

## EXCEPTIONALISM AND BEYOND: CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN CUBA, 1986–2008

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Change is in the air in Cuba and its prospect permeates discussions of its politics and society. For a long time, the study of Cuban politics has been dominated by the notion that its subject is exceptional and immobile. To some degree this reflected the ideographic tendency of historical research, as well as the long shadow cast over Cuba by the permanent presence of Fidel Castro and his highly personal imprint on the Revolution. He and his regime outlived the Soviet gerontocracy, outlasted no fewer than ten U.S. presidents, and survived the cataclysm provoked by the disintegration of the Soviet Union and its East European allies. Finally, in February 2008, there occurred the (apparently) uneventful transmission of power to his brother, Raúl Castro.

There is no better analytical perch from which to analyze the prospects for change (and continuity) in Cuba than through the relationship between the *Partido Comunista de Cuba* (PCC) and the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias* (FAR). They have been the two dominant institutions in revolutionary Cuba, and they are the interlocking and, occasionally, interchangeable core of what we term the *partido fidelista*. Neither the PCC nor the FAR is entirely what its name would suggest. The Communist party is the “vanguard” of the revolutionary movement, but it has exercised this role under important constraints over the past nearly fifty years. Over time, though, its institutional capabilities most certainly have increased. Its members have filled the administrative structures of the state, new cadres have replaced PSP holdovers, and a new generation, handpicked by Fidel and Raúl Castro, has entered its top ranks and also wields power through the provin-

cial and municipal party organizations. The Revolutionary Armed Forces sit alongside the Communist party as privileged members of the *partido fidelista*. The FAR is the heir of a guerrilla movement that won a civil war and made the Revolution. It is beyond doubt the most prestigious institution in Cuba. When the cataclysm of the late 1980s and early 1990s occurred, the FAR assumed a major responsibility for implementing the survival strategy of the regime. As such, the FAR is much more than a typical military institution.

Our analysis of civil-military relations in Cuba will include a discussion of the domestic and external factors that have framed the relationship between party and military. In evaluating the relationship and relative weight of each institution, we shall consider the role each plays within the system, the resources and assets each has at its disposal, as well as the tasks each has been assigned and its success in the performance of these duties. This paper will analyze the civil-military relationship in the period 1986–2008. It will begin with a consideration of the impact of civil-military relations on the multiple crises brought on by rectification, the Ochoa affair, and perestroika and, then move on to consider how these links evolved as the regime implemented a “survival” strategy and managed the end of autarky and the rise of “enclave” capitalism. Our conclusion will identify issues that lend themselves to a comparative research agenda, while also speculating as to the role each institution may play during the succession process and in the transition to a new regime.

## THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION (1986–1991)

The great transformation consisted of several distinct but interconnected crises that tested—as never before—the *partido fidelista* and its two leading actors, the PCC and the FAR. First came the “rectification” process announced by Fidel Castro in February 1986 (it would continue until 1990), whose aim it was to correct the “errors and negative tendencies” exhibited by the PCC. Rectification led to the ouster of most party cadres who had responsibility for economic management and the implementation of planning mechanisms. It also demonstrated the continued weaknesses of the party as an institution and its dependence on the leadership of Fidel Castro. The second crisis was far more dramatic—it shook the very top ranks of the FAR and the Ministry. It resulted in the execution of General Arnaldo Ochoa and four other officers in July 1989. There followed extensive purges within the military and security commands over the next half year. To this explosive mix we must add the emergence of Mikhail Gorbachev and implementation of *perestroika*, *glasnost*, and a “new thinking” in foreign policy, not to mention the consequences it would have for the “special” economic relationship with Cuba.

Fidel Castro launched the “rectification” campaign in February 1986, but the winds of change had been evident already in late 1984 when he placed Osmani Cienfuegos in charge of the Grupo Estatal Central and charged it with adjusting the current Five-Year Plan. “Rectification” signaled Castro’s intention to restructure the *fidelista* coalition and to eliminate the influence of Soviet-oriented technocrats (and former PSP members) who directed JUCEPLAN, the Central Bank, and other major economic institutions.<sup>1</sup> Decentralization had failed to increase enterprise efficiency, and it had been accompanied by a lessened emphasis on ideological commitment and political mobilization. PCC membership more than doubled between 1965

and 1981 (from approximately 211,000 in 1975 to 523,000 in 1986),<sup>2</sup> but behind the numerical success lay the danger that the PCC was becoming an organization of managers and careerists. Following in the steps of Milovan Djilas, one dissident Marxist intellectual would even write about the emergence of a “new” class in Cuba.<sup>3</sup> Whatever the case, available data pointed to a dramatic increase in the number of administrative and managerial positions in the state sector and administrative positions in the state sector. Such jobs had more than doubled in a ten-year period, totaling nearly 500,000 in 1987.<sup>4</sup>

“Rectification” represented an effort to resolve a number of problems. Only some of them had to do with the implementation of management and reforms. Others reflected a deeper social malaise and sense of institutional fragility. By the middle of the decade, the downturn in the Cuban economy had become manifest.<sup>5</sup> The national debt had increased substantially, the interest rates Cuba paid on loans had risen, and so had the budget deficit. The decline in the value of the U.S. dollar had reduced the income generated by the re-sale of (Soviet) oil on the international market. By the mid-1980s, the shortage of foreign exchange had become severe. Among the more significant measures the government undertook to acquire hard currency was the decision to set up a network of trading companies and to create Department MC (for *moneda convertible*) within the Ministry of the Interior.

Rectification came to a head at the 3<sup>rd</sup> PCC Congress in December 1986. The new Central Committee showed a turnover of nearly 40 percent. Among those who lost the most ground were the technocrats responsible for planning and economic management. The most prominent of these Humberto Pérez, was relieved as vice president of the Council of Ministers and minister-president of the Central Planning Board in July 1985, and though he remained an alternate member of the Politburo, he lost that position, too, in De-

1. Anthony Kapcia, *Cuba—Island of Dreams* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 204–205.

2. Janette Habel, *The Revolution in Peril* (London: Verso Press, 1991), 94–95.

3. Ariel Hidalgo, *Cuba, el Estado Marxista and la Nueva Clase* (Mimeograph, 1984).

4. Hidalgo, 37.

5. Susan E. Eckstein, *Back from the Future: Cuba under Castro* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 73

ember 1987. Numerous provincial party secretaries, many of them old members of the PSP, also fell by the wayside. The *sierra* core recovered lost ground at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress, though one of the veterans, Ramiro Valdés, was ousted as Minister of the Interior in 1985, presumably for his failure to combat corruption. Ultimately, Fidel Castro employed rectification to underscore what to his mind were the serious deficiencies that affected the political and ideological work of the PCC. The latter was supposed to be the “vanguard” of the Revolution, but it was not yet quite up to the task.

The FAR was near the zenith of its influence in the mid-1980s. It had never tasted defeat; it had acquired great prestige from the fulfillment of its internationalist missions; it was a true people’s army and admired throughout Cuban society. That Raúl Castro ranked second in the revolutionary hierarchy and was also its titular head hurt neither the FAR’s corporate identity nor its (relative) autonomy within the *partido fidelista*. Even as the PCC technocrats came under criticism for their management of the economy, Raúl Castro had implemented his own set of management initiatives (known as *perfeccionamiento empresarial*) at the flagship Empresa Militar “Comandante Ernesto Che Guevara.” The latter became a laboratory where Western-style management methods, later to be applied throughout the country, were studied and implemented.<sup>6</sup> During this period, the FAR was also at the peak of its resources. It had nearly 300,000 men and women under arms, and in relative terms, its budget was one of the largest in the world, representing nearly 4.2 percent of the GDP. Members of the armed forces had also made important inroads into the top leadership ranks. General Abelardo Colomé became a full mem-

ber of the Politburo, while his colleagues Generals Senén Casas Regueiro and Ulises Rosales del Toro were named as alternates. All told officers from the FAR made up nearly 27 percent of the new Central Committee—the highest percentage since 1965.<sup>7</sup>

Less than three years after the “rectification” congress, the Cuban leadership and the *partido fidelista* would feel the tremors of an extraordinary political earthquake. The crisis went far beyond the arrest and execution of General Arnaldo Ochoa, division army general, veteran of numerous proletarian internationalist missions in Africa and Latin America, and Hero of the Revolution. By the time the dust had settled, Ochoa and four accused co-conspirators had been executed; 14 ministers, vice-ministers and heads of enterprises had been ousted; more than 5 percent of the members of the Central Committee had been expelled; the Minister of the Interior had been jailed (where he died from a heart attack) and eighteen of his Ministry’s high-ranking officers had been imprisoned; and, probably, an additional several thousand officers from the FAR and the Ministry of the Interior had been relieved of their positions and retired.<sup>8</sup>

The Ochoa affair touched the very core of the revolutionary project. Its main backdrop was the Cuban intervention in Angola. Begun with the dispatch of an expeditionary force in November 1975, it had led in the ensuing fourteen years to the rotation of approximately 400,000 Cuban soldiers there. By the mid-1980s, there were nearly 50,000 Cuban troops stationed in Angola, and Cuban forces had become involved in an apparently interminable civil war. The Cuban government would eventually acknowledge that the FAR suffered more than 2,100 combat fatali-

6. Juan del Aguila, “The Cuban Armed Forces: Changing Roles, Continued Loyalties,” in Irving L. Horowitz and Jaime Suchlicki (eds.) *Cuban Communism* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 2000), 512–525; Domingo Amuchástegui, “Cuba’s Armed Forces: Power and Reforms,” *Cuba in Transition—Volume 9* (Washington: Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy, 1999) and Amuchástegui, “FAR: Mastering Reforms,” *Cuba in Transition—Volume 10* (Washington: Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy, 2000); Juan Carlos Espinosa, “Vanguard of the State: The Cuban Armed Forces in the Transition,” *Problems of Post Communism* 48:6 (November/December 2001); Frank Mora, “The FAR and its Economic Role: From Civic to Technocratic Soldier,” Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies (University of Miami) Occasional Paper Series (June 2004).

7. Del Aguila, “The Cuban Armed Forces.”

8. Jean-Francois Fogel and Bertrand Rosenthal, *Fin de siècle a la Havane—Les secrets du pouvoir cubain* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1993), 29. This book contains one of the most complete discussions of the many dimensions of the Ochoa affair (26–148). Another excellent piece is Julia Preston, “The Trial that Shook Cuba,” *New York Review of Books*, December 7, 1989, 24–41.

ties in Angola.<sup>9</sup> These casualties (to which should be added an unspecified number of wounded and non-combat deaths) undoubtedly contributed to the rise in the number of cases of desertion and draft evasion. Angola gave its name to a syndrome, both within Cuban society and among the ranks of the military as well.<sup>10</sup> One knowledgeable observer, himself sympathetic to the Revolution, described the situation in the following terms: “(T)he returning officers, used to a degree of autonomy and prestige and many of them Soviet-trained, might (have) become frustrated at finding not a ‘land fit for heroes’ but a crisis-ridden and again besieged Revolution.”<sup>11</sup>

Ochoa was the prototype of the FAR warrior. He was a hero of the Cuban Revolution, one of only two general-rank officers who held that title in 1989. A combatant in the *sierra* at age 16, he had participated in guerrilla activities in Venezuela during the 1960s and had served with distinction in Angola, Ethiopia, and Nicaragua. He had attended the top Soviet military schools (including the Voroshilov Military Academy) and, in addition to learning Russian, had developed close links with senior Soviet officers. A highly decorated war veteran, he had served several times in Angola, with his last tour from late 1986 to early 1989.

Upon his return to Havana, the Cuban government had announced his appointment as commander of the Western Army with jurisdiction over the national capital. Ochoa had been arrested in late May 1989, released, and then re-arrested in mid-June at which time a *Granma* editorial accused him of corruption and negligence of duty.<sup>12</sup> Yet more explosive charges were leveled against him some ten days later, by which time he was accused of “exceptional ... disloyalty to the people, ethics, and the principles of the Revolution” and charged with drug smuggling. By this time, the accusations against Ochoa had been merged with those against Colonel Antonio de la Guardia.<sup>13</sup> Two other senior officers (Minister of the Interior General José Abrantes and Minister of Transportation General Diocles Torralba)<sup>14</sup> were also arrested, but they were tried separately from Ochoa and de la Guardia.<sup>15</sup>

The charges of drug smuggling grabbed the headlines in the Ochoa affair. Far more explosive were its political ramifications.<sup>16</sup> Gorbachev had visited Cuba in April 1989, and by then, there was little doubt he was moving firmly to change the basic coordinates of Soviet foreign policy and also pressing for the removal of hard-liners within the CPSU and its East European counterparts. There was something akin to *perestroika*

9. See the speech by Fidel Castro (December 2, 2005) on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Cuban troops landing in Angola.

10. Fogel and Rosenthal, 141.

11. Kapcia, 206.

12. *Granma*, June 12, 1989.

13. The latter had had a long and distinguished career in the Ministry of the Interior. He had been a founder of the elite *tropas especiales*, had provided security to Chilean president Salvador Allende, had carried out sensitive diplomatic and economic missions, and was a founder of the Ministry of the Interior. He had also served as director of Department Z (1982–1985) and Department MC (1985–1989) within the Ministry of the Interior. These departments were charged with acquiring hard currency for the Cuban government and to this end set up an extensive web of front companies throughout Latin America and Europe. Fogel and Rosenthal, 36 and 41–44.

14. Like his colleague Ochoa, Torralba had fought in the *sierra*. He had been chief of antiaircraft and of the air force. He had been placed in charge of the sugar industry in the mid 1970s, vice president of the Council of Ministers, and had been appointed to the Council of State in 1976. Jorge I. Domínguez, *Cuba, Order and Revolution* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1978) 307, 309.

15. This is not the place for an extensive consideration either of the charges against Ochoa or of the evidence presented against him. Information about the case is sketchy and incomplete. The trial was not open to the press, and the Cuban government only released partial transcripts of the testimony presented at the trial. The government also released videos, but they were similarly censored. Notwithstanding the incompleteness of the record, the transcripts and video recordings do afford an interesting window from which to observe the interaction between prosecutors and defendants, not to mention the involvement and testimony of the Castro brothers.

16. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KS2wcFn9uHM&feature=related>. There has been speculation that senior Cuban government officials were involved in or authorized drug smuggling operations or, at the very least, provided cover for drug smugglers flying over the island or making drop-offs within Cuban coastal waters during the 1980s. See [http://blogs.abcnews.com/theblotter/2006/08/RaúlRaúl\\_castro\\_coc.html](http://blogs.abcnews.com/theblotter/2006/08/RaúlRaúl_castro_coc.html) for an article describing a Department of Justice decision not to indict Raúl Castro on drug charges in 1993. See also Fogel and Rosenthal, 53–69.

fever on the island. In this context, it would not take a paranoid to imagine that Gorbachev and his allies would seek out their contacts in the Cuban military and intelligence services. In his speech to the Western Army, Raúl Castro had referred to the advocates of *perestroika* and to those, apparently a reference to Ochoa, “who congregate against the figure of our commander in chief.”<sup>17</sup> During his trial, Ochoa admitted he had become “tired” and, after so many years outside Cuba, had grown used to “acting alone.” In another part of his testimony he criticized himself for becoming an “independent thinker” who had thought he was “right.” Raúl Castro provided Cubans with a partial window on the Ochoa affair in a speech he gave on June 14, 1989 to the assembled officers of the Western Army. He talked about the “traumatic” and “bitter and painful” effects of this crisis, calling Ochoa a “charlatan” who suffered from “gold fever,” and urged the “dummies” who liked *perestroika* “to leave for Hungary, Poland...or Armenia.”<sup>18</sup>

Even twenty years later it is difficult to render a balanced and complete judgment about the events surrounding the arrest and execution of Ochoa. The case involved a combination of drugs and high-level political intrigue. That much seems evident. Rivalries between the Ministries of Defense and Interior may well have exacerbated the situation, and so might have latent tensions between combat officers and those who held more staff or political positions, or even more narrow personal rivalries. Did the Ochoa affair involve a conspiracy against Fidel Castro? We do not know. Ochoa, Torralba, Abrantes, and the de la Guardia brothers were friends; they probably voiced their disenchantment to each other. Whether their actions rose to the level of a conspiracy is rather more doubtful, but it ultimately depends on your point of view or

on evidence that is not available. The more immediate danger probably involved defection.<sup>19</sup>

The consequences of the Ochoa affair were profound. They shook the foundations of the FAR and tested the loyalty of many officers. They resulted in the emasculation of the Ministry of the Interior and brought it under the direct control of the Ministry of Defense. From an institutional point of view, Raúl Castro and his close associate General Abelardo Colomé (who was placed in charge of MININT) found their authority significantly strengthened. There was also a deep purge within the FAR. According to one estimate, nearly 70 percent of the officers of the Western Army were transferred or retired after July 1989.<sup>20</sup> Between 1985 and 1990, the government also reduced the size of the FAR by nearly 40 percent. Ostensibly brought on by the end of the Cold War and the corresponding change in the mission of the FAR, these cutbacks also facilitated the removal of numerous officers. It was a streamlined and loyal FAR that emerged from these turbulent events. Hierarchy and discipline had been reaffirmed. A purged and newly loyal FAR was given a central role in helping the Revolution survive the challenges of the brave new post-Soviet world. That role entailed a significant expansion in its economic responsibilities, and it opened the door to extraordinary financial opportunities and rewards for the many active duty and retired officers who would become managers of numerous joint ventures in the lucrative areas of tourism and export-related activities.

The great transformation (1986–1991) brought crisis and tremendous changes to the *partido fidelista*. The reaffirmation of Fidel Castro’s authority coincided with the onset of the deeper systemic crisis provoked by the disintegration of the Soviet Union, which had its most visible result in the collapse of the Cuban

17. *FBIS-LAT-89-117* (June 20, 1989), 17.

18. *FBIS-LAT-89-117* (June 20, 1989), 5–21. At one point, Raúl Castro recounted one of his conversations with Ochoa where he had asked the general if he did not realize that Fidel Castro was “our father” and that neither “you (referring to Ochoa) nor I would be sitting here” were it not for the “social cataclysm” he produced.

19. *Ibid.* See also Andres Oppenheimer, *Castro’s Final Hour: The Secret Story behind the Coming Downfall of Communist Cuba* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

20. Richard Millett, “Cuba’s Armed Forces—From Triumph to Survival,” *Georgetown University Cuba Briefing Paper Series*, no. 4 (September 1993).

economy. Viewed from an institutional perspective, the PCC and FAR experienced dramatic changes in both organization and personnel. “Rectification” resulted in one set of purges within the party. There followed a second purge whose target was those who had been sympathetic to *perestroika*.<sup>21</sup> In the wake of the Ochoa affair, a parallel process of crisis and purge occurred within the FAR. An overall assessment of the situation would suggest at least one common denominator—Fidel Castro the “generalist” who subscribed to notions of “permanent struggle” and insisted on the application of “political criteria” had triumphed over technically gifted “specialists.”

### **SURVIVAL, THE END OF AUTARKY, AND REGIME TRANSITION (1991–2006)**

The Cuban Revolution stood on the verge of collapse in the early 1990s. With the suspension of oil deliveries, the collapse of trade, and the end of the extensive program of Soviet subsidies came a 40–45 percent decline in the GDP. The disintegration of the Soviet Union ended the Cuban experiment in autarky and introduced what Fidel Castro called the “special period in a time of peace.” The regime sought to palliate the social consequences of this economic earthquake, while searching for new trade and investment partners and straining to maintain internal order.<sup>22</sup>

Survival required major adjustments in economic and social policies. The measures included “dollarization” of the economy and introduction of a dual currency (July 1993), the granting of permits to engage in limited self-employment, the re-opening of farmer’s markets, the search for foreign capital and the creation of numerous joint venture companies (many of them run by the armed forces), the encouragement of tourism and remittances from immigrants, and the re-direction of investment away from social programs (with their

corresponding decline in quality and access) and toward those sectors that would attract foreign investors. Fidel Castro bluntly expressed his deep dislike for these reforms. “This bipolar world,” he said in 1993, “obliges to do that which we would otherwise never have done.”<sup>23</sup> Four years later at the 5<sup>th</sup> PCC Congress, he would again declare: “This struggle in the economic arena is bitter, tremendously bitter, difficult, and hard,” explaining that it was sometimes necessary for a patient “to ingest certain unpalatable medicines or to submit to certain surgical procedures that bring a good dose of suffering.”<sup>24</sup>

The reforms of the “special period” allowed the Cuban Revolution to survive the disintegration of the Soviet Union, but they led to deep changes in the structure of the economy and society. One major effect was the re-introduction of capitalism into the Cuban economy. Capitalism had never entirely disappeared on the island. For one thing, as in all other state-centered economies, it was visible in the informal sector or underground economy. Following an older Marxist tradition, it could also be argued that, while expropriation had effectively ended entrepreneurial capitalism, the new structures had created a system of state monopoly capitalism wherein the perks of ownership passed to those who controlled economic enterprises through the state. The reforms of the “special period” accentuated these tendencies, while adding a new ingredient to the mix. In order to survive, the regime needed foreign investment, and in creating joint venture companies, it created enclaves of (protected) capitalism. Foreign enterprises paid the Cuban state in dollars for the workers they hired, while the workers received their compensation in undervalued pesos. The strategy of enclave capitalism and reliance on remittances from immigrants (or exiles) deepened social inequalities and led to a deepening stratification of so-

21. The most visible casualty of this latter process may have been Carlos Aldana, PCC secretary for ideology and culture, who lost his position in the Politburo in 1992. Because they are often accompanied by charges of corruption or malfeasance, it is often difficult to sort out the political from other factors.

22. Fidel Castro declared: “(We shall do) whatever we have to do to save the motherland, the Revolution, and socialism under these exceptional circumstances...(We) stand ready to defend our ideas and our cause at whatever price, at whatever price! We are willing to fight without limits.” See his closing speech to 4<sup>th</sup> PCC Congress in [www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/1997/esp/fl101097e.htm](http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/1997/esp/fl101097e.htm).

23. See Fidel Castro’s speech July 1993.

24. Informe Central to PCC 5<sup>th</sup> Congress, October 1997.

ciety. There were those who had access to dollars and those who had not.

The reforms of the “special period” also had contradictory effects on the Cuban state. As Javier Corrales perceptively noted, the creation of joint ventures increased the discretionary power of the state. Not only did it extract profits from this sector, the joint venture companies provided jobs and benefits to “worthy citizens vetted and approved by the PCC and mass organizations.”<sup>25</sup> That the FAR administered most of these joint venture companies only added to the perception of an interlocking elite involved in a “protection racket.”<sup>26</sup> Even Fidel Castro took pains to reassure that the regime was not about to construct “capitalism under the leadership of the proletariat.”<sup>27</sup> Paradoxically, the “special period” also contributed to a decline in the capacity of the Cuban state. No longer did it have the capacity to enforce permanent mobilization. Neither could it provide effective services to the population (particularly in the area of health, but also in terms of transportation and housing) or to handle natural disasters as before.

Both the PCC and FAR played important roles in implementing the survival strategy of the regime during the “special period in a time of peace.” For the PCC this would mean a renewed drive to expand its membership and the rejuvenation of its leadership. For his part, Fidel Castro became newly reconciled to the idea of party building as key to the longer-term survival of the regime. Just what brought about this change of mind is unclear. Perhaps the collapse of the Soviet Union and the old Communist model removed psychological (and political) obstacles. Or it was the depth of the domestic crisis as well as the slow but inevitable disappearance of stalwarts from the *sierra* generation. Whatever the reason, one result of the crisis of the 1990s was his commitment to reinvigorate the PCC.

One task the PCC took on was to find a replacement for Marxism-Leninism. The latter had collapsed, along with the Soviet Union. It was now imperative to recover national symbols and history and to employ these to legitimate the regime and its rule. Marx, Engels, and Lenin now took a back seat to Martí, Mella, and Maceo. National myths of resistance and martyrdom came to the forefront. Fidel Castro thrust the slogan of *socialismo o muerte* onto the national consciousness in 1989. Martí and his *Partido Revolucionario Cubano* (Cuban Revolutionary Party) even became the historical source and justification for single-party rule in Cuba.<sup>28</sup> Ernesto (Che) Guevara reclaimed his place in the national pantheon. The government cultivated the Guevara cult, not least because he had been an opponent of Soviet “bureaucratic” methods and could serve as an outlet for youth who wanted to express their disconformity within the parameters of the revolutionary project. The new PCC program (1991) and national Constitution (1992) eliminated numerous references to the Soviet Union, proletarian internationalism and scientific materialism, while recognizing religious freedom and separation of Church and State. If the Revolution and the PCC needed national heroes, however, it also needed enemies. Raúl Castro described dissidents as “people for whom the concept of fatherland and independence mean nothing...(They are) traitors and accomplices of the enemies of the fatherland.”<sup>29</sup> PCC members and CDR activists, in combination with officials from the Ministry of the Interior, organized *brigadas de respuesta rápida* and *turbas revolucionarias* to harass and abuse dissidents.

Renewal led to a dramatic expansion in party membership as well as the incorporation of a new generation of cadres. Preparations for the 4<sup>th</sup> Congress (October 1991) took place at the apex of the crisis, and there was extraordinary effervescence in party ranks. More than three million people participated in the pre-Congress

25. Javier Corrales, “The Gatekeeper State: Limited Economic Reforms and Regime Survival in Cuba, 1989–2002,” *Latin American Research Review*, vol. 39 (November 2004), 35–65.

26. Corrales, 50.

27. See the speech in [www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/1991/esp/f101091e.html](http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/1991/esp/f101091e.html).

28. *Granma Internacional*, May 5, 1991, 1.

29. Raúl Castro in his speech on the 41<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the assault of the Moncada barracks. *FBIS-LAT-94-144*, July 27, 1994, p. 4.

debate and discussion, and the process generated a number of controversial proposals, including the establishment of a multiparty system and competitive elections. The Politburo even issued a statement that the revolutionary and its leadership were beyond question.<sup>30</sup> By the time the Congress met, the most radical of the proposals and the most unreliable candidates for delegate slots had been weeded out, but there was lively debate about the legalization of farmers markets (the one issue on which Fidel Castro spoke and which he opposed) and talk of separating the position of head of state and head of government as well as increasing the power of the National Assembly.

There were important changes to the PCC leadership announced at the 4<sup>th</sup> Congress. Only 8 of the 14 members from the previous Politburo were re-elected; more than two-thirds of the Central Committee was new; the Secretariat was abolished; half of the Central Committee departments were eliminated; and 50 percent of the party staff was slashed. The perennials from the *sierra* generation (Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, José Ramón Machado Ventura, Juan Almeida) remained, but other historic figures (Armando Hart and Jorge Risquet) lost their posts on the Politburo. There was an infusion of younger leaders into the senior ranks,

among them Carlos Lage, Roberto Robaina, and Carlos Aldana.<sup>31</sup> The new Politburo also contained a strong number of current, former and future provincial party first secretaries.<sup>32</sup> With the exception of Esteban Lazo and Jorge Lezcano, these provincial secretaries represented a younger age cohort. The presence of these party secretaries underscored the importance Fidel Castro and his brother attached to the renewal and rejuvenation of the PCC and the importance of building provincial and municipal party structures. The new Politburo also included four senior FAR officers—Generals Abelardo Colomé, Ulises Rosales del Toro, Julio Casas Regueiro, and Leopoldo Cintra Frías. Each of them represented a distinct sector within the armed forces. Colomé was Minister of the Interior, Casas was MINFAR Vice Prime Minister and founder and CEO of GAESA, Cintra was head of the Western Army, and Ulises Rosales del Toro was a former chief-of-staff who became Minister of the Sugar Industry in 1997. The renovation (and purge) of the leading party bodies was accompanied by a concerted drive to expand membership and thereby extend the party's reach into Cuban society. Membership increased from 548,000 in 1991 to 780,000 in 1997 and, finally, to more than 856,000 in 2003.<sup>33</sup>

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30. Enrique Baloyra, "Where does Cuba Stand?," in Donald E. Schulz, *Cuba and the Future* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), 31–32.

31. Aldana would be ousted from the Politburo in 1992 for alleged financial improprieties. Robaina was named Foreign Minister, but was then replaced and ousted from the Poliburo in 2002.

32. These included some older members of the PCC (Esteban Lazo and Jorge Lezcano, for example), but younger people as well. Among the latter Yadira García Vera (future party secretary in Cienfuegos), Alberto Hondal (Ciego de Avila), Alfredo Jordan (Minister of Agriculture but former first secretary in Las Tunas), Nelson Torres (Minister of the Sugar Industry and first secretary of Cienfuegos), and María de los Angeles García Álvarez (executive bureau of Santiago de Cuba).

33. For 1997 figure, see Fidel Castro at 5<sup>th</sup> PCC Congress, "El Partido por Dentro," *Cuba Socialista*, June 2005, 4. [www.cubasocialista.cu/texto/cscdcentro.htm](http://www.cubasocialista.cu/texto/cscdcentro.htm).

A new pattern of authority developed within the *fidelist* coalition during the 1990s. Fidel Castro remained the undisputed leader and arbiter of the Revolution, but his interests lay more in the exercise of moral leadership<sup>34</sup> and in setting boundaries beyond which reforms could not go rather than in the actual implementation of policy.<sup>35</sup> As the patriarch of the Revolution he became increasingly concerned with how to ensure its continuity, addressing it most directly in his very personal address to students at the Faculty of Law at the University of Havana in December 2005.<sup>36</sup> More and more he turned to this brother. The latter had a reputation as a pragmatic and no-nonsense manager<sup>37</sup> who was interested in Chinese-style reforms.<sup>38</sup> Though he described the August 1994 riots in Havana (that left three dead, 100 injured and resulted in more than 225 arrests)<sup>39</sup> as “disorders of a counter-revolutionary character,” he was apparently anxious to

avoid another Tiananmen massacre that would bring the FAR into direct conflict with the population. It was he who used the phrase “beans are more important than cannons”—an apparent reference to the importance of improving living conditions. Raúl Castro urged constant vigilance against “social indiscipline” (which he noted were “a natural ally of the counterrevolution”),<sup>40</sup> and he did not shirk from cracking down on “liberal” elements within the PCC.<sup>41</sup>

Raúl Castro assumed major responsibility for both the implementation of the economic reforms of the “special period” and the rejuvenation of the *partido fidelista*. He was the key figure of the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress (1997) where he made all the major personnel decisions and reduced the size of the Central Committee from 225 to 150 members. Fidel Castro singled out the FAR (and the Ministry of the Interior) for special praise in

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34. The following quote provides an example: “There has never been a revolutionary political process more noble and generous” than ours, Fidel Castro declared. In a passage worth quoting at length, he went on: “Our conduct does not have even one stain, it has been above criticism in all respects...(This) is the most pure of the revolutions...For us justice is a religion; liberty, the well-being of our compatriots is a religion, independence is a religion, the fatherland is a religion...Everything, revolution, fatherland, independence, social justice, socialism is for us a religion...Marti, Mella, and Che represent an infinite altruism, they died for their ideas, they died for their fatherland, they did for the Revolution, and they died for socialism.”

35. Elsewhere one of the authors has labeled the regime of the “special period” as charismatic post-totalitarian.

36. [www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/2005/esp/fl71105e.html](http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/2005/esp/fl71105e.html).

37. The best source for information on the relationship between the two brothers is Brian Latell, *After Fidel: The Inside Story of Castro's Regime and Cuba's Next Leader* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). For an example of Raúl Castro's pragmatic style, see his speech to cadres of PCC, UJC, and mass organizations in Bayamo as played on Tele Rebelde network on August 23, 1994 and translated in *FBIS-LAT-94-165*, August 25, 1994, 24–26: “I have spent over thirty years...listening to those reports, and to all that data which in the majority of cases we do not fulfill...(This report) had the same defects as all reports. It was apologetic, filled with complacency, and contained very little self-criticism...We (are) tired of hearing apologetic reports that during normal times should have been eliminated. Now, and in the situation that we find ourselves, that spirit, that method, and that attitude should simply be eliminated...What happens is that at times, when we do not say the whole truth, when we speak half-truths, candy-coated, when that truth is lacking, the truth of the problems which the people endure daily, then the people get the impression we are telling lies...The acute situation of the special period requires that party unite forces, mobilize the masses, inspire them, eliminate bureaucratic red tape. Identify subjective weaknesses in order to eliminate them without delay, and objective problems in order to find alternative solutions with the conviction that—yes, we can!”

38. Yinghong Cheng, “Fidel Castro and ‘China’s Lesson for Cuba’: A Chinese Perspective,” *China Quarterly* (no. 189), March 2007, pp. 24–42, pp. 35–36.

39. Benigno Aguirre, “Social Control in Cuba,” *Latin American Politics and Society* 44:2 (2002), 81.

40. Raúl Castro, “Informe del Buró Político,” *Granma*, March 27, 1996.

41. *Ibid.* In his report to the April 1996 Central Committee Plenum, he combined a call for the broadest debate (so long as we are “united by the same patriotic and revolutionary principles”) with the decision to dismantle and purge the *Centro de Estudios sobre América* (CEA), a party think-tank home to advocates of market reforms.

his report to the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress,<sup>42</sup> and it did not surprise anyone when the percentage of military and security personnel in the Central Committee increased to nearly 18 percent (the high point had been 27 percent in 1981).<sup>43</sup> The new 25–member Politburo had 5 members from the FAR.<sup>44</sup> Testimony to the complicated political situation was the turnover among provincial party secretaries. Though very few who were elected in 1991 retained their seats on the new Politburo, as a group provincial party secretaries were still very much in evidence. Six of their number sat on the Politburo where the most influential among them were Yadira García Vera (Matanzas), Pedro Sáez (Havana), and Jorge Luis Serra (Holguín). The 5<sup>th</sup> PCC Congress also confirmed the succession to the *Comandante en Jefe*. Raúl Castro had been appointed second secretary of the PCC in 1965, vice-prime minister in 1972, first-vice-president of the newly established Council of State, but not until 1997 was he formally anointed. His brother gave him a ringing endorsement: “Of his merits I do not have to speak; of his experience, capacity and contributions to the Revolution I do not need to speak. He is known for his indefatigable activity, for his constant and methodical work in the armed forces (and)...in the Party.”<sup>45</sup>

The most memorable contribution Raúl Castro made to the survival of the Revolution involved the armed forces. The FAR had been his long-time bailiwick, and under his leadership, it had been transformed into the institution with the most prestige in Cuban society.

The crisis of the “special period” forced radical surgery on the FAR. It had to absorb drastic cutbacks in its budget and personnel. Its budget went from \$2.2 billion in 1988 to \$720 million ten years later. The armed forces saw their share of government expenditures reduced from 4.5 percent in 1985 to 1.6 percent ten years later. There was a corresponding decline in troop strength from 297,000 in 1987 to approximately 55,000 in 2000.<sup>46</sup> Beyond dealing with these cutbacks, the FAR also faced the challenge of becoming self-sufficient and reconfiguring force structures so as to maintain its defensive credibility.

Once again, the tasks entrusted to the FAR went far beyond the military arena. While the PCC gathered new impetus by taking on political and administrative tasks, to the FAR was entrusted implementation of a new system of enterprise management (the *sistema de perfeccionamiento empresarial*) and the establishment of joint venture companies with foreign investors. The latter would help address what Raúl Castro called “the principal problem of the national economy—the lack of hard currency.”<sup>47</sup> Opening the lucrative export sector to the armed forces provided a source of jobs and privileges to active duty and retired officers whose families had not otherwise been immune from the harsh effects of the “special period.” This was a way of rewarding and cementing loyalty. There was no independent oversight of FAR economic operation, and this did not change when the Ministry of Audit and Control was established in 2001.<sup>48</sup> There were over

42. See Fidel Castro, “Informe Central” (1997).

43. For a discusión of these personnel changes, see Frank Mora, “Raúl Castro and the FAR: Potential Future Roles in a post-Fidel Cuba,” a paper delivered at the Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy (Rhode Island), March 21–24, 2002.

44. Of the 25–member Politburo elected at the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress, one died (Alfredo Jordan in 2005) and two were expelled—Roberto Robaina in 2002 and Juan Carlos Robinson (provincial party secretary in Santiago de Cuba) in 2006. Miguel Díaz Canel, first secretary in Villa Clara, entered the Politburo in July 2003.

45. See Fidel Castro, “Informe Central” (1997).

46. Cuban Armed Forces Review: <http://cubapolidata.com.cafr.cafr.html>

47. Raúl Castro, “Informe del Buró Político,” *Granma*, March 26, 1996.

48. Hal Klepak, *Cuba’s Military 1990–2005: Revolutionary Soldiers during Counter-Revolutionary Times* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

300 enterprises associated with the FAR, and they accounted for nearly 90 percent of Cuban exports, nearly 60 percent of hard currency transactions, nearly 60 percent of tourism earnings, and employed 20 percent of state workers.<sup>49</sup> The most important of the FAR enterprises was the aforementioned holding company GAESA whose subsidiaries (among them Gaviota, Cubanacan and Agrotex), operate hotels and hard currency shops (the nearly 400 *tiendas de recaudación de divisas* catering to foreigners or Cubans with dollars or euros), and are involved in aviation, mining, and the citrus industry. Reportedly GAESA earned \$970 million USD in 1997.<sup>50</sup> The joint venture companies under FAR control brokered deals with foreign companies and investors, administered joint venture projects, found markets for Cuban exports, served to route the transfer of technology, and provided channels for the circumvention of the U.S. embargo. Once the vanguard of internationalism, the FAR (or at least some of its officers) had become the privileged interlocutors with foreign capital and perhaps an embryonic proto-capitalist class.

The *sistema de perfeccionamiento empresarial* (SPE) involved the FAR in the application of Western business methods to socialist enterprise management. *Perfeccionamiento* was initially applied in the more than 200 factories of the Unión de la Industria Militar (UIM), but in 1997 Fidel Castro announced it would be extended to non-military enterprises. Decree-Law 871 (1998) gave this notion legal sanction, and within two years, nearly of the 3,000 state enterprises had begun to apply the model.<sup>51</sup> So far the verdict on the SPE has been mixed. In a country where economic reforms have been tepid (certainly compared to China and Vietnam), it has been viewed as something of a precur-

sor to deeper changes. Perhaps this will be the case, but up to now, it has been largely a mechanism to enhance greater administrative control and productivity. So far there have no efforts to introduce genuine market incentives into the economic system. Moreover, just because an administrative method works in enterprises under military control, does not mean it will perform in the civilian sphere, even in a country where there is no labor mobility and trade unions do not view it as their job to represent and protect workers. There are conflicting views as to how well the SPE has worked. Carlos Lage noted that fewer than 2 percent of state enterprises had met the conditions necessary to embark on SPE; and in May 2001, Raúl Castro said that “the process of enterprise improvement ... had not advanced with the dynamism we had hoped for.”<sup>52</sup> A more positive interpretation came from Colonel Armando Pérez-Betancourt, head of the Enterprise Management Commission, who said profits, wages, and productivity had increased in the more than 800 companies that applied SPE methods.<sup>53</sup> Productivity in those enterprises, he said, was 42.4 percent above other state companies, wages were 22.5 percent higher than the non-participant average, and only 7 percent of the SPE enterprises operated at a loss compared to 38 percent in other state-run enterprises.

During the 1990s the FAR expanded its role far beyond the traditional confines of a traditional military institution, thus confirming the judgment of General Ulises Rosales del Toro that “there are no armed forces in the world that look like ours, ours are unique.”<sup>54</sup> The missions of the “special period” did not lead to a militarization of the economy, nor did they imply a return to the mobilizational omnipresence of the 1960s. What was constant in all these initiatives, however,

49. For additional details, see “The Cuban Military in the Economy,” Staff Report of the Cuba Transition Project (no. 46), August 11, 2003 and also “Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, S.A.” in *El Universal* (Mexico), February 23, 2007.

50. “The Cuban Military in the Economy.” The financial reference is from *Diario 16* (Madrid), June 24, 2001, quoting Luis Alberto Rodríguez López-Callejas, CEO of GAESA and a son-in-law of Raúl Castro.

51. Juan Hermida, “Perfeccionamiento Empresarial a lo cubano,” *Tribuna de la Habana* (1999), [www.tribuna.islagrande.cu/economia.htm](http://www.tribuna.islagrande.cu/economia.htm), cited in Espinosa, “Vanguard of the State,” 19–30, footnote 33.

52. Raúl Castro in *Granma* May 18, 2001 (cited in Espinosa).

53. Reuters dispatch, January 23, 2007.

54. Luis Báez, *Secretos de Generales* (Oviedo: Editorial Losada, 1997), 513.

was the belief that the armed forces were available for use in any arena that the revolutionary leadership decided. The expanded role of the FAR led to new characterizations. One analyst described the emergence of the technocrat-soldier—a “manager and administrator, (who was also) a soldier...and implement(ed) modern organizational and technical business practices and methods to enhance productivity of military and civilian industries.”<sup>55</sup> Another advanced the idea of the “entrepreneur-soldier” whom he viewed as an extension of the “technocratic soldier” albeit with “greater autonomy and greater access to the international dollar economy.”<sup>56</sup>

The PCC and the FAR remained the major components of the *fidelistas* coalition into the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. With the infusion of young leaders and a significant expansion in its membership, the Party has increased its presence and weight in the political system. But the process has not visibly weakened the FAR. Senior officers are well represented in the highest policy-making bodies, and they have close ties and easy access to their former commander and new president, Raúl Castro. One analyst of civil-military relations in Cuba has argued that the Revolution has produced a fused organism in the leadership. For him, party and military are the same; they are a “unicellular organism, each with a separate function.” The biological analogy is questionable, but there is little doubt that civil-military relations are in a state of fragile equilibrium. Whether and how long this can be sustained will depend on the nature and characteristics of the transition from Castroism.

#### BEYOND EXCEPTIONALISM— A CONCLUSION

Cuban politics is in a state of flux, evolving from a highly personalized, charismatic and totalitarian system of rule toward another, perhaps less rigid form. A stable and well-planned succession has taken place.

The National Assembly duly elected Raúl Castro, former Minister of Defense and long-time designated heir to his brother, as President of the Council of State in late February 2008, and many of the same people occupy the senior positions of leadership in the country. But behind the stability of the succession lurks the prospect of more substantial change. For one thing, no one can rule with the authority, charisma, and legitimacy of Fidel Castro. With his passing, a particular type of politics will also end. At its core was the capacity to treat politics as if it were war by other means, to demand constant sacrifice from the population, to rely on mobilization as the preferred instrument for social and political control, and to make political endurance, not any type of economic performance, the standard by which he and the Revolution was to be judged.

The end of charismatic rule will bring forth a new regime to Cuba. The elite has already felt the absence of Fidel Castro, the end of his impromptu visits to factories and ministries, his capacity to intervene whenever and wherever he likes. But it goes far beyond the differences in style between one brother and the other. Raúl Castro may be *primus inter pares*, but he must manage the *fidelistas* coalition differently than his brother. There will be much greater intra-elite negotiation in post-Fidel Cuba, and the farther one travels from the center of power in Havana, the more members of the ruling coalition, whether in party organizations or in the armed forces, will probably come to resemble baronial stakeholders. There will be new imperatives in dealing with the society at large. Raúl Castro has identified the economy (a euphemism for the scarcity of food and housing, problems in transport, in addition to the weak purchasing power of the convertible peso and the social inequalities generated by a two-tier currency) as his fundamental challenge. How he handles the economy and these pent-up social demands will have important consequences on the evolution of the regime. In any case, Raúl Castro is at age 76 a transi-

55. Frank Mora, “Raulismo and the Technocrat-Soldier: The Economic Role of the FAR and its Implications for the Transition in Cuba,” a paper delivered at the conference on “The Politics of Military Extrinsication in Comparative Perspective: Lessons for Cuba” in Arrabida (Portugal), September 21–22, 2000, 10.

56. Mora, “Raulismo and the Technocrat-Soldier”; and Juan Carlos Espinosa and Robert C. Harding, “Olive-Green Parachutes and Slow-Motion Piñatas: The Cuban Armed Forces in Comparative Perspective,” paper delivered at the conference on “The Politics of Military Extrinsication in Comparative Perspective: Lessons for Cuba” in Arrabida (Portugal), September 21–22, 2000.

tional figure. The old regime may not end until both brothers pass from the scene, but it is the younger brother who will also play a central role in laying the foundation for the new edition of the *partido fidelista* as well as the post-Castro regime. The uncertainties of regime transition will become more, not less important over the next few years.

The transition to a new regime will have an important impact on civil-military relations in Cuba. This paper has analyzed the dynamics and evolution in the relationship between the PCC and FAR. The relationship has been marked by the dominance of the sierra generation and its *guerrillero* ethos. What began as a highly unequal relationship has evolved into one characterized by a more equilibrated division of labor. The decisive turn occurred in the early 1990s when Raúl Castro assumed greater responsibility in the renovation and renewal of the PCC. Today provincial party secretaries have real weight not only in the national party bodies (Politburo and Secretariat) but also throughout the country, coordinating work among enterprises and mass organizations, and working with military units in their districts. The PCC has made great strides over the past decade in terms of its organizational presence and reach into society, but it continues to share top billing within the *fidelista* coalition with the FAR. No longer the agent of mobilization nor the vanguard of proletarian internationalism, the FAR has managed, nonetheless, to sustain and expand the range of their responsibilities within the Cuban body politic. Responsible for external security, it has also taken on the duties of internal security (through its control of the Ministry of the Interior since 1989). Even more significantly, it has become the entrepreneurial backbone of a hybrid economic system that retains a high emphasis on social welfare but has reintroduced capitalism and relies on partnerships with foreign investors for modernization and development. The FAR is the key actor in this Cuban version of the developmental state. It has direct access to Raúl Castro, participates in the highest policy-making bodies, and has broad margins

of autonomy with respect to other state institutions, including the Ministry of Audit and Control.

The current PCC-FAR duopoly bears the personal imprint of Raúl Castro. This is why we describe the relationship as one involving a fragile equilibrium. Once he passes from the scene, the current balance of power will be difficult to maintain. As we have suggested earlier, Cuban society has not been immobile over the past fifteen years. State and society have experienced important changes. It is not difficult to imagine that, perhaps less visibly, actors within party and military spheres have not been immune to such changes. Cuba has been caught in a time warp over the past fifteen years. Both the heroic phase of the Revolution and the Cuban experiment in autarky ended with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The changes Cuban society has undergone confirm this. At the same time, Fidel Castro, who had truncated the transition to post-totalitarianism in the 1980s, remained vigilant and active at the center of power. Only with his retirement did the inevitability of change assume real proportion, that is to say, its prospect could be debated and grasped. Raúl Castro recognized this new reality in July 2007 a few days after “provisionally” taking over the duties of his brother.<sup>57</sup> Our problems, our inefficiencies, our errors and our bureaucratic and/or slack attitudes,” he declared, call “for structural and conceptual changes.” In saying this, the new leader of the Cuban Revolution merely acknowledged (and thus spurred) a process of debate and discussion that had already begun.

One participant in this debate was the heir-apparent, Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque who, in the December 2005 speech mentioned earlier, took up the question of how to ensure the continuity of the regime.<sup>58</sup> Remarking on the “entrenched vices” in Cuban society, Pérez Roque went on to identify three “premises” (or conditions) for the continuity of the regime. First was the “moral authority of its leadership” based on “austere conduct, dedication to work” and “absence of privileges;” second was the need to base this leadership on the “basis of ideas and convictions”

57. <http://www.granma.cubaweb.cu/2007/07/27/nacional/artic01.html>.

58. Speech by Felipe Pérez Roque to National Assembly on December 23, 2005. See [www.cubaminrex.cu/Archivo/Canciller/2005/FPR\\_231205.htm](http://www.cubaminrex.cu/Archivo/Canciller/2005/FPR_231205.htm)

and not on “material consumption;” and, third was the need to prevent the emergence of an “oligarchical, transnational, and pro-yanki minority” whose objective would “the dismantling of the Socialist state” with the result that “Cuba (would) become a county (*municipio*) of Miami.” The gauntlet could not have been thrown more clearly.

But Pérez Roque was not the only voice discussing the future. An article published in *La Jiribilla* explicitly took him on, and then went on to talk about the “disquieting (national) institutional weakness”<sup>59</sup> and asked how it was possible that there could exist in Cuba “a fair number of laws and decisions taken at every level (that are) frankly unconstitutional.” For its part, a participant in a debate on “the transition to socialism” organized by the journal *Temas* talked about the inevitability of generational change over the next ten years (“for biological reasons”) and warned that a system “called socialist could exist” even though it would “in reality” not be so.<sup>60</sup> This effervescence will undoubtedly continue in the run-up to the next PCC Congress, and it will be interesting how the leadership, having urged debate and discussion, deals with calls for greater participation, a lessening of controls, “socialist constitutionality,” and pluralism within the PCC. Ultimately, Raúl Castro and the shape of what comes after him (both in terms of personalities, policy, and possible change) will be influenced decisively by how these political issues are handled and what is the outcome of the economic reforms. Through all this, the key to the survival of the regime and to the balance of civil-military relations will depend on the capacity of civilian actors to remain united.

The other element in the civil-military equation pertains to the FAR. It is probably the most respected in-

stitution in the country, having great legitimacy and a reputation for effectiveness and efficiency. One indicator of its influence in the Cuban political system is the presence of FAR officers in the highest policy-making bodies. If we count Raúl Castro, 6 of the 25 members of the Politburo are from the FAR. So are 24 of the 150 members of the Central Committee. FAR members hold two of the six vice-presidencies of the newly elected Council of State (2008) and make up 6 of its 31 members. But even these numbers do not give a real sense of its pervasive influence.<sup>61</sup> Harold Trinkunas offers a more suggestive framework for such an analysis.<sup>62</sup> If we consider military influence in terms of the diverse concentric arenas he identifies (external threat, internal security, public policy, and leadership selection), then the Cuban armed forces are, indeed, influential. They have a monopoly over the first two arenas,<sup>63</sup> have extensive responsibilities over the third (public policy), and are undoubtedly consulted about leadership selection. This framework should also provide markers for the future evaluation of influence.

If regime change does take place (though not necessarily democratization), the nature of civil-military relations in Cuba may become more comparable to other Latin American countries. Over the longer term the normalization of political life, heightened institutionalization, and greater public access to the public space may decisively influence the balance of power between the PCC and FAR. Even before such trends consolidate, we should be able to gain analytical leverage regarding them if we apply concepts and tools from the extant literature on civil-military relations in Latin America and Southern Europe. No case ever escapes its uniqueness, but Cuban exceptionalism may fade—if there is a transition to another, less mobilizational

59. Manuel David Orrio, “Cuba: Constitución vs. ¿socialismo reversible?,” *La Jiribilla* (vol. 4), no. 252, March 4–10, 2006. Curiously, Orrio had infiltrated a group of independent journalists and then broke his cover by testifying against them and other dissidents in an April 2003 trial of 75 dissidents.

60. See the special issue “Sobre la transición socialista en Cuba: Un simposio” in *Temas* (nos. 50–51), April–September 2007, 126–162.

61. Amuchástegui, “FAR: Mastering Reforms,” 438.

62. Harold Trinkunas, “Crafting Civilian Control in Argentina and Venezuela” in David Pion-Berlin (ed.), *Civil-Military Relations in Latin America—New Analytical Perspectives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 165. Trinkunas was writing about democracies, but his ideas may be sensibly applied in the Cuban context.

63. Responsibility for internal security is crucial, involving as it does oversight and surveillance over military and civilian elites as well as social groups and individuals.

regime. We should be ready to analyze “the way the military exit took place, the main features of the transition, and the early institutional arrangements.”<sup>64</sup> Hopefully, it will not be decades before scholars can examine what specific policies and strategies civilians

might use to establish democracy and their control over the armed forces.<sup>65</sup> Finally, by then, we might join Galileo and say: “E puor si muove” (sin embargo se mueve).<sup>66</sup>

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64. Felipe Aguero, *Soldiers, Civilians, and Democracy: Post-Franco Spain in Comparative Perspective* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 197.

65. David Pion-Berlin, 11–12.

66. The phrase refers to the Earth and is attributed to Galileo Galilei who is supposed to have uttered it even after he had accepted the Inquisition’s condemnation of his theories that the Earth rotated around the Sun.