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CHRISTINE FOLCH 205

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## REVIEW ESSAYS

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### REVOLUTION AND ITS AFTERMATH IN CUBA

*Jorge I. Domínguez*  
*Harvard University*

- Corruption in Cuba: Castro and Beyond.** By Sergio Díaz-Briquets and Jorge Pérez-López. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006. Pp. 286. \$21.95 paper.
- Redefining Cuban Foreign Policy: The Impact of the "Special Period."** Edited by H. Michael Erisman and John M. Kirk. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006. Pp. 360. \$65.00 cloth.
- The Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered.** By Samuel Farber. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006. Pp. 212. \$19.95 paper.
- Cuba's Military 1990–2005: Revolutionary Soldiers During Counter-Revolutionary Times.** By Hal Klepak. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005. Pp. 340. \$55.90 cloth.
- After Fidel: Raul Castro and the Future of Cuba's Revolution.** By Brian Latell. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005. Pp. 289. \$14.95 paper.
- The "New Man" in Cuba: Culture and Identity in the Revolution.** By Ana Serra. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007. Pp. 210. \$59.95 cloth.
- Foreign Policy toward Cuba: Isolation or Engagement?** Edited by Michelle Zebich-Knos and Heather N. Nicol. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005. Pp. 285. \$35.00 paper.

How much do we know about Cuba's revolution and its aftermath, during the past nearly half century, as Fidel Castro's era draws to a close? The set of books reviewed here exemplifies both what scholars know about Cuba's domestic circumstances and international relations and how they know it. The books also lay bare what is not very well known about Cuba because it has been so difficult to study it for reasons extraneous to the world of scholarship.

Scholars know a great deal about Fidel Castro's biography. There is a long list of such books, many of which are illuminating and excellent, though some, of course, are tendentious. In this more recent set, Brian Latell's book builds on this scholarly literature and makes three specific innovations to the genre. First, it is a cobiohistory of Fidel and Raúl Castro. Although Fidel still receives the bulk of his attention, Latell's is the first sustained biographical account of Raúl Castro as a person and as a high government official in interaction with his brother. His professional assessment of Raúl Castro as a highly effective "chief operating officer" for Cuba is especially valuable and persuasive. Second, the book relies, as others have, on personal interviews and testimony from those who have known Fidel or Raúl at various points in time, all of whom have since become their opponents. Latell includes, however, several prominent defectors from the recent past who shed valuable light on the contemporary approach to governance at the top of Cuba's government and the Communist Party. Thus he covers nearly the entire life span of the Castro brothers, whereas most other biographies tend to reach just into the first half of the 1960s. Third, Latell takes a psychological approach to understanding the Castro brothers' decision-making process, honed by his long and distinguished experience as a veteran Castro watcher at the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

There are two limitations to all research on Fidel Castro, not just Latell's. The first is that most of the information that gets closest to addressing the question, "What sort of person is Fidel Castro and what makes him act as he does?" comes from defectors. Much of this information is excellent. Many of these informants have sought to guard against their own biases, in admirable examples of professional reporting. Authors, Latell certainly among them, have taken these potential biases into account. Yet we lack comparably candid, well-informed, and perceptive commentary from a similar set of persons close to the Castro brothers who have never broken from them.

Second, and this is a general problem not limited to biographies of the Castro brothers, scholars have lacked (with very rare exceptions) access to Cuba's secret documentary record that might otherwise greatly enrich what can be gleaned from interviews with others. For example, the best-documented book based on materials from Cuban archives, among other sources, has been Piero Gleijeses's fine history of Cuban engagement in

Africa between 1959 and 1976. According to his bibliography, Gleijeses did not interview Fidel Castro or have access to his private papers.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, most Cuban archives since 1959 have been inaccessible to non-Cubans, and access has been limited even to archives regarding the struggle of the 1950s.

Some might object that Fidel Castro has spoken at such length, with such frequency, and for so many years that surely nothing of great interest would spring forth from Cuba's confidential records. That is highly doubtful. In 1992, on the eve of a conference held in Havana to examine the Cuban missile crisis thirty years after its occurrence, the Cuban government released a set of letters that had been exchanged between Fidel Castro and Nikita Khrushchev at the height of the crisis. In the first letter, Castro recommends that the Soviet Union launch a first-strike nuclear weapon attack on the United States in the event of a U.S. invasion of Cuba with conventional forces.<sup>2</sup> Such a request and the reasons for it had not previously been part of the public record. These letters are highly revealing of Castro's cast of mind. His personal papers no doubt will be quite revelatory when they become public.

What, then, may be said of Fidel Castro as a decision maker on the basis of our limited knowledge? He combines strategic and tactical abilities rarely surpassed among world leaders. A core concept, which bears also on the foreign policy books considered in this review, is his belief that the long-range interests of Cuba and the United States are incompatible. This belief is independent of his relationship to Marxism-Leninism. A second fundamental idea is that it is not only possible to recognize the march of history but also desirable to speed its progress. This approach to history made Marxism intriguing to Castro, and this approach to revolutionary leadership made Leninism essential. A third key idea—as valid in 1960 as in the twenty-first century—is that revolution in only one country is not possible. International activism must be an inherent component of a revolutionary's thought and action, and it is indispensable to widen Cuba's prospects for independence and influence.

Fidel Castro has also long believed that he has a historic mission. He maintains that individuals can overcome obstacles through sacrifice and hard work. The more apparently unreachable the goal—survive the U.S. onslaught at the beginning of the 1960s, survive the collapse of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1990s, deploy hundreds of thousands of troops to African wars in the 1970s and 1980s, and even literally resur-

1. Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 503–510.

2. Fidel Castro and Nikita Khrushchev, "Letters between Castro and Khrushchev," in *Cuba on the Brink*, ed. James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 481–491.

rect himself from near death in 2006 and 2007—the more worthy it is of pursuit. Willful political action and tactical boldness work best in the long run, even if there are temporary setbacks. There are, moreover, no subjects beyond his intellectual grasp, from battlefield tactics to the genetics of cattle breeding or, as in 2007, expounding on the ills of ethanol development. No detail is unworthy of his attention. His interference in the most minute decisions at all levels of government has been one explanation—the most important in the late 1960s—for the disorganization, at times wild experimentation, and repeated collapses of the Cuban economy.

“Men make their own history,” Karl Marx once famously wrote, “but they do not make it just as they please.” The Achilles’ heel of historical and social science writing about Cuba since 1960 has been the difficulty of placing Fidel Castro in the context of wider circumstances, domestic and international.<sup>3</sup> For some, he approximates the sole explanatory cause of what is good or bad about the processes in which he has been engaged. For others, he is the source of many speeches and declaratory policies and a political leader to be described, whereas wider and longer historical processes are the key to social, economic, and political explanation—Fidel as such is not an explanatory cause.

One of the many merits of Samuel Farber’s new book is his attempt to argue that the “revolutionary leaders acted under serious external and internal constraints but were nevertheless autonomous agents pursuing independent ideological visions” (4). Farber draws on the vast scholarship that has addressed the origins of the Cuban revolution, leading up to victory in January 1959 and over the next three years. He relies on the past scholarly work, including his own. As his book’s title indicates, he seeks to reconsider what we had thought we knew. He does this carefully, effectively, and with fairness, albeit also with feistiness.

Farber’s admirable approach to both domestic and international structural arguments emphasizes constraints and possibilities. The characteristics of the Cuban economy in the 1940s and 1950s, for example, set the agenda for public action as Fidel Castro emerged on the national scene. The World Bank’s 1951 mission to Cuba, on which Farber quite rightly relies as perhaps the best available assessment, described the economy’s highly uneven development. The economic agenda did not mandate a revolution, but it closed off some paths, pointed to others, and above all made the task

3. *Autocrítica* is a much-neglected early practice of Communist Party rule in Cuba. It has been neglected because, under its name, much abuse has been committed against adversaries of the government and the party. Yet it is a good voluntary scholarly practice. Thus I have written that my *Cuba: Order and Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978) paid insufficient attention to the role of ideas in the Cuban revolutionary process and, thereby, to the impact of agency. For *autocrítica* on this and other matters, see my *Cuba hoy: Analizando su pasado, imaginando su futuro* (Madrid: Editorial Colibrí, 2006), 27–34.

of revolutionaries possible. Cuba’s prerevolutionary political party system presented no obstacle to Fidel Castro, nurtured his early populist style, favored “men of action,” and welcomed a larger-than-life style in its politicians. The wider political system provided fewer constraints and more possibilities. Farber’s analysis of the role of the Soviet Union and the old Communist Party equally emphasizes possibilities.

Farber’s most innovative chapter is his study of the U.S.-Cuban relationship. He is right to chide previous scholarship for overemphasizing the sequence of specific policy decisions. He features the more institutionalized elements of U.S.-Cuban relations in the 1950s. More important, he explores explicitly whether U.S. policy toward Cuba could have been different between 1959 and 1961. He focuses on the role of U.S. Ambassador Philip Bonsal and a comparison between U.S. policy toward revolutionary Bolivia (to which Bonsal had been posted as ambassador just before his posting to Cuba) and revolutionary Cuba in the 1950s. He concludes that the differences between Bolivia and Cuba, and between the skill and support base of the respective revolutionary leaderships, decisively shaped the course of U.S. policy toward the two countries. Nevertheless, his consideration of plausible counterfactuals is an important corrective to a scholarship on Cuba that sometimes suffers from being mechanistic in its approach to historical causation. Farber continuously emphasizes as well that Cuban leaders at all points were “greatly influenced by their own political predispositions and ideological inclinations” (112).

One of Farber’s reconsiderations deserves to be reconsidered yet again, however. Farber concludes that “an undeniable radicalization of the Cuban masses occurred” in 1959 and immediately thereafter, yet “that shift moved from the leaders to the masses rather than the other way around” (135). Nevertheless, there remains persuasive scholarly research, some of which Farber cites, that notes significant and widespread instances of collective action that are less well connected to leadership from above. Some of this collective action took the form of labor union strikes in 1958, which spread from east to west as the rebellion grew, but that stemmed also from economic and social motivations. Some of it developed in early 1959 among urban industrial workers, peasants, and agricultural workers—strikes or land invasions, many of them for better pay and working conditions, or land, taking advantage, to be sure, of the circumstances created by the new revolutionary situation but independently caused. Certainly by late in 1959 the role of those from above had become dominant, but there was a more autonomous causal role for social protest from below—for collective agency—during the revolutionary “moment” that lasted roughly from the failure of the revolutionary strike called from above in April 1958 to the establishment of control from above over the Cuban Workers Confederation and the University Students Federation in October 1959.

Further reconsideration will some day become possible as Cuban archives open. The project originated by James Blight of Brown University, and ably co-led by Peter Kornbluh of the National Security Archives (NSA) at George Washington University, has focused its attention principally on a review of the 1962 missile crisis but also to some extent on the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. As the books and articles from that project and the NSA's documents show, much will be learned on these and many other topics when Cuba's archives regarding various other aspects of its experience since 1959 become accessible to all scholars. The NSA project has, for example, Cuban Interior Ministry documents that assess the threat from armed domestic opposition on the eve of the Bay of Pigs invasion as well as arrest records for individuals in that period. Cuba experienced a revolution, but its cadres did not neglect keeping up with their bureaucratic filing. These records should some day shed further light on questions of lasting salience.

Scholars know the least about what happens inside the Communist Party and the state, especially in the military, which is the subject of Hal Klepak's thoughtful, well researched, and carefully developed book. Klepak visited Cuba some eighty times between 1960 and 2004 and spent some three years in Cuba between 1990 and 2004. After demonstrating the devastating effect of the collapse of the Soviet Union on Cuba's military capacity, Klepak shows that the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR, the Spanish acronym for *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias*) remain remarkably professional and since 1990 have successfully addressed three crucial tasks.

First, they have successfully managed their own downsizing, contemporary Cuba's contribution to whatever government will rule in Cuba's future. The FAR has many fewer personnel and makes fewer demands on Cuba's national budget. The FAR provides, in addition, many services to support itself or the rest of the country. Second, the FAR has improved the efficacy of the enterprises that it has long run to supply itself and, borrowing from its own traditions from the 1960s, in the 1990s exported organizational models and cadres to the civilian economy, principally to manage enterprises that operate on quasi-market principles, above all in the tourism sector. These are today some of Cuba's best-run enterprises.

Third, in Klepak's important chapter 5, the FAR has managed a carefully calibrated and always complicated process of military-to-military limited confidence building with the U.S. military, especially around the U.S. base near Guantánamo and in the Straits of Florida. Klepak's own work on the faculty of Canada's Royal Military College has given him a valuable perspective on confidence building; his detailed empirical reconstruction of this little-known dimension of U.S.-Cuban relations is a valuable contribution to the education of the public, not just to scholarship. The principal result—beyond the specifics of cooperation with regard to

disease and boundary control around the perimeter of the U.S. base, or migration and exile flotilla interdiction on the Straits of Florida—has been to reduce the likelihood that an "accident" would trigger a military confrontation between the United States and Cuba. In this fashion, the FAR contributes to the defense of Cuba.

Klepak deals well with the most sensitive question: is the FAR still capable of deterring a U.S. invasion of Cuba and defending Cuba if such an unlikely event were to happen? "It would be a mistake, however, to count the FAR out on the subject of traditional defense and deterrence," Klepak argues, because the FAR "would almost surely inflict unacceptable casualties on any U.S. force attempting it" (269). The FAR has sufficient besting capability. As of this writing, moreover, past the fourth year of U.S. involvement in war in Iraq, Klepak's judgment is more likely correct than it was when he first penned it.

Klepak's book raises most directly a problem that bedevils and should trouble all scholars who have had research access to Cuba: "It is both irresponsible and unacceptable for an academic with sustained access to so many people to quote them in the usual fashion acknowledged by the academic community as proper" (10). Klepak goes on to describe the various constraints that render Cuba's population "deeply worried about expressing itself openly on sensitive issues" (10). Klepak has behaved appropriately under these circumstances.

Yet these circumstances should trouble every scholar. I have written in the following way about how my own work is affected: "The procedure [no quotation of interviewees by name] is troubling because it infringes on a standard of scholarship, namely, replicability; that is, another scholar should be able, in principle, to retrace my steps to assess my results."<sup>4</sup> The procedure is even more troubling because of the politicization of U.S.-Cuban relations. The U.S. government has made it very difficult for Cuban scholars to engage in research in the United States. The Cuban government has made it possible for some scholars but impossible for others to engage in research in Cuba. Failure to cite quotations according to prevailing scholarly norms causes additional harm to fellow scholars who already suffer from unacceptable political discrimination—these colleagues may neither engage in such research nor hold accountable the scholars who do. Every scholar and the public suffer as a result.

The study of corruption in Cuba has been no less challenging. We know that there is corruption in Cuba because published Cuban sources tell us so, usually while describing how the criminal got caught and was punished. Such sources provide much of the evidence for the fascinating book that Sergio Díaz-Briquets and Jorge Pérez-López have written. It is supple-

4. Jorge I. Domínguez, *To Make a World Safe for Revolution: Cuba's Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 286; see also discussion at 285–289.

mented through the accounts of defectors, particularly those who broke with the Cuban government and ruling party since the late 1980s, as well as judicial proceedings in the United States, Switzerland, and other countries. The defector sources pose the same problems noted previously with regard to the study of Fidel Castro; the judicial proceedings also suffer at times from biases because the Cuban government may refuse to participate. Nevertheless, Díaz-Briquets and Pérez-López compile an impressive, detailed, and persuasive empirical case.<sup>5</sup>

Alone of all the books under review, *Corruption in Cuba* features two important corrections to certain characteristic weaknesses of social science writing on Cuba. First, much contemporary social science work on Cuba ignores the prerevolutionary past. In contrast, Díaz-Briquets and Pérez-López give prerevolutionary corruption full treatment to ascertain the impact of that past on the present. This historical dimension of their book takes them also to consider prospects for the future; that is, they write about Cuba at different historical periods, enabling them to comment not just on the current political regime but also on the country as it has changed such regimes. Commendable as this approach is, however, the research design makes it difficult to assess whether cultural or institutional explanations work best to shed light on corruption in Cuba.

A second corrective to typical weaknesses of social science writing on Cuba is the book's very explicit analytical and comparative framework. Theirs is the only book among the set of seven under review that seeks to connect to broader scholarly literature on the topic and to the experiences of other countries, in this case mainly former communist countries. They manage to be analytical and comparative while still writing in accessible prose.

These authors argue that the development of corruption in Cuba, especially since 1990, rests on a tripod of explanations: (1) the monopoly power of the state over most of the Cuban economy, (2) the extraordinary official discretion in policy making, and (3) the lack of means to hold officials accountable. On the last point, the authors point out that Cuba features a weak civil society, government ownership and operation of nearly all the mass media (church publications excepted), and single-party rule. I would add to their trio a fourth factor: the marketization of the economy since 1990, limited though it has been, is an essential contributing cause to corruption in Cuba through the interaction of state and economy. The rise in corruption in Cuba in the 1990s goes in tandem with marketization.<sup>6</sup>

5. Klepak also discusses corruption in enterprises associated with Cuba's military (97-101).

6. As with much public evidence on crime in any country, in the 1990s the perception of corruption in Cuba may have increased more than its actual practice. Defectors since the

Latell, Farber, Klepak, and Pérez-López have all devised ways to meet the challenges of research access to make important contributions. In contrast, the study of Cuba's international relations is relatively easier. The word *relatively* deserves comment. The problem of lack of access to Cuban archives—except as already noted for some aspects of the 1962 missile crisis, the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, and (as shown by Gleijeses) Cuban policy in Africa—is nearly as severe in the study of Cuban international relations. The difficulty in quoting Cuban interviewees (and sometimes even interviewees who work with Cuban officials but are not themselves Cuban) is no less problematic. The U.S. and Cuban governments place comparable obstacles for the work of scholars on the international side. But evidence for the study of Cuban international relations differs in two important respects from that on domestic aspects. First, international relations research may proceed through sources that are outside Cuba. Second, the Cuban government acts on the world stage and, in so doing, generates much public information.

The two foreign policy books under review include twenty-eight chapters combined. Each has chapters on Cuba's relations with the United States, Mexico, Canada, and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The Erisman-Kirk book adds chapters on other multilateral topics such as Cuban relations with the European Union, Latin America, and the Free Trade Area of the Americas. It offers four chapters on foreign policy and international relations as seen from Cuba itself; the authors of three of these four chapters are Cubans in official think tanks in Havana. The Zebich-Knos-Nicol book presents two chapters on Cuban American Miami as it engages on international relations and three on aspects of Cuban engagement with the world as seen from Cuba, one of which was written by a Cuban academic.

These two books inform us well about these various dimensions of Cuba's international relations. The range of geographic and topical coverage is useful. The participation of Cuban academics in these books is praiseworthy. One empirical limitation of both is the absence of any chapter on Cuba's engagement in music, the plastic arts, sports, or other forms of international relations under the realm of culture. These books are not built, moreover, around a shared analytical framework, nor do they provide comparative perspectives to the international relations of other countries with the same or different partners or adversaries that Cuba has. I will highlight some features selectively, beginning with the solo chapters of three Cuban academics in these books (another Cuban academic, Carlos

late 1980s reported more about corruption in Cuba than about political persecution, for example. Embassies and international journalists posted to Cuba are also more likely to report on corruption.



Oliva Campos, coauthored a chapter with Gary Prevost in the Erisman-Kirk volume).

Carlos Alzugaray's chapter in the Erisman-Kirk book is the most analytically aware of the twenty-eight chapters. A former Cuban ambassador and professor at Cuba's Foreign Service Institute, he writes in the recognizable tradition of internationalist "realism."<sup>7</sup> That approach, exemplified by a scholar such as Hans Morgenthau, begins by specifying a government's foreign policy interests and moves on to assess the international system with those motivations as the starting point. Realists make judgments according to a government's success or failure in achieving its international objectives; that is, the study of foreign policy truly matters.

Alzugaray reaches the strong and persuasive conclusion that the Cuban government may not have achieved its maximum foreign policy objectives since 1990, but "it has obtained certain significant results"; above all, "it has blocked the internationalization of the [U.S.] embargo" on Cuba, which he identifies as one objective of the Torricelli and Helms-Burton acts (formally known as the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996; 57). A missed opportunity in Alzugaray's chapter, though admittedly inconsistent with a realist framework, would have been a discussion of the evolution of ideological factors in Cuban foreign policy before and after the collapse of communist regimes in Europe.

Moreover, in the light of the criticism noted previously regarding the lack of chapters in these books on cultural dimensions of international relations, Alzugaray usefully draws on Joseph Nye's work to argue that Cuba possesses "soft power," that is, the ability to exercise influence at the level of the transnational societal environment through its transborder activities in health care, its music and plastic arts, and its sports success in the Olympics and Pan-American Games.

Soraya Castro Mariño is one of three authors common to both foreign policy books and the only Cuban academic in both books (her two chapters overlap and thus I discuss them as one). She provides a comprehensive account of U.S. policy toward Cuba under the Clinton and Bush administrations. She is the only scholar in these two books to discuss the military-to-military confidence-building relationships that are the cornerstone of security stability in U.S.-Cuban relations (in Erisman-Kirk, 319–321), and

7. Realists take domestic circumstances into account as well as a wide panoply of factors for international influence. Neorealists are less likely to be interested in the domestic circumstances of the "units" or countries in the international system and focus more on states than on international organizations, transnational relations, and so on. Neoconservatives have strong ideological motivations, which realists and neorealists eschew. Realists like Morgenthau and neorealists like John Mearsheimer opposed U.S. policy with regard to the Vietnam and Iraq wars, respectively.

this turns out to be her only extended discussion of Cuban foreign policies in this chapter.<sup>8</sup> Her intellectual approach to foreign policy emphasizes a domestic politics focus as a means to understand U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba.

Jorge Mario Sánchez-Egozcue, also a Cuban academic in the Erisman-Kirk book, writes about Cuba's international economic interests. He focuses on Cuba's world after the collapse of communist regimes in Europe, demonstrating and assessing changes in Cuban economic policies and performance. He notes, among other findings, Cuba's compliance with key rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO), including a drop in Cuba's average tariff levels to the 10–12 percent range in the mid-2000s, which is well within the Latin American spectrum for tariffs under the WTO. Alone among the scholars in both books, Sánchez-Egozcue demonstrates the dramatic change in the pattern of Cuban international economic relations before and after 1990, featuring "a higher diversification in markets, changes in the structure of exports (e.g., services prevailing over primary commodities and new areas such as vaccines and software with higher value-added technological content) and of imports (e.g., substantial reduction of dependence on imported oil for domestic generation of energy), as well as new factors (i.e., significant inflows of remittances, a growing wave effect of tourism, monetary duality, and segmented markets) and increasing trade (despite extreme restrictions) with the United States" (91).

The solo chapters by these three Cuban authors explicitly highlight their topics from the perspective of Havana. Other chapters in both foreign policy collections may have been misnamed, however, because they suggest attention to the relationship between actors, whereas most focus nearly exclusively on one side of the relationship, that is, not on Cuba.

Thus the chapter by Carlos Oliva Campos and Gary Prevost in Erisman-Kirk, called "Cuba's Challenges and Opportunities Outside the Free Trade Area of the Americas," explores three broad scenarios for change, in all of which the explanatory dynamic for change lies within the United States; no scenario presupposes a fundamental change in Cuba. Georgina Sánchez, also in Erisman-Kirk, writes effectively about Mexican foreign policy toward Cuba but, in a chapter called "Mexican-Cuban Relations: Between Interests and Principles," Cuba is rendered as a passive bystander. John Kirk and Peter McKenna have chapters in both foreign policy books, "Canada-Cuba Relations" in Zebich-Knos-Nicol, and "Cuba, Canada, and Constructive Engagement" in Erisman-Kirk. The former,

8. Klepak has chapters in both foreign policy books but writes about Cuban relations with Latin America generally in Erisman-Kirk and about Cuban relations with Mexico in Zebich-Knos-Nicol, not about military confidence building as he did in his book.

however, focuses exclusively on Canada's policy toward Cuba; the latter for the most part does the same, although it does ask in a general way why Cuba has responded as it has toward Canada (208–209).

Each of the three chapters on relations between CARICOM and Cuba in both books pays disproportionate attention to CARICOM, but each devotes at least a page to the kind of Cuban behavior that provides a segment of the explanation for the bilateral relationship. Thus Sahadeo Basdeo's chapter in Zebich-Knos-Nicol holds the Cuban government accountable for the strategic choices that it has made with regard to economic policy as one explanation for Cuba's predicament after 1990 (116). Cedric Grant, also in Zebich-Knos-Nicol (135–136), and John Walton Cotman in Erisman-Kirk (141) take note of the lack of political reform in Cuba and the adverse consequences for relations with the democratic governments in CARICOM that stem from the Cuban government's repression and at times imprisonment of domestic opposition leaders. Cuba is less a bystander in these chapters. Similarly, Hal Klepak's chapter in Zebich-Knos-Nicol on "Mexico-Cuba Relations in the Post-Cold War Era," to quote its subtitle, focuses also disproportionately on Mexico, though, as with the CARICOM-Cuba chapters, spends some paragraphs (100–101) on the Cuban side of the explanation for trends in bilateral relations.

Each of the chapters just mentioned makes a thoughtful contribution to our understanding of one-half of a bilateral relationship with Cuba. It would have been better, of course, if a systematic search for explanations had also been undertaken on the Cuban side, because the Cuban government's actions or inaction explain much of what occurs or fails to occur in its relations with other governments. In this sense, Alzugaray's chapter is exemplary: he opens by identifying the interests of the Cuban government in the conduct of its foreign policy. This government is not a mere bystander as the march of international history unfolds. Alzugaray's analysis starts from what he calls "material elements" (e.g., geographic location and size, relative mix of natural resources, demographics) as supplemented by cultural, political, and ideological preferences on which Cuba's government conducts its foreign policy. Fully conscious that Cuba from the 1960s through the 1980s was a significant actor on the world stage, Alzugaray informs the reader that, still today, Cuba remains a decisive actor in the making of its own history. All scholars who write about the relationship between any country and Cuba should start from that same premise.

For those same reasons, John Kirk's perceptive chapter in Erisman-Kirk deserves special attention. Kirk takes Cuban foreign policy seriously as he ponders its implications for the pattern of Cuban international relations. He draws several broad conclusions. He is on target in affirming that the Cuban government's international actions are "only marginally influenced by wealthier and more powerful nations" (338). Kirk astutely points

out also that "ideological concerns combined with a profound conviction that their approach is right constitute the key element of the revolutionary government's foreign policy" (339). If Kirk is correct on these two points, as I believe that he is, then the following advice is in order.

Look not, fellow scholars, to Ottawa, Madrid, Brussels, or Mexico City, but to Havana, to understand why some other government's relationship with Cuba is what it is. The key enduring elements of Cuba's bilateral relations are to be found in Cuban foreign policy, whereas the volatility in bilateral relations is found in the partner country, as each of the latter's successive governments tries alternative policies to varied effect. The decisive explanatory significance of the Cuban government's decision making is what accounts for the relative ineffectiveness of Canadian, European Union, Mexican, or other Latin American policies toward the Cuban government.

Kirk further argues aptly that "Havana will continue to champion the interests of poorer and underdeveloped nations," and be respected by them for it. He also claims that the Cuban government will seek a role "once again as a power broker on the international stage" (344). From both of these conclusions, it follows that Havana will continue to seek and obtain influence from such policies in a combination of traditional statecraft, albeit with revolutionary symbolism, and what Alzugaray labels "soft power."

More debatable is Kirk's argument that "Washington's attempts to overthrow or modify the Cuban Revolution have simply not worked" (337). To paraphrase Alzugaray's discussion of Cuban foreign policy, successive U.S. administrations have not achieved their "maximum objective" with regard to Cuba—no overthrow—but they have "obtained significant results"—lots of modifications (see Alzugaray, in Erisman-Kirk 56–57). The U.S. government significantly raised the cost to the Cuban government of its chosen policies and raised the cost of supporting Cuba to the latter's allies over time, above all to the Soviet Union. The U.S. government contributed to the failure of the Cuban government's search for prosperity, making the latter's economic model much less attractive. The United States helped systematically to defeat most revolutionary movements that the Cuban government supported in the Americas, until Cuba abandoned such policies. Aided, to be sure, by the collapse of the Soviet Union, U.S. coercive strategies are part of the explanation for compelling the Cuban government to change its economic policies in the early 1990s.

More narrowly, U.S.-Cuban interactions over time have modified Cuba's specific policies toward emigration and drug trafficking, increasing the likelihood of U.S.-Cuban bilateral cooperation, as Klepak's book demonstrates. During the Bush administration in the current decade, moreover, the United States became Cuba's principal international supplier of agricultural products and one of Cuba's principal trade partners



on its import side. Alas, Cuba pays for such U.S. products promptly and in cash, accumulating no debt—something that the Canadians, Spaniards, Chinese, and Venezuelans, no matter how constructive their engagement with Cuba may be, surely do not get.

To recognize such significant U.S. policy results does not require an analyst to praise them.<sup>9</sup> On the contrary, we may bemoan the extraordinarily high direct and opportunity costs that the United States and Cuba have incurred as a result of their conflict-ridden relationship. But let scholars approach the scholarly study of U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba in a fashion as hardheaded as Alzugaray approaches Cuba's in the Kirk-Erisman book.

Kirk's most general conclusion with regard to Cuban foreign policy is the only one that deserves outright disagreement: "the Cuban Revolution . . . simply defies logic, and it has survived, based upon its own model of development and its own distinctive foreign policy" (333). If Kirk were to believe that, he would not have written this chapter, edited this book, or contributed in so many other valuable ways to scholarship on the Cuban revolution. This review essay is not the right venue to develop the case that much about the Cuban revolution does not defy logic—Farber's book addresses that topic. To be sure, it is not the logic of the market or that of the wealthy democracies of the North Atlantic. For this review's purpose, let us note that Cuban foreign policy, albeit "distinctive," surely has a recognizable logic. Various chapters in the two foreign policy books, more so in some chapters than in others, explore the logic of Cuban foreign policy, as have other scholars elsewhere.

Cuban foreign policy is one example along the analytical spectrum of party-governments that have pursued similar governmental and ruling party international policies, rest their actions on material interests as well as strong ideological commitments, and are prepared to sacrifice domestic objectives for the sake of influence abroad. The French revolution, the Bolshevik revolution, and the Iranian revolution are other examples on that spectrum.

Finally, consider Ana Serra's *The "New Man" in Cuba*. This marvelous book deserves to be reviewed by scholars more competent than I at literary criticism and cultural studies, but it helps to complete this general review of contemporary Cuban studies. Scholars know much about Cuba's international relations and can write about Fidel Castro, historical topics, or the contours of corruption. Social science field research in Cuba is, however, difficult—one of the merits of Hal Klepak's research is that he succeeded in carrying it out—on mass culture, society, political behavior,

9. I have spent a significant portion of my professional career actively opposing most U.S. policies toward Cuba.

community studies, and the panoply of topics that are the daily bread of social scientists across Latin American countries today.

Cuban scholars have engaged in such research,<sup>10</sup> at times in collaboration with scholars from other countries,<sup>11</sup> but only to a limited extent and less so during the current decade. Cuban academics today, as well as some graduate students from universities outside Cuba, remain engaged in some ethnographic work, but social science field research in Cuba has become less common this decade because of the adverse impact of U.S.-Cuban intergovernmental relations on the context of such work.

Serra's book provides an alternative approach to questions of individual and collective experience and imagination. She "consider[s] the Revolution as a discursive event" in which "the Cuban state invested a great deal of its power on defining discursive limits and providing models of identity" (3). She focuses on five novels, four of which won awards from Casa de las Américas (official Cuba's principal source for such recognition), all published between 1967 and 1971, the key years for the formulation of the ideological ambitions of the leaders who framed the "new man" discursive strategies. What was Cuba's cultural revolution like at its most revolutionary moment?

It was masculinist—the new man was distinctively male even in Ernesto (Che) Guevara's canonical text, "Socialism and Man in Cuba."<sup>12</sup> It often coped with complex gender issues via the subterfuge of a "masquerade" (132). It silenced the voices of peasants on whose behalf the revolution claimed to work and referred to them in derogatory ways. It neglected racial differences, notwithstanding their importance for the lived lives of Cubans. And in response to top-down culture-changing policies, ordinary Cubans chafed under the strictures of an institutionalized revolutionary program as they endeavored to explore and manifest the fluidity of their identities.

Serra's book explores the meaning of public upheaval in the context of personhood. She reflects upon the discourse of those in power as it bears

10. Among many examples of valuable social research, see Haroldo Dilla, Gerardo González, and Ana Teresa Vincentelli, *Participación popular y desarrollo en los municipios cubanos* (Havana: Centro de Estudios sobre América, 1993); see also Aurora Vázquez Penelas and Roberto Dávalos Domínguez, eds., *Participación social: Desarrollo urbano y comunitario* (Havana: Universidad de La Habana, 1998).

11. An example of such scholarly collaboration is Carmen D. Deere, Niurka Pérez Rojas, Cary Torres Vila, Miriam García Aguiar, and Ernel González Mastrapa, *Giñines, Santo Domingo, Majibacoa: Sobre sus historias agrarias* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1998).

12. "The leaders of the revolution have children just beginning to talk who are not learning to say 'daddy.' They have wives who must be part of the general sacrifice of their lives to take the revolution to its destiny," in "Socialism and Man in Cuba," *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution* (Sydney: Pathfinder, 1987), 259.

on the hopes and needs of ordinary folks. She thoughtfully and subtly explores the disconnect between leaders and citizens, which in the 1960s impaired the capacity of the Cuban revolution to live up to its claim of being democratic. Cubans and their leaders demonstrate elements of a broad human experience for expression and representation that is symbolic and material, political and cultural. Cuba is distinctive, but it is not unusual within our shared humanity: Serra's insightful analysis lays bare the hopes, aches and pains common to the human condition.