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Cuba's impact in the Caribbean

Cuba's impact on global international relations has been dramatic particularly since, historically, few sovereign nations have been so subordinate to a dominant power as was Cuba to the United States prior to its successful revolution of 1959. The radical restructuring of its national society and economy in an adverse political global environment during the 1960s (as well as its current functional viability as a small nation-state with limited natural resources, but strong influence on the world stage) is hardly the result of accident or quixotic behaviour. Cuba's pursuit of specific domestic and foreign policies, and the elements which have contributed to a revolutionary path, are important factors in appreciating the Cuban dynamic. To isolate and analyse the causes of this success is a continuing effort; but certain broad observations and tentative deductions can be made about Cuba's emergence on the world stage and its contemporary behaviour in international politics.

As many observers of Cuba's international relations note, that country's foreign policy has undergone several distinct changes since 1959.[1] Throughout its first decade (1959-69) the

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1 For various general assessments of the phases in Cuban foreign policy, see Carmelo Mesa-Lago, *Cuba in the 1970's: Pragmatism and Institutionalization* (rev ed; Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press 1978); and several of the essays in Cole Blaiser and Carmelo Mesa-Lago, eds, *Cuba in the World* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press 1978) and in Jorge I. Domínguez, ed, *Cuba: Internal and International Affairs* (Beverley Hills: Sage Publications 1982). See also Jorge I. Domínguez, 'Cuban foreign policy,' *Foreign Affairs* 57 (fall 1978), 83-108.

priority of the revolution was to ensure the nation's internal survival in the face of the hostility and the containment policies of the United States. During the 1960s, the Cuban régime faced many difficulties, including internal civil conflict, an invasion attempt sponsored by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) which came to be known as the Bay of Pigs, Cold War crises such as the 1962 missiles crisis, attempts at political and economic destabilization culminating in the United States trade embargo, and the expulsion of the revolutionary government from the inter-American system. The pursuit of survival and the economic difficulties of the nation at first hindered overt initiatives in international affairs. By the mid-1960s, however, when it seemed clear that the revolution was secure and stood an excellent chance of success, the Cubans began to abandon their defensive posture. Limited aid to guerrillas in Haiti and the Dominican Republic during 1959-61, and the provision of sanctuary for exiled Latin American radicals, foreshadowed the change to a more radical and activist foreign policy bolstered by a commitment to the Marxist-Leninist concept of proletarian revolutionary internationalism.

The reasons for the aggressive ideological posture which characterized Havana's foreign policy for the remainder of the decade are matters of some debate; but the decision to support with vigour radical leftist guerrilla groups, particularly in Guatemala, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia, with arms and personnel was opposed vehemently by the governments of those countries with the active support of the United States. The period was also characterized by a deterioration in relations between the Soviet Union and Cuba over the latter's policy. In spite of the international publicity surrounding the Tricontinental Conference in January 1966, and the founding of the Organization of Latin American Solidarity (OLAS) in August 1967, this thrust of Cuban foreign policy did not succeed. The defensive reactions of the liberal-democratic Venezuelan régimes of Romulo Betancourt (1959-64) and Raúl Leoni (1964-9) in particular, as well as the death of Che Guevara in

Bolivia in 1967, accelerated its demise. One logical result was an increase in right-wing military régimes in the hemisphere at the end of the decade.

Beginning about 1970, the foreign policy of Cuba entered another phase. Whereas Cuba's aid to guerrillas in Latin America (and to some extent Africa) during the 1960s was indicative of a pre-occupation with opposing colonial or neo-colonial régimes, during the early 1970s Cuba turned to improving its relations with a variety of governments. Fidel Castro travelled widely in Asia, Africa, and Latin America seeking in a pragmatic manner diplomatic relations with governments which ranged from 'progressive militarist' to 'democratic socialist' to 'representative democracies.' In particular, the Cuban régime pursued relations with states which, though not revolutionary, were committed to nationalist socio-economic reform and which behaved 'independently from the United States.' This shift in policy reaped rewards, beginning with the establishment of diplomatic relations with four independent Commonwealth Caribbean nations acting jointly in December 1972. Subsequently Cuba began to re-establish relations and rapport with an increasing number of countries in the hemisphere. In July 1975 the Organization of American States reversed its decision to embargo Cuba (although the United States continued its own embargo) and adopted the principle of 'ideological pluralism' as a policy rationale for the conduct of hemispheric relations. This foreign policy phase was also characterized by a marked improvement in Cuban-Soviet relations and considerable international economic assistance to Cuba.

The third major phase in Cuban foreign policy began in 1975. Its thrust was both operational and geographical and projected military, economic, and political influence in a manner not normally associated with small Third World nations of limited resources. Small numbers of regular Cuban troops had been committed previously in Algeria (1963) and Syria (1973); but the dispatch to Angola in November 1975 of large numbers of combat military reserves to assist the Movimento Popular de

Libertação de Angola (MPLA), the support for the socialist government in Ethiopia against Somalia in early 1978, and the extensive provision of matériel and military personnel to guerrilla movements in Southern Africa indicated a bold new departure in the size and nature of Cuban military assistance. In this foreign policy phase, Cuban military adventures were accompanied by activist diplomacy. Third World leaders flocked to Havana, establishing it as a major international centre, and Cuba's global political prestige was further enhanced in 1979 when Fidel Castro secured the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement. Finally, by 1981, several economic agreements with the USSR had provided a secure basis for Cuba's development expenditure and its own assistance programmes.

The current phase in Cuban foreign policy, which began in the early 1980s, appears to be a relatively less successful era in which Cuba's global prestige has diminished considerably. Domestic crises, diplomatic setbacks, and increased pressure from the United States have contributed to this change.

The state of Cuba's past and current relations with the Caribbean countries corresponds closely with some of the phases I have outlined. But the objectives, characteristics, and impact of such relations can only be understood within the broader framework of Cuba's emergence as a prominent international actor. To assess the relative weight of a variety of domestic and external elements in the making of policy is always difficult, but some effort will be made here to sort out cause from effect (stimulus and response) and to illuminate the national and international environment within which Cuba's policies towards the Caribbean took shape.

In an interesting appraisal of Cuban foreign policy, Jorge Domínguez identified the 'management of success' (that is, the success of Cuban foreign policy in relation to the values, goals, and priorities that the government set for itself) as an instrument of Cuba's international viability.[2] Although prior to 1962

2 See Jorge Domínguez, 'The success of Cuban foreign policy,' Occasional Papers no 27, New York University, January 1980, on which this appraisal is based. See also his *Cuba: Order and Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1978).

there was no guarantee that the revolutionary régime would survive, Cuba's *domestic* revolutionary strategy was co-ordinated very early on with a similar strategy regarding Cuba's role in *world* affairs. The domestic revolutionary experience stimulated conflict with the United States, and the effect of that confrontation was a reciprocal globalism. Although in the 1960s the United States response to Cuba led to its isolation and hindered the implementation of its foreign policy, the situation changed subsequently. In general, the basic reasons for Cuba's foreign policy success in the 1970s were: a successful alliance with the Soviet Union which facilitated economic recovery; the professionalism of the Cuban armed forces, with a consequent improvement in national security; increased bureaucratic competence in economic management; the reassertion of Soviet hegemony after 1968 with a consequent Cuban abandonment of counterproductive foreign policy options; the co-ordination of foreign policies with the USSR in an alliance based on fundamental agreements; and the acceleration of Soviet economic subsidies to Cuba for the replenishment and modernization of military inventories, making possible combat successes abroad.

Other events that facilitated Cuba's success in the 1970s included: the collapse of counterproductive United States policies towards Cuba; the perceived United States reluctance and impotence to engage in Third World conflicts in the post-Vietnam era; and the emergence of a multipolar world in which Cuba could seek links with some countries of the West without jeopardizing either its relations with Moscow or those other countries' relationships with the United States. The net effect was not only revolutionary survival, but also economic recovery and international influence. The régime's sense of revolutionary solidarity, desire for influence, ideological commitment, leadership, mission, and ambition helped to ensure this success while the need for such success in foreign policy was constantly prompted by structural vulnerability (limited energy resources and proximity to the United States).

Other factors have contributed to Cuba's ability to pursue its revolutionary path and to project its power in the interna-

tional arena. First, the revolutionary struggle provided Cuban nationalism with an anti-United States flavour. Given the overt hostility of the United States in the 1960s, the leadership and citizens responded in a cohesive and positive fashion to attempts to destroy the revolution. The emergence of a genuine national community, with the capacity and leadership to respond to international pressure, was one consequence of this episode. Second, the bipolarity of the Cold War environment, and the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, allowed the Cuban régime the policy space and manoeuvrability necessary to its survival. However, the United States response was to become overtly vigilant in seeking to prevent 'another Cuba' in the hemisphere. Third, after almost a decade of economic setbacks from attempting to industrialize and in failing to overthrow King Sugar, the Cuban developmental model began to complement the initial emphasis on social welfare, social justice, moral incentive, and resource distribution with a measured corollary of capital accumulation and concern for economic input and productivity. Fourth, the ideological flavour of the revolution (a suggestive combination of José Marti, Castro, Marx, and Lenin) gave Cuban internationalism a unique flexibility. Finally, Soviet economic aid and military assistance (particularly since 1970) became crucial for Cuba's revolutionary survival, and the projection and success of its foreign policy. Cuba's relationship with the Soviet Union was marked, particularly in the realm of foreign policy, by reciprocal interests – a consideration central to an understanding of Cuba's actions in the international arena.[3]

The Cuban-Soviet relationship is a complex one. Various analyses of the relationship have suggested the features of a 'special' relationship, argued a 'convergence' of Soviet and Cuban interests, typed Cuba as 'a puppet,' proposed a 'proxy

3 For an interesting analysis of Cuba's pursuit of its international objectives, see Nita Rous Manitzas, 'Cuba and the contemporary world order,' in Paget Henry and Carl Stone, eds, *The Newer Caribbean: Decolonization, Democracy, and Development* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues 1983), 141-58.

theory' of Cuban foreign policy, or described Cuba's exploits in Africa as those of a 'paladin.'[4] Whatever the relative merits of any of these categorizations, they should not divert attention away from the large measure of autonomy which Cuba has always demonstrated in its foreign policy vis-à-vis Latin America and the Caribbean. Nevertheless, the relationship with the Soviet Union is unique and, although a cost/benefit analysis is unavailable, the link has produced both opportunities and difficulties for Cuban foreign policy.

Fidel Castro's declaration (in late 1961) in favour of Marxism-Leninism, and Cuba's subsequent commitment to the Soviet bloc, were both expedient and of subsequent advantage to both Havana and Moscow. For the Cubans, the relationship still provides, inter alia, a security umbrella against direct United States military action, tangible and long-range government-to-government economic assistance, a guaranteed market and stable prices for sugar, and guaranteed petroleum supplies. For the Soviet Union, the international bonus in maintaining Cuba's detachment from the United States orbit is probably worth the attendant costs. Cuba is not only a symbol of socialism in the Americas, but it is a useful ally and conduit in the Caribbean which now has some significance in the ideological and national perceptions of the USSR, but in which the Soviet Union does not act directly or overtly.

In spite of what appears to be Cuba's heavy dependence on the USSR, and the potential economic leverage that provides, the relationship is clearly not one of traditional subservience. The Soviet Union was angry over the ill-fated Cuban-inspired guerrilla movements in Latin America during the 1960s, for this was a time when Moscow was actively seeking an accommodation with some of the same régimes Cuba opposed, in order to guar-

4 For some of these characterizations and discussions of the issue of Cuban-Soviet relations, consult Robert A. Pastor, 'Cuba and the Soviet Union: does Cuba act alone?' in Barry B. Levine, ed, *The New Cuban Presence in the Caribbean* (Boulder CO: Westview Press 1983), 191-209; and W.R. Duncan, 'Soviet interests in Latin America: new opportunities and old constraints,' *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 26(no 2, 1984), 163-98.

antee the survival of local communist parties. Nevertheless, it was only when these guerrilla movements failed and when the need to give priority to domestic tasks became clear that Havana began to move toward a more collaborative relationship with the USSR which became characteristic of their relations in the 1970s. Moreover, Cuba enjoys independence in its internal affairs, in contrast to the majority of East European countries.[5]

The disadvantages for Cuba stemming from the relationship are also apparent. The military assistance programmes in Africa have brought about a deterioration in Cuba's relations and trade with some West European countries, and the validity of Cuba's 'non-aligned' posture has been questioned. In particular, Cuba's failure to condemn Soviet intervention in Afghanistan at the United Nations in 1980 gave credence to the charge that its loyalty is actually to the Soviet Union. Cuba's failure to win a seat on the Security Council in January 1982 perhaps best exemplified the changing fortunes of its foreign policy and the more critical perspective which a number of African, Latin American, and other Third World states were beginning to develop towards Cuba. There may also be domestic costs which result from the relationship, such as the commitment of technicians, skilled manpower, scarce resources, and military manpower overseas. In part, these may have provoked the domestic crises over resource allocation and stimulated public dissatisfaction, symbolized by thousands of Cubans seeking asylum in Latin American embassies and the United States during 1980 and subsequently.

In retrospect, therefore, Cuba's international behaviour has been conditioned, inter alia, by careful management, a revolutionary psychology, ideology, and the ability of the political leadership to perceive, test the limits of, and act within the available policy space. However, this has not been accomplished without some domestic costs, various problems in the main-

5 See Jacques Lévesque, *The USSR and the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Praeger 1978).

tenance of international prestige, and recent significant setbacks in the Caribbean Basin.

The impact of Cuban foreign policy in the Caribbean has been felt increasingly since the establishment of relations with the four largest Commonwealth Caribbean states in December 1972. The action of these Caribbean governments complemented changes in Cuba's foreign policy objectives which included its desire to end its hemispheric isolation, to broaden its co-operation with a wide range of governments, and to explore in a systematic manner its legitimate role as a Caribbean country of significant political and military strength. These objectives coincided with the need of the Commonwealth Caribbean states to broaden their scope for independent foreign policy action. The history of relations since that time has been varied, dramatic, and, at times, demanding of ingenuity for both parties. It is in the Commonwealth Caribbean (rather than in the circum-Caribbean Latin American countries) that Cuba established its most productive links with 'progressive' governments, provided substantial developmental (and some security) assistance, projected its image as a desirable model of successful regional socialist change, and eventually tested the limitations of direct competition with the United States.[6]

The collective decision of Guyana, Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad-Tobago to seek ties with Cuba was not followed by the development of any uniform relationship. The Commonwealth Caribbean's responses to Cuba's interest and diplomacy have been varied, because the relationships which were forged depended on the unique political configuration of each territory and the pragmatic perspectives of the governments involved. Leaders of the Caribbean states recognized that relations with Cuba were a part of a broader approach to expanded contacts with other socialist countries, a demonstration of their commitment to the spirit of the Non-Aligned Movement, to which

6 This is not to deny the importance of the Cuban-Nicaraguan link, or the Cuban role in Central American insurgency, but rather to highlight the emphasis which Cuba put on its linkages with states such as Jamaica and Grenada.

most of the countries of the Caribbean community (CARICOM) belonged, and a support for the principle of ideological pluralism, including the right of each state to pursue its own foreign policy. During the 1970s, the appeal of socialism and the absorption of radical critiques of Third World development by bureaucrats, planners, aspiring politicians, and even heads of government in some Caribbean countries created widespread admiration for Cuba as proof that even small nations could search for alternative economic, political, and international strategies. Moreover, Cuban participation during the 1970s in multilateral organizations, such as the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee group within the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), the Mexican/Venezuelan-sponsored Latin American Economic System (SELA), and the Caribbean Multinational Shipping Enterprise (NAMUCAR), from which an already strong maritime nation, such as Cuba, stood to benefit, seemed to indicate an active role for Cuba and its Caribbean neighbours in attempts to reshape some existing international economic relationships.

The bilateral economic relations which developed between Cuba and its CARICOM neighbours were very flexible and varied from country to country.[7] Substantial Cuban assistance to Jamaica – highly visible and widely publicized – followed the 1972 election of a socialist prime minister, Michael Manley, who retained power for eight years. Cuba's aid was directed at basic problem areas in Jamaica: medical doctors for the health services; the construction of a secondary school and other infrastructure projects using a combined Cuban-Jamaican labour force; and a supply of condensed milk for sale to low-income groups in the population. Cuban assistance was also extended in the areas of transportation, agriculture, and fisheries and in training Jamaican youth in Cuba in construction technology. During a tour of Jamaica in October 1977, Fidel Castro also offered extensive educational assistance to universities, research

7 Information on these bilateral economic relations is gleaned from regional newspapers such as the *Gleaner* (Jamaica), the *Trinidad Guardian*, the *Guyana Chronicle*, and *Granma Weekly Review* (Cuba).

centres, hospitals, and technological institutes. Cuban-Jamaican relations remained very close until the Manley government was defeated by Edward Seaga's Jamaica Labour party in 1980.

Relations between Cuba and Guyana required some ingenuity because the official opposition in Guyana (the People's Progressive party led by Cheddi Jagan) is a communist party with a close relationship with the Communist party of Cuba. Furthermore, despite Cuban recognition of the activist posture of Guyana's foreign policy in the early 1970s, doubts persisted throughout the region with respect to that CARICOM member's commitment to socialism. Although Cuba signed agreements in 1975 for joint development of Guyana's fishing industry, medical assistance, civil aviation, and guaranteed supplies of cement, these constraints prevented the development of any strong political relationship between Havana and the government of Forbes Burnham.

Cuba's relations with Trinidad and Tobago flowed primarily from the fact that it was the latter's prime minister, Dr Eric Williams, who had devised the mechanism for the collective diplomatic recognition of Cuba. Williams visited Cuba in June 1975 to receive an honorary degree from the University of Havana, and technical and co-operative agreements were signed then between the two countries. However, implementation of the agreements was limited at best, and relations were correct but somewhat less than active. In the case of Barbados, relations with Cuba were consistently cool.

The pragmatism among the major Commonwealth Caribbean states with respect to their political relations with Cuba was perhaps best illustrated in December 1975 by the decision of the governments of Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados to prohibit the use of their aviation facilities for the airlift of Cuban troops to Angola. Both nations defended their stance as a commitment to the policies of 'non-interference' and 'non-alignment.' However, Guyana and Jamaica then endorsed Cuban intervention in Angola, and Guyana invited Cuba to use its airfields for the refuelling of troop transports. Subsequently, in October 1976, the mid-air bombing of a Cubana airliner en

route from Barbados to Cuba (with the loss of 73 lives, including 11 Guyanese) seemed to herald an increase in the pace of terrorist attacks by Miami-based Cuban exile groups against not only the Castro régime but also governments in the Caribbean friendly to Cuba. The Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago governments were perhaps not unmindful of the threats by Cuban exiles of further costly terrorist activities, and the two events exacerbated the differences in the attitudes of some countries in the region towards Cuba.

The strongest relationship which Cuba developed in the English-speaking Caribbean was with the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) of Grenada, which had come to power by armed coup on 13 March 1979. There is no evidence of any Cuban involvement in the overthrow of the government of Prime Minister Eric Gairy, but the Cuban government moved quickly at the invitation of the PRG to establish diplomatic relations and to develop a wide-ranging programme of aid and assistance to Grenada. Immediately after the coup the PRG had approached the governments of Canada, the United States, and Britain, among others, for military supplies in order to meet the threat of a possible mercenary invasion organized by the former prime minister. The refusal of these nations to provide assistance was offset by Cuba which began to supply arms to the new Grenada government one month after the coup. During 1980, Cuban military advisers began the process of training the 2000-person People's Revolutionary Army for Grenada.[8]

Military assistance represented only one part of Cuban aid to Grenada. Programmes of technical assistance in health, education, fishing, housing, and agribusiness were soon implemented. Cuban lines of credit for the purchase of some agricultural commodities were also made available. By early 1984 the joint agreements for technical and economic co-operation between Cuba and Grenada were wide-ranging and impressive.

8 Grenada also signed military assistance pacts with the Soviet Union and North Korea.

The major item in the relationship was undoubtedly Cuban assistance in the construction of a new international airport at Point Salines. Other countries were involved in the construction of the airport, but Cuban manpower, construction equipment, expertise, and funding were the essential elements. Finally, Cuban assistance to Grenada was bolstered by ideological and personal friendships. The PRG leadership perceived the Cuban revolution as a model for Grenada and a warm personal friendship developed between the Grenadian prime minister, Maurice Bishop, and Fidel Castro. Eventually, this close alliance between the two countries and its leaders would bring Grenada into direct conflict with the United States.

Cuba's relations with the English-speaking Caribbean reached a turning point during 1979 and 1980 as a result of a conjuncture of events which was not necessarily predictable or the result simply of regional dynamics. Admiration for Cuba as a model of change, or as a valuable regional partner, was not shared by all governments in CARICOM; and the Grenadian revolution itself soon stimulated anxiety in some quarters about a possible Cuban role in helping to create other Grenadas.

In the short history of Cuba's relations with the region, the enthusiasm of Jamaica (during the Manley era) and Grenada (during the régime of the PRG) had always contrasted with the pragmatic approaches of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, and the consistent nervousness of Barbados. However, by the early 1980s, and partly as the result of conservative electoral triumphs in Jamaica and several eastern Caribbean states, the situation had developed into one of suspicion of and, in some cases, hostility towards Cuba. Additionally, Cuban military initiatives in Grenada soon gave rise to tensions in intra-CARICOM relations as some policy-makers began to perceive a Cuban/Soviet design to subvert the Caribbean archipelago and littoral, and others saw a threat to their own political positions.

Caribbean perceptions regarding Cuba as a threat were bolstered on 10 May 1980, when Cuban air force jet fighters attacked a clearly marked Bahamian coastguard vessel in broad

daylight in Bahamian waters, sinking it and killing four of its crew. On the following day, Cuban jets impeded Bahamian efforts to rescue the ship's survivors who were stranded on a cay. The Bahamian coastguard vessel had arrested two Cuban fishing boats in Bahamian territorial waters and the Cuban government, instead of apologizing outright for what appeared to be a mistake, accused the Bahamians of serving some vague United States interests and stated Cuba's right to react similarly in future. Only after the Bahamas threatened to accuse Cuba of aggression before the United Nations Security Council did Cuba apologize and compensate the government and families of the dead sailors for their losses. It may be that the concurrent domestic crisis in Cuba, characterized by Cubans seeking asylum in Latin American embassies and departing in waves from Mariel harbour to the United States, provoked Cuba's overreaction to what it seems to have perceived as a security threat from the Bahamas. Nonetheless, the countries of the English-speaking Caribbean took strong notice of the use of Cuban military power against one of their own.

The decline in Cuba's international and regional standing was accelerated by the election of Ronald Reagan to the United States presidency. Reagan's anti-Cuban views were well known even before he was elected, and Cuba's assistance to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, to insurgent forces in El Salvador, and to the PRG in Grenada provided the grist for United States arguments concerning supposed Cuban/Soviet subversion.[9] Reagan's policy of keeping the Caribbean and Central America together and using ideological and security considerations to define the region, as set out in his address on 24 February 1982 launching the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), were designed to isolate Cuba and its friends in the region.

9 On the divergence, rather than convergence, in Cuban and Soviet policies toward the Caribbean, see W.R. Duncan, 'Soviet and Cuban interests in the Caribbean,' in R. Millett and M. Will, eds, *The Restless Caribbean* (New York: Praeger 1978), 132-48; Jorge I. Domínguez, 'Cuba's relations with Caribbean and Central American countries,' *Cuban Studies/Estudios Cubanos* 13(no 2, 1983), 79-120.

The effectiveness of the United States campaign became apparent as early as 1981 when Jamaica, Colombia, and Costa Rica all broke diplomatic relations with Cuba, while Cuba's relations with Panama, Peru, and Venezuela deteriorated substantially. Partly because of the effect of Reagan's policies, Cuba became increasingly isolated in the Commonwealth Caribbean, and its continuing support of Grenada brought it into direct competition with the hemispheric superpower. In a general way, Cuba's prestige in the Caribbean was also affected by its own failing economy, its perceived dependency on the Soviet Union, and by the development of a Venezuelan strategy of democratic internationalism designed to combat Cuba's influence in the Commonwealth Caribbean and Central America.

The invasion of Grenada in October 1983, by United States forces and small contingents from several Commonwealth Caribbean states, clearly indicated the limits of United States tolerance for Cuba's initiatives in the Caribbean. The invasion was also a severe blow to Commonwealth Caribbean unity in the face of crisis with the governments of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana adamant in their opposition to the invasion and highly critical of those governments of the Caribbean Community which had actively supported it. Finally the intervention was a rejection of the ideal of ideological pluralism which some Caribbean leaders were struggling to nurture.[10]

In the search for economic and political alternatives, the Cuban revolutionary experience has had widespread appeal in the English-speaking Caribbean.[11] In fact, the type of direct aid

10 Jamaica and Suriname both expelled Cuban personnel after the invasion of Grenada.

11 For some commentaries on this appeal, see Ronald E. Jones, 'Cuba and the English-speaking Caribbean,' in Blaiser and Mesa-Lago, eds, *Cuba in the World*, 131-45; and Anthony T. Bryan, 'Las Políticas exteriores de los Estados de la Mancomunidad del Caribe,' in Juan Carlos Puig, ed, *América Latina: Políticas Exteriores Comparadas* (Buenos Aires: GEL 1984), 236-65. See also, Gordon K. Lewis, 'On the limits of the new Cuban presence in the Caribbean,' in Levine, ed, *The New Cuban Presence in the Caribbean*, 235-40.

which Cuba provided to Jamaica and Grenada seemed more valuable, visible, and acceptable than the multilateral and bureaucratic absurdities normally imposed by aid agencies on the region. Particularly during the 1970s, Cuba was able tactfully to provide legitimacy to those who desired change by being supportive of 'progressive' régimes – even those which blurred the distinction between theory and practice! Consequently, what one Caribbean scholar describes as the 'Cuban card' was used variously by regional leaders – as a smokescreen to cover up deficiencies and incompetence, to legitimize the seizure and consolidation of power by radicalized middle-class groups, or to help conservative leaders outflank radical domestic opposition.[12] Eventually, however, the turn of events, beginning with Grenada in 1979, heightened the atmosphere of ideological rhetoric and intra-CARICOM tensions and opened the way for a United States attack on the Cuban connection.

The tragic struggle within the PRG in Grenada, which provided the context for the invasion, perhaps best illustrated the inability or unwillingness of Cuba to control even a destructive political situation in a sister revolutionary state. Fidel Castro publicly indicated his displeasure at those events, and it seems clear that there is a significant schism between Cuba and the USSR over their respective assessments of the tragic sequence of events which led to the arrest and execution of Prime Minister Bishop and several key colleagues by the People's Revolutionary Army. Since the Grenada invasion, Premier Castro has emphasized to the Soviet Union that Cuba must continue to exercise sovereignty and independence over its decision-making, because of its distance from Moscow and its proximity to the United States.[13] Cuba has subsequently sent unmistakable sig-

12 On this point, see Anthony Maingot, 'Cuba and the Commonwealth Caribbean: playing the Cuban card,' in Levine, ed, *The New Cuban Presence in the Caribbean*, 19-41.

13 Neville C. Duncan, 'Cuba changes mood, direction,' *Caribbean Contact* (February 1985).

nals to the United States regarding possible rapprochement and, in the meantime, has begun seriously to deal with plans for a resurgence of its own economy.[14]

Since the Grenada crisis, observers have been heartened by the recuperative potential demonstrated by the Caribbean Community. The polarization among CARICOM leaders seriously damaged prospects for Caribbean unity and ideological pluralism. The governments of most member states, with the exception of Guyana,[15] have now distanced themselves from Cuba and among the eastern Caribbean states in particular arrangements for a regional security system are being actively pursued. Ironically, in the aftermath of the invasion of Grenada, it is Cuba which is regarded as the 'security question' in the region!

In the final analysis, the factor which currently affects Cuban foreign policy the most, and which differentiates the 1980s from the preceding decade, is the concerted campaign of the Reagan administration to make Cuba, the Caribbean, and Central America significant geopolitical elements in the global confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. The efforts of the Reagan administration to restrict Cuban influence and to woo Caribbean Basin countries have begun to enjoy a measure of success. Although the Caribbean region continues to take precedence in Cuban foreign policy, its agenda will be influenced by relations with the superpowers. While Reagan occupies the United States presidency, Cuba's strategy appears to be a low profile in aiding insurgent movements in the basin and efforts to maintain, if not improve, relations with the governments of CARICOM.

14 Jaime Suchlicki, in 'Is Castro ready to accommodate?' *Strategic Review* 12(no 4, 1984), 22-9, suggests, however, that Castro is unwilling to abandon his anti-United States posture because it is an essential element in his own power and Cuba's claim to international status.

15 Guyana recently signed a bilateral trade and economic agreement with Cuba in education, agriculture, science, culture, and protocols for barter: see *Guyana Chronicle*, 18 September 1984 and *Express* (Trinidad), 3 February 1985.