 2003, he won the first Secretary's Award for Public Outreach for his work explaining U.S. policy to domestic audiences. He is a 1979 graduate of the University of Virginia. His wife, Elizabeth Whitaker, is also a Senior Foreign Service officer. They have three sons: Stuart and Thomas, age 20, and Daniel, age 10.

### **Dr. Sergio Díaz-Briquets**

Sergio Díaz-Briquets is Vice President of Casals & Associates, Inc. (C&A), a Washington, D.C., area consulting firm, and Executive Director of the Council for Human Development. At C&A, he currently manages US Agency for International Development (USAID) funded transparency and anticorruption projects in Africa and Latin America. Previous institutional affiliations include the U.S. Congressional Commission for the Study of International Migration and Cooperative Economic Development, the Population Reference Bureau, and Canada's International Development Research Center (IDRC), as well as academic appointments. Díaz-Briquets, a graduate of the University of Miami and Georgetown University, received a Ph.D. in Demography from the University of Pennsylvania.

### **Mr. Frank Calzón**

Frank Calzón is the Executive Director of the Center for a Free Cuba, an independent, not-for-profit human rights and pro-democracy organization founded in November 1997. The Center promotes democratic values and a transition to democracy in Cuba. The Center gathers and disseminates information about Cuba and Cubans.

Mr. Calzón holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in Political Science from Rutgers and Georgetown Universities, respectively. He has testified before congressional committees on Cuba and U.S.-Cuba policy.

Throughout the years, some of his opinion columns have been published in *USA Today*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Miami Herald*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and other newspapers in the United States and Latin America. He is quoted by national and international media, including the wire services. He has appeared on "The News Hour with Jim Lehrer," PBS' "Think Tank," Canada's "Face Off," VOA's "Foro Interamericano," the BBC, Radio Martí, and others.

For eleven years, Mr. Calzón served as the Washington representative of Freedom House and led the Freedom House delegation to the annual meetings of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. Mr. Calzón was born in Cuba.

### **Mr. Orlando Gutiérrez**

Orlando Gutiérrez was born in Havana, Cuba, in 1965. He holds undergraduate degrees in Communication and Political Science, as well as an M.A. in Political Science from Florida International University (FIU), and is completing his Ph.D. in International Studies at the University of Miami. He currently teaches courses in political science and international studies at FIU and Barry University.

He is a cofounder and National Secretary of the Cuban Democratic Directorate, one of the leading organizations in procuring international support and solidarity for Cuba's internal pro-democracy movement. He is coauthor of the yearly *Steps to Freedom* reports, published by the Directorate, which chronicles the growth of the civic movement on the island and of *La República Invisible*, a collection of essays on Cuban national identity, exile politics, and the civic movement on the island.

**Mr. Ramón Colás**

Ramón Humberto Colás was born in Cuba and studied clinical psychology at the University of Las Villas. He was an Independent Journalist in Cuba at Agencia Cuba Press from 1997–2002. In 1998, he founded the Independent Libraries of Cuba.

He is currently a Research Associate at the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, University of Miami, and Host of a WQBA Radio Program, Entre Cubanos. His current research includes The Psychology of Cubans and Levels of Dependence of Cubans. He is the author of *El Miedo en Cuba: Algunos Fundamentos*.

**Mr. Fredo Arias King**

A businessman in Mexico City, Fredo Arias-King served as an aide in relations with the United States to the Vicente Fox presidential campaign and the National Action Party of Mexico. A Harvard MBA and MA in Russian Studies, he is also the founding editor of the U.S.-Russian academic quarterly *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*.





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