EXILING EXPATRIATES: THE DISSAPEARING AMERICAN COLONY IN HAVANA, 1959-1960

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Abstract

SAMUEL R FINESURREY: Exiling Expatriates: The Disappearing American Colony in Havana, 1959-1960
(Under the direction of Louis A Pérez)

The American Colony in Havana was a collection of 4,000 U.S. citizens who had made the city their home over the first sixty years of the twentieth-century. The members of this diverse community held different interests and varied reasons for settling in Cuban society. Breaking from traditional descriptions of the diplomatic failure between the United States and Cuba in the late 1950s and early 1960s, this paper exposes a unique American lens through this Colony. The commitment by these colonists to ensure a peaceful solution between their home and their homeland represents an opportunity to go beyond the binary that pins the interests of the U.S. power elite against a radical Cuba. As Cuba transitioned from the Batista dictatorship to the revolutionary government in 1959, these U.S. citizens, many of whom had arrived decades earlier, hoped and often fought for their community's survival. Accomplishing diplomacy would assure a place for these American colonist in a increasingly autonomous Cuba.
To My Parents, My Compass In All Things
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INTRODUCTION

In 1953 the Cuban census accounted for nearly 4,000 U.S. citizens living in the Cuban capital of Havana. Many of these U.S. citizens had witnessed the demise of President Gerardo Machado in Cuba twenty years earlier. They remembered the violence that followed. Others had heard tales of the brutality that took place across the country after the collapse of the Machado regime. Even more lived through the 1940 constitutional transition to democracy under the leadership of President Fulgencio Batista, and Batista’s overthrow of that same democracy twelve years later.

By the end of 1958 the expatriate community had almost certainly heard of young freedom fighters in the Cuban mountains. This political movement was distinct from the uprisings of the past. A group of idealists were determined to dismantle the failed Cuban governmental apparatus that had encouraged instability, oppression and corruption. This was not a coup d’état, conspiring with traditional Cuban powers to eliminate a figurehead. This was a revolution sustained for over two years, with the consent and assistance of the rural and urban populace. So it is of little surprise that on January 8, 1959, as Comandante Fidel Castro and the 26th of July Movement marched victoriously into the city of Havana marking the defeat of dictator Fulgencio Batista, many of the women and men of the American Colony celebrated for and with their neighbors, for themselves, and for their adopted country. A Cuba for Cubans was finally a feasible proposition.

1 Oficina Nacional de los Censos Demografico y Electoral, Censos de población, viviendas y electoral (La
Within days Cuban and U.S. forces would challenge the exuberance permeating throughout the expatriate community. In the next year the identity of these expatriates, and their community as a whole, would be in crisis; the bridge between their two societies began to crumble. The existence of the American Colony was dependent on the maintenance of at least a civil relationship between the governments of the United States and Cuba. As diplomacy between the two nations transitioned into hostility, the members of the Colony were cognizant of their disappearing place in Cuban society. Many within the community became bi-national advocates for international friendship. These people attempted to encourage their fellow community members to reach out to relatives and representatives back home. They sought to cultivate support continued relations between the two nations. Within a matter of months, however, those in the Colony faced the choice of accepting the destruction of their identity as U.S. citizens living in Cuba or hoping, and at times crusading, for improved international interactions, which would allow them to maintain their bi-national character. Against tremendous opposition, many choose the latter.

To understand the varied perspectives in the American Colony from 1959-1960, and the corporate and political interests at home with which they had to compete, I reviewed sources in the Eisenhower Presidential Library, the Library of Congress, Columbia University Library and Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina. I examined the experiences of Colony members in 1959 and 1960. I interviewed Religious leaders in Havana from multiple Protestant communities, as well as a Jewish community. In addition I undertook a process of combing through the Congressional Record, major news organizations, and letters between Historian Louis A. Pérez and Colony members written in the early 1990s. This paper also draws heavily on the media of the American Colony. Letters
and memoirs collected and written after most of the community returned to the United States are noticeably tinged with the anger of having been forced to leave. While these sources still, for the most part, sympathize with the Cuban Revolution, juxtaposing the hostility of the U.S. Congress at the time, or in any U.S. administration starting with President Eisenhower, they are colored nonetheless by the bitter loss of an adopted home.

The journalism of the Colony reveals the day-to-day experiences and emotions of the Colony. It provides complex portraits of how those in the community sought to shape political events and relations between their two countries in an effort to sustain their lifestyles. The expatriate newspapers were the voice of the community, an organizing mechanism that aimed to craft a peaceful solution between agitated governments until, and perhaps beyond, the point where this goal was no longer politically viable. When contrasted with conversations in the U.S. media, in the halls of Congress and among the advisors of President Eisenhower, the Colony’s journalistic accounts of these U.S. expatriates reveal a distinct, complex, hopeful and ultimately ignored perspective voiced by U.S. citizens in Cuba who saw peace as the only way to maintain their existence. This paper is their narrative. By focusing primarily on the words and actions of this highly informed and equally neglected group, this essay seeks to explore the goals, sentiments and strategies of the American Colony before its members knew how their story would end.

A number of scholars, including Morris Morley, Lars Schoultz, Esteban Morales Dominguez and Gary Prevost in have convincingly demonstrated that the threat to U.S. economic and political dominance shaped the collapse of relations between Havana and Washington. These authors, along with many others, focused on the cooperation of U.S. government officials and capitalist forces in opposition to the goals and aims of the Cuban
revolutionary government. This cooperation led, predictably, to the collapse of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba. These authors framed the conflict between Havana and Washington as fundamentally political, ideological and economic, without attending to the human element embodied in this expatriate strategy of mobilizing its community for action. It was the political, ideological and economic disagreements that ultimately led to the collapse of relations. Colony leaders continuously reminded the Cubans and their fellow Colony members that their personal friendships, sense of belonging in Havana, institutional connections and historic camaraderie, were worth salvaging even when challenged by overwhelming political, ideological and economic forces. The scholars mentioned above discounted this human element because it did not significantly impact the course of events.

Yet there was another chapter to this narrative. A large number of U.S. citizens had been living, vacationing, working, attending school and religious functions in Cuba since the nineteenth-century. When contending with the growing tension between the United States and Cuba many of these expatriates sought to humanize their Cuban neighbors, coworkers and friends, to their fellow colony members. In addition there was the hope that these voices would cross the 90-mile waterway that divides Cuba and the United States and enter the consciousness of the U.S. public, facilitating patience from, and softening the reaction of, the Eisenhower administration. This was perhaps the only path for this community to influence the events unfolding in front of them, and salvage the existence they had grown so accustomed. So many U.S. citizens living in Havana mobilized to overcome what can be viewed now as a political inevitability. Their story has been overlooked in the political history of U.S.-Cuban relations.
The naïve hope of many within this community, that human forces could overcome political, geo-political and economic ones, demonstrates an alternative to the traditional historical narrative. A defined U.S. community in Havana witnessed the rise of revolutionary Cuba and the collapse of their place within it. This vantage point alone would make this story worth telling. Their inability to steer the direction of this historic struggle, maintain the lives those within the Colony had been living, and influence geo-political events, is a tragedy of the personal. This narrative explores intimately informed U.S. citizens calling on their government, writing in newspapers to encourage action by their fellow community members and fighting for a solution before succumbing to the tidal wave of politics, ideologies, panic and dollars. The human cost that followed, especially for the Cuban population, has been well documented. However, the efforts of these delicately positioned U.S. citizens living in Havana who urged a different course remains largely absent from the historiography of this conflict.

Vast segments of the American Colony were well integrated into the lifestyle of Havana’s local elite by 1959. Many Colony members enjoyed close friendships with their Cuban neighbors in the elite neighborhoods of Vedado, Miramar and Country Club. Some of these Cubans were U.S. educated. Others had business interests in the United States or sent their children to U.S. schools. Many held an affinity for U.S. culture. As Colony member Craig Sutton recalled: “We always lived in an upper middle class Cuban neighborhood, and we developed acquaintances and friendships with people in the neighborhood.”

2 “Social mixing,” according to former expatriate William H. Dorsey, occurred, “on the golf courses,

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in the swimming spas, at the beach, in the yachting regattas, business clubs oriented to particular economic phases of Cuban business life.”

While conceding that the majority of interactions that occurred were between Colony members and the most cosmopolitan elements of Havana society, there is evidence of a paternalistic sympathy towards the Cuban lower classes. Still, it was their Cuban economic peers and social partners of the American Colony with whom colonists interacted regularly. In their routine interaction with U.S. culture and knowledge of the English language, members of the Cuban middle and upper classes were able to operate in these circles in ways that the Cuban working class could not.

The deeply rooted connections between Cuban elites and the American Colony become clearer when examining the lifestyles of individuals in the Colony. At the time of the revolution, two Havana-based newspapers, The Havana Post and the Times of Havana, were published exclusively in English. Many Colony residents attended Protestant Churches, and a community of American Jews had also formed in the first half of the twentieth-century; services for these religious organizations were in English. Some Colony members were fluent in Spanish—many claimed fluency in Castilian Spanish, but most lacked proficiency in “Cubanese,” while others would claim an aptitude in neither. Their children attended private schools with the children of the Cuban middle and upper classes such as the Ruston Academy, which published its yearbooks in English and Spanish on a page-by-page basis.

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4 Slang for the Cuban dialect of Spanish

5 Ibid.

Many U.S. expatriates worked for businesses whose corporate headquarters were based in the United States. Others Colony members worked for the United States government. Some opened small stores and others worked as journalists or writers.

Although a majority of the residents in the American Colony never shed their U.S. identity, they had come to consider Cuba their home. Before 1959, most U.S. expatriates believed that their loyalty to the United States should not invalidate fidelity to Cuba. A crisis of identity was forming as Colony members began to realize that an allegiance to their homeland was becoming incompatible with their continued existence on the island many of them had come to love. As a community they held out hope, long after most in Washington had abandoned it, for peaceful re-negotiation of relations between the United States and Cuba, and thus a continuation of their tropical lifestyles.

Yet by the end of 1959, community members confronted the panic of a politically persuasive corporate community and powerful government voices that increasingly advocated regime change in Havana as the only option. Many chose to combat these influences by reminding their fellow Colony members that the Cubans were their friends, sometimes going as far to request that these expatriates calm the tempers of those living in the United States by informing “your fellow citizens about these truths and to counteract those concepts which, through error or bad intentions, are being published in the United States against Cuba.”7 As this open letter to the American Colony published in the Times of Havana confirms, elemental to the continuation of their increasingly precarious position as U.S. citizens living in a Cuba seeking greater autonomy were public pleas for support,

patience and understanding toward the Cuban revolutionary government by people in positions of power in the United States.

Complicating matters for the American Colony was the fact that the U.S. corporations and the government held interests in Cuba extending far beyond the expatriate population in Havana. Many of these interests were in direct contradiction with the aims and aspirations of the new Cuban government. The U.S. military was committed to maintaining the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base and the State Department was concerned about the geopolitical ramifications of an unfriendly or even neutral nation in the Caribbean Basin at the height of the Cold War. Tied to U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba was the close relationship between U.S. corporate interests and the Eisenhower administration. The U.S. based heads of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, The United Fruit Company and the King Ranch, among others, began to use their immense political capital, to push for harsher and more combative policies from Washington in defense of their Cuban interests. It was with these voices that those within the American Colony had to contend; as many of these expatriates were seeking a peaceful compromise to maintain the existence of their community, voices calling for the severing of all relations drowned them out.

North Americans had been entering Cuba since early nineteenth-century, a process that accelerated during the U.S. occupation of 1898-1902. They arrived as Protestant missionaries, prostitutes, businessmen, peddlers, oilmen, hotel builders, gamblers, philanthropists and newsmen.⁸ For a brief period of time, from 1959–1960, this Community felt the need to mobilize itself to combat the growing tensions between the two governments. Active Colony members were motivated by self-interest and informed by admittedly

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stratified levels of social interaction with the Cuban people. They were not necessarily driven by social justice or the well-being of everyday Cubans, but sought, simply, amiable diplomatic relations between Havana and Washington in order to maintain the lifestyle to which they had become accustomed. At the time, Washington was striving for geo-political regional dominance and was loyal to U.S. corporate interests. In contrast, Havana was committed to political and economic autonomy. Against these competing visions concerning the future of Cuba, the many people within the American Colony scrambled to find common ground, and by extension salvage their community. The fight for survival was indeed a daunting one.
Chapter I

Vengeance: The Firing Squads of 59

It did not take long for a divide to emerge between the vocal elements of the expatriate community and members of the U.S. press and U.S. government. Following the collapse of the Batista regime, Cuban agents who had been loyal to Batista were detained by the new government and tried in military tribunals. Many were sentenced to death by firing squad for war crimes committed during the effort to repel the 26th of July Movement and the other revolutionary movements.

The American Colony was certainly aware of these executions. However, in light of the past historical events, such as the violence following the fall of President Gerardo Machado, they understood that this process of reestablishing order in the country assured the protection of innocent civilians. The children of the expatriate community would not fear having to leave their homes in Havana as many of their parents had done two decades earlier. Longtime Colony resident and *New York Times* correspondent Ruby Hart Phillips recalls in her memoir *Cuba: Island Of Paradox*, that in 1933 the violence was far less controlled. In the 1930’s the mob chased the Porristas – the secret police of the Batista government – and their sympathizers throughout the streets of Havana. On-lookers watched bloodthirsty hordes smash a man over the head with a stone and shoot him in the chest before he could unleash his revolver. As the man gripped a post refusing to fall, a solder approached and, to the cheers of the masses behind him sent the man mercifully to the ground with a bullet through
the head. The wife and children of the dead man looked on from the balcony at the Hotel Pasaje as the crowd diligently set to work to render the corpse unidentifiable. Blood stained the streets of Havana in the days following the abdication of President Machado. Homes and stores were looted. With the army guided by the blind rage of the masses, no end to the chaos was insight. It was this type of anarchy that many members of the American Colony wanted to avoid. Whether or not they supported the executions, a good number of Colony members understood that the military tribunals and summary executions contained this potential for greater violence.

On January 1, 1959, reporters and officials from the United States began to focus with intensity on Cuban affairs. A substantial portion of them found the executions that followed the assumption of power by the revolution unnerving. Many within the U.S. government voiced outrage. Unlike Phillips and other Colony members, these U.S. citizens were generally unfamiliar with the historical context leading up to these executions.  

Elements of the American Colony grew frustrated with the uninformed and critical reports coming out of Cuba in early 1959. Phillips, challenged the narrow perspective of her journalistic colleagues from the United States when she wrote: “[U.S.] reporters judged everything they saw from the point of view of an American, probably born and raised in a small town under a civil administration, which functioned quietly. In such a town there were no police and soldiers walking the streets with machine guns.” A lack of historical perspective left these reporters ill-prepared to make sense of the scenes they were about to witness. The island had just come out of a civil war where as many as 20,000 Cubans were 

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killed by government forces.\footnote{Herbert Mathews notes, Box 11, Folder 6, Writings, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York.} Phillips acknowledged this context when she wrote to the U.S. public and her fellow journalists in her memoir, “Can anyone imagine a crowd of several hundred thousand in the United States screaming for executions by firing squads and shouting against neighboring countries?”\footnote{Phillips, \textit{The Cuban Dilemma}, 30-31.}


The U.S. press fixated on this morbid element in the consolidation of power by the revolution. In an article critical of the near unanimity of major U.S. political and media figures, Dale Francis noted in the national Catholic action weekly \textit{Our Sunday Visitor},
“denunciations of the executions by the new Cuban government have followed no political lines. Fulton J. Lewis and Edward R. Murrow found themselves in surprised agreement. David Lawrence and Max Lerner wound up for the first time in years saying almost exactly the same thing… All without exception denounced the executions.” While not yet anticipated by the American Colony, a lack of support from the U.S. media would prove detrimental to those in Cuba who wanted to prevent a split between Havana and Washington. Newsmen and women have historically influenced the opinions of the U.S. public, to whom, at least to some degree, the U.S. power structure must answer. Thus, the early negative representations of the Cuban revolution in the mainstream media of the United States did not bode well for the survival of the American Colony.

Perhaps even worse for the American Colony was that objections to the methods enacted by the Cuban government extended well beyond the media and into the halls of the U.S. Congress. It is important to note that in the first weeks following the success of the revolution these voices were neither unanimous nor overtly hostile toward the new Cuban government. Yet in early 1959 many congressional voices refrained from celebrating the revolution as a triumph against tyranny and strongly urged restraint to the Cuban leadership in dealing with their former foes. The Democratic Senator George Smathers from Florida was under pressure from his constituents to “jump on [Fidel Castro’s] bandwagon.” The Senator refused to do so and on January 20, 1959 inserted into the Congressional Record that he urged “restraint on the part of all,” and that it was his “hope that all of us will stop

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18 Lewis was a leading conservative radio commentator. Murrow was a major liberal T.V. personality that famously helped bring down Wisconsin’s Senator Joseph McCarthy. Lawrence was a conservative journalist who founded the weekly United States News. Lerner was a liberal newsman who later earned distinct membership on the “master list of Nixon political opponents.” Dale Francis, “Why Were They Wrong About Cuba?—U.S. Commentators Have Taken For Granted That The People Being Executed “Were Merely Political Opponents—They Were Not—They Were Criminals Who Murdered, Tortured, Raped,” Our Sunday Visitor, quoted in 105 Congressional Record, February 3, 1959, A784.
shooting and shouting on these important matters where hasty decisions mean ill-considered acts.”\textsuperscript{19}

That same day Senator Wayne Morse, from Oregon, a state with significantly fewer refugees who had been pushed out of Cuba by the recently overthrown Batista government, used far less ambiguous language to assess the situation in Cuba.\textsuperscript{20} “It is necessary to keep the record straight, because there have been some reports out of Cuba to the effect that fair procedure trials were held prior to the early executions in Cuba after Castro took over…I know, as a matter of fact, that in some instances that was not the case.”\textsuperscript{21} Senator Morse continued, “To the contrary, certain members of the Batista regime—true, known to be men with a sordid record of cruelty, murder, and bloodshed behind them—were not subjected to any trial in the true meaning of the term but within a relatively few minutes after they were brought before military officers, were shot by a firing squad…the substitution of tyranny for tyranny does not beget democracy.”\textsuperscript{22} This was not the first time Senator Morse patronizingly derided the new Cuban government. On January 15 the\textit{Washington Post and Times Herald} reported “Sen. Wayne Morse (D-Ore.) yesterday denounce[d] what he called the ‘blood baths’ taking place in Cuba under the new Fidel Castro regime.” The article quoted Morse, the Chairman of a Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Latin American Affairs: “[The] execution of political opponents ‘is not the way for the leaders of the new regime in Cuba to win the support of free men and women around the world…”’ [he] pleaded

\textsuperscript{19} 105 Congressional Record, January 20, 1959, 914-915.

\textsuperscript{20} Ironically Senator Wayne Morse was one of two senators to dissent on the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.

\textsuperscript{21} 105 Congressional Record, January 20, 1959, 924.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
with the new leaders to ‘withhold executions until emotions calm’ and trials can be held in a better atmosphere.”

Objections to the revolutionary government could be found in both congressional houses. On January 19, 1959, New York Representative Katharine St. George voiced concern in a tone similar to that of her colleague from Oregon. Referring to the public’s adoration of Castro immediately following the revolution, the Congresswoman said “as these startling errors of judgment of ours keep recurring, one begins to believe the words of the late Senator Huey Long… ‘you can sell any ideology to Americans by calling it Democracy.’” The rising tensions were a potential disaster for the members of the American Colony. With forces in both Congress and the U.S. media challenging the new Cuban government, the potential loss of place in Cuban society for members of the expatriate community was fast becoming an ominous possibility.

Many within the American Colony understood that this hostile congressional rhetoric glossed over the differences in traditional jurisprudence between the two societies, and, like the U.S. press corps, failed to note positive changes in Cuban society enacted in the first month of the revolution. Indeed, nearly every mention of Cuba and Castro in the Congressional Record in the second half of January of 1959 included a critique of the military tribunals and execution of Batista supporters. Even Representative Porter of Oregon, who defended the trials held by the new Cuban government against accusations by others on Capitol Hill, conceded, “I believe their procedures should be much improved.”

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24 105 Congressional Record, January 17, 1959, A274.

25 105 Congressional Record, January 26, 1959, 1153.
Mass executions were not always considered an ethical or moral violation by the United States government. Congress had backed far more violent and less morally digestible expressions of justice in other countries and even within Cuba itself over the six decades before 1959. Yet this contradiction was not helpful to the U.S. citizens who had found a home on the Caribbean island, this Cuban government presented a challenge to U.S. political and economic authority that alarmed many in Washington. More significantly this was Cuba, previously one of the United States closest allies geographically and politically, completely within the U.S. sphere of influence. As early as January 1959, the signals coming from Havana caused panic on Capitol Hill. Many in Congress were concerned about where the new Cuban government stood, and was headed. Until loyalty was assured, the revolution would be held to unreasonable standards by the United States. Relations between the United States and Cuba, and by consequence the fate of the American Colony in Havana, would suffer from these inflexible standards.

Not every U.S. voice was aligned against the policies of rebel justice by the new Cuban government. In the first weeks of the 1959 Herbert Matthews of the New York Times noted “Bat [Batista] tortured and killed as many as 20,00 Cubans…what did the senators and editorial writers say at that time—or the State Dept [Department], or the Amer [American] Ambassador in Havana?... So the history of Cuba began on Jan 1, 1959 as far as all these Amers [Americans] are concerned.”26 He continued, “I honestly believe that in all my 36 years of newspaper work I’ve never seen a worse job of journalism than has been done on Cuba in the last 3 weeks.”27

27 Ibid.
Matthews saw what the majority of U.S. onlookers did not. He wrote in his personal notes that both the historical context and the larger picture were essential to evaluating the actions of the revolutionary government. “The point is that a lot of things happened in Cuba in the last 3 weeks – nearly all wonderful things – but what has the amer [American] press got – nothing but executions.”28 Even as an outsider, Matthews was able to see and speak through the complex lens shared by many within the American Colony. He, and they, remembered, or internalized from firsthand accounts, the massacres that bloodied the streets of Havana only twenty-five years earlier. As relations continued to deteriorate, Colony members probably hoped that voices like Matthews triumphed so that their existence in Cuban society would remain viable. Yet the dominant discourse in the United States seemed blind to this history, spelling tragedy for these U.S. expatriates.

In January 1959, many in the American Colony were still celebrating the collapse of the Batista government. When the issue of executions began showing up with a kind of ritualized repetition in the U.S. press, the papers of the expatriate community seemed to begin to take seriously a need organize the American Colony for a response. Obviously they had significant self-interest in the maintenance of good relations between their homeland and their current home. Members of the community likely understood that they had the background, the information, the context and the connections to educate their fellow citizens living in the United States about the complex historic antecedents to “Rebel Justice” enacted throughout the island. By publicizing their collective knowledge, community members could ensure their stake in Cuban society.

28 Ibid.
Responding to the criticism from the United States, the media of the American Colony made the complexity of the executions clear to their expatriate readers. While not directly calling upon readers to educate citizens in the United States, it is likely that the editors of these newspapers hoped their words would reach and mollify an increasing anxious U.S. public. On January 8, 1959 the Times of Havana posted an editorial contextualizing the government-sanctioned executions, “Never has there been a revolution in the history of the world where such incidents of summary justice have not occurred. The history of the United States itself shows many instances where undesirables were eliminated by drumhead court martials.”29 This editorial was both critical of the executions and committed to offer a balanced historic context for these acts. A more strident response to criticism abroad could be found in an editorial titled “Voice of The People,” which defended the large-scale capital punishment enacted by the Cuban government as the will of the people. “Fidel Castro and his policy of rebel justice for accused war criminals received a resounding vote of confidence yesterday. It echoed in an affirmative shout across the Palace Square and through the adjacent streets when Castro asked all those in favor of continuing with the trials and executions to raise their hands.” The article closed with strong affirmation: “without a shadow of a doubt…the people are solidly behind him [Castro].”30

That same day the readers of the Washington Post Times Herald woke to see the Senator from Oregon refer to the killing of Batistianos as a “blood bath.” Mary Louis Wilkinson wrote in her weekly column for the Times of Havana, “This was the first revolution that had not been followed by an aftermath of rioting and rampaging, of utter

uncontrollability."  The community remembered the streams of blood that followed the overthrow of President Machado and, in contrast, apparently viewed the violence of 1959 as controlled, orderly and perhaps even justified. It was almost certainly the collective hope of the community that these executions would not lead to a hostility towards the new Cuban government by the U.S. government that could threaten the existence of the Colony.

The framing of the executions in the expatriate coverage, as well as their significance was sympathetic toward the difficult position of the revolutionary government. On January 22 the *Times of Havana* headline read, “War Trials Begin Today After Roar of Approval Heard Round the World.”  On the same day, in the same paper, the author who wrote under the *nom de plume* “An Old Habanero” explained that the executions of these war criminals did not represent a revolutionary government acting without the consent of the people, but in fact reflected the desires of those people. “The people carried signs, thousands of signs, banner and posters all demanding the trial and execution of ‘war criminals’ of the Batista regime.”

Other articles went further, commenting on the apparent restraint shown by the revolutionary government. According to a January 17 *Times of Havana* article, “a number accused of being pro-Batista…have been freed for lack of evidence.” Fidel Castro was paraphrased as estimating that “no more than 450 Cubans will be executed for ‘war crimes’ committed during the regime of Fulgencio Batista.” The article pointed out that this number was less than the 450 bodies “found in the bottom of an abandoned mine shaft” killed in a


single town by agents of Batista with many bearing “evidence of torture.”34 Some pieces revisited the horrors of life in prison during the Batista presidency. One article opened, “Life in Batista’s prisons had its gentler aspects, such as indirect music. But when the music stopped, the screams began.”35 Other works detailed the atrocities committed by the very men being put to death before the revolutionary firing squads.36 The arguments voiced in these articles stood in sharp contrast to the U.S. media and the Congressional representatives who hardly acknowledged the tyranny of the former regime while vehemently condemning “rebel justice.”

Clarence Moore, the editor of the Times of Havana, decided to take action to preserve the relationship between the United States and Cuba, thereby salvaging the viability of the American Colony. Moore set off for Washington in the winter of 1959, hoping to gain an audience with Congress, to address the “confusion and misunderstanding on both sides.” He envisioned himself as improving what appeared “to be strained relations between the two nations” he loved.37 Reflecting on Moore’s efforts, on February 7, 1959 the Times of Havana published an article that endorsed Castro. Delineating the qualities essential to a Cuban leader, the editorial concluded that this leader should have “fought and lived for his country…he must be intelligent, imaginative, creative…he should be of a good family…a young lawyer with vision…there is only one candidate: Fidel Castro.”38 Referencing the upcoming trip to the United States by Castro, another editorial read, “he will get a huge

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welcome as a liberator which he deserves, and he will see for himself how much the United States appreciates freedom and those who win it.”

There was no lack of patriotism for the United States among this perspective of community members, but they understood in the winter of 1959 that to preserve the distinction of U.S. citizens living in Cuba, the U.S. public and U.S. government would have to accept this new revolutionary Cuba.

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Chapter II
The Prisms of Spring: Reframing Interstate Power Dynamics

In April 1959 members of the American Colony were convinced that the trip by
Prime Minister Castro to the United States could ease relations between Havana and
Washington. This was viewed as an opportunity to put a charming face on a revolution that
some within the Colony felt had been misrepresented and misunderstood by the public, the
press and the government of the United States, and thus was threatening the expatriate
community. These Colony members hoped the trip would allow their fellow citizens living in
the United States to view the Cuban leader as a champion of his people rather than a threat to
U.S. interests.

Unfortunately many members of the Colony were unaware of the resentment already
held by the Eisenhower administration toward the Cuban leader. On March 26, 1959, a Times
of the Havana editorial declared, “We recognize that the country’s responsible leaders are
dedicated to the well-being of their country and pledge that along the road to reform, Cuba
will have the full support of the entire democratic world, including the United States.”40 That
same day, behind closed doors in Washington, the National Security Council met to discuss
“disturbing developments” in Cuba. As Central Intelligence Director Allen Dulles informed
the group, “The Castro regime is moving toward dictatorship…Cuban business interests are
very concerned about his actions, his wild statements continue, and there is even some talk of

a counter-coup.” President Eisenhower asked whether the Organization of American States (OAS) could or would take action against Castro. Secretary of State Christian Herter, recently promoted due to the colon cancer that would soon claim the life of the former Secretary John Foster Dulles, replied in the negative. The President continued, “In that case, could we not refuse to give Castro a visa?” referring to the upcoming trip to the United States planned by the Cuban Prime Minister at the behest of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.\footnote{American Society of Newspaper Editors president George W. Healy Jr. was forced to explain his decision for giving a “propaganda platform for a dictator.” He responded, “No apologies are needed for inviting Castro to address us…This man has made news and we should see and hear him—so that we can understand him better, and perhaps have him understand us better.” (“Editors Under Fire on Castro Visit,” \textit{Chicago Daily Tribune}, 16 April, 1959, 10.)} Secretary of Defense Donald Quarles was quick to support the idea, claiming “Castro had already behaved badly enough to provide us with very good reasons for refusing him admission to the U.S.” Again Secretary Herter urged caution against this measure. Director Dulles explained there was “a slow-growing movement against Castro in Cuba, we must be careful not to do anything which would tend to discourage the growth of this movement.”\footnote{Minutes, NSC Meeting, Subject: Discussion at the 400\textsuperscript{th} Meeting of the National Security Council, 26 March, 1959, Eisenhower, Dwight D.: Papers as President, 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box 11, Folder 400\textsuperscript{th} Meeting of NSC, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas.}

No action would be taken to hinder Castro’s visit. However, Eisenhower was out of town when the Cuban president arrived in Washington. Instead Vice President Richard Nixon convened a closed-door session with the Cuban leader.\footnote{“Cementing The Ties of Friendship,” \textit{The Havana Post}, 16 April, 1959, 1.} It was evident that by the third month of the new government, the Eisenhower administration had already begun to abandon a peaceful solution to the rising tensions.

These sentiments of the U.S. Executive Branch were not yet fully comprehended in Havana. In April 1959, during the visit by Castro to Washington, the expatriate press wished...
Castro “continued success on his tour, which has already won him numerous new friends for Cuban and the revolutionary government.”

The Havana Post, the other newspaper published for the American Colony, “share[d] with Ambassador Bonsal the hope that this will be one of the benefits of the visit of Prime Minister Castro to the United States.”

Headlines reflected the Colony’s enthusiasm not only for bi-national relations, but for the stability of its position in Cuban society. “Wild Welcome for Fidel On Arrival in New York: 20,000 Turn Out At Station Hotel,” and “US Understands Justice Of Cuban Cause: Castro,” were splashed on the front page of The Havana Post. On April 18 The Post commented upon the determination by Castro to create a commercial treaty with the United States. The author declared the Prime Minister gave a “favorable impression” and “his words were received with an ovation.”

The Cuban-based U.S. papers emphasized Cuban opposition to communism and all dictatorships. These papers felt that the perceived ideological ambivalence of Castro was the main cause of strife between the two nations. Continuing to pursue his role as mediator, Carl Moore explained, “The Times (of Havana) has tried to do its part in dispelling part of this confusion…” He went on to list all of the actions initiated by new government that would conform to the desires of the United States, calming anxieties about Cuba as a threat to the hemisphere:

44 “Setting the Record Straight,” Times of Havana, 23 April, 1959, 9.
45 “Cementing The Ties of Friendship,” The Havana Post, 16 April, 1959, 1.
46 “Wild Welcome for Fidel On Arrival in New York: 20,000 Turn Out At Station Hotel,” The Havana Post, 22 April, 1959, 1.
49 “We Oppose Communism, All Dictatorships: Castro: Cuban Elections Not More Than 4 Years Off,” The Havana Post, 21 April, 1959, 1.
One that not many would deny is that now in Cuba we have an honest regime that is sincerely devoted to making this island a better place to live for all Cubans. Another is that there are many persons in high positions who are capable, intelligent and dedicated. A third is that Cuba is determined to honor its international obligations. A fourth is that Cuba wants foreign capital...A fifth is that the morale and spirit of the people throughout the island has jumped tremendously in the last four months—mounting criticism from certain business groups notwithstanding. A sixth, and certainly not least, is that the Communist elements, apparently well financed and staffed, are active in various sectors of the economy. Prime Minister Castro recently stated that communism feeds on empty stomachs and misery, and that the purpose of his government is to eliminate so far as is possible these sources of unrest and conspiracy.\textsuperscript{50}

Unfortunately for those Colony members hoping to remain in Cuba, one advocacy group was developing a strong and defiant resistance to the vision offered by Moore. “Mounting criticism from certain business groups” would prove to be pivotal to policy makers in Washington.

It is evident that the politics of the Cold War in large part shaped the U.S. position. Political anxieties were brewing in the U.S. government over the potential loss of Cuba and perhaps other parts of the Caribbean from the U.S. sphere of influence. Representative Edward Borland rose to the House floor on May 6 to express his frustration, “This Nation [The United States] is concerned with the turn of events in our neighboring island.”\textsuperscript{51} On April 10 Senator Smathers of Florida spoke once more to the upper chamber of Congress on Cuba. He was no longer restraining his words. Despite the habitual proclamations by Mr. Castro that he was not a Communist, the Senator was taken aback by the comments of the Cuban Prime Minister on the potential neutrality of the Island in the event of a war between the U.S.S.R. and the United States. Senator Smathers chose to insert two articles into the Congressional Record: “Is Castro Involved in Red Attempt to Pour Ring Around Panama

\textsuperscript{50} Carl Moore, “Footnote To The Headlines: A Long Look At the Revolution,” \textit{Times of Havana}, 25 April, 1959, 3.

\textsuperscript{51} 105 Congressional Record, May 6, 1959, 7585.
Canal?”\(^{52}\) and “Confused Castro Talking Cuba Into Red Orbit—Economy Near Paralysis, But There’s Still Hope.”\(^{53}\) Scolding the Cuban leader on April 20 Wisconsin Representative Alvin O’Konski delivered a speech on the House floor, “Questions Dictator Castro Did Not Answer” while Castro was in the United States. Congressman O’Konski raised questions about Cuban neutrality favoring the USSR and unemployment problems rising in Cuba, and began to compare the Castro regime unfavorably to the “generous” policies of Fulgencio Batista.\(^{54}\) As the revolution was attempting to assert autonomy, Washington grew more visibly concerned.

While concern about Castro’s move to the U.S.S.R. was high, voices on Capitol Hill were not homogenous in their opposition to the new Cuban government. Representative Porter often rose to defend the embattled Cuban leader, “Castro and his top leaders are against communism and all other forms of tyranny.”\(^{55}\) Likewise, Colony members were growing less uniform in their opinions of the new Cuban government. Indeed, a divide was emerging. The editorial writer “An Old Habanero” challenged Castro who seemed committed to appealing exclusively to the “masses…no matter what the cost. In striking at industrialists, manufacturers, sugar mill owners, holders of real estate and all other sources of investment capital he [Castro] is rapidly freezing up those very monies that are necessary to the country for…advancing prosperity.”\(^{56}\)


\(^{54}\) 105 Congressional Record, April 20, 1959, 6364.

\(^{55}\) 105 Congressional Record, May 18, 1959, 8353.

While there were various positions evident in both countries, there was an undeniable and growing divide between Colony members and their government and media representatives in the United States. As spring came to a close, the hostility between the two nations had intensified. The hope that the trip by Castro to the United States would humanize the revolution for U.S. policy makers and the U.S. public had not been realized. However, the spirit and hope of the American Colony for peaceful and positive relations had yet not succumbed to the tensions that were clearly rising with the temperatures in the summer of 1959.
Chapter III
Storms of Summer: A Colony Losing Sense of Place

Panic grew in the American Colony as the Cuban government passed the Agrarian Reform bill in May 1959. U.S. expatriates understood that this would be seen as a challenge to U.S. property owners in Cuba and cause concern in Washington as to the direction of the revolutionary government. Many within the Colony had become disillusioned with the prospects of harmony between the two nations and they prepared to relocate outside of Cuba. Others continued to maintain their place in Cuban society. Many of these Colony members chose to express the actions by the revolution as attempts to ameliorate the suffering of a populace that had been ignored for the entirety of Cuban history. While condemning the verbal and written attacks against the United States by Cubans, these Colony members were equally quick to denounce moments of U.S. antagonism. The job of convincing their fellow expatriates of the acceptability of the Cuban government and the viability of relations, a job that had been assumed by the Colony newspapers, was proving increasingly difficult as attacks from both nations against the other allowed Cubans and U.S. citizens alike to dehumanize one another.

The Agrarian Reform law, which limited the size of farms to 3,333 acres, was signed on May 17 and put into effect on June 3, 1959. Within six weeks, on July 16, Cuban president Manuel Urrutia, who enjoyed substantial popularity among community members
for his stance against communism, resigned. The Cuban summer was opening with a radical turn of affairs.

The U.S. Ambassador to Cuba was Philip Bonsil. Before being transferred to the Cuban consulate, Bonsal had served as Ambassador to Bolivia. Bonsil was a career diplomat from a family of diplomats. His father, Stephan Bonsal had served the United States abroad in-between stints as a Pulitzer Prize winning newsman who covered the Cuban War of Independence for the *New York Herald Tribune*. Unlike his predecessor Earl T. Smith, Philip Bonsal was not a political appointment. Smith had been a businessman before receiving the post and did not speak Spanish. Bonsal was a serious representative of the State Department, trained in U.S. foreign policy. On January 21, 1959 President Eisenhower made clear, through his appointment of Bonsal, the new Cuban government required a career diplomat; plush political appointments designed to reward political allies would no longer suffice. American Colony member Ruby Hart Phillips explained, “both Cubans and Americans approved the appointment.”

On May 28, 1959, Ambassador Philip Bonsal met with the Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs and its Chairman, Democratic Representative from Alabama Armistead, I. Selden, Jr. The Ambassador knew Selden to be one of the most important men in the United States involved in the precarious relations between the United States and Latin America. Bonsal sat before the Congressional Committee being questioned by Representative Selden about the soon to be signed Cuban Agrarian Reform bill:

> Mr. Ambassador, in connection with this there has been some discussion in the committee on the possibility of including in the Mutual Assistance bill a section, which would make some reference to expropriation or confiscation of property. Do you think the inclusion of such an amendment in the bill

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would be helpful as far as the Cuban situation is concerned? That it might possibly ward off expropriation or confiscation of American property in that area.\textsuperscript{59}

The ambassador did not quite know how to respond. The Representative from Alabama seemed to be asking for advice on whether it was appropriate to pressure the Cuban government to exempt U.S. interests as the Cuban economy was adjusted. Ambassador Bonsal quickly registered that the economic and political autonomy sought by the Cuban government, the main reason he likely believed he had been sent in to replace the unqualified Ambassador Smith, was not the primary concern for the group of men before him. “This is a very difficult question for me to answer…If what you are thinking about in this amendment is leverage of an effective type, I would say probably the answer is no in the case of Cuba and that the political repercussions down there of this kind of thing would be great and adverse.”\textsuperscript{60}

Ambassador Bonsal said he would need a bit more time to organize his thoughts. The subcommittee chairman responded, “It would be well to have your views on that because the committee is considering such an amendment.” The Representative from Georgia, John Leonard Pilcher, spoke the words that the ambassador was perhaps not in a position to utter:

Now God knows I am opposed to any expropriation of property, but as long as there are kids eating out of garbage cans all over Cuba and these big land holdings – call it whatever you want – you are going to have your problems in Cuba right on until you get some way to help the masses of these people. I think this amendment would be the worst thing we could do.\textsuperscript{61}

Recognizing that he was not the lone voice of reason, the Ambassador maintained his courage: “My preliminary reaction went along that line.”\textsuperscript{62} He continued in a written

\textsuperscript{59} “Briefing By Hon. Philip W. Bonsal, United States Ambassador to Cuba,” Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 28 May, 1959, Phillip Bonsal Papers, Box 1, Folder 7, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, District of Columbia.

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
response to clarify his remarks to the question posed by Representative Selden: “We do not, as I understand it, question the right of sovereign governments to expropriate private property…It would be most unfortunate to involve the purposes and objectives of our Mutual Assistance policy in the settlement of these claims. We would lose far more than we would gain.”

As Ambassador Bonsal walked out of the subcommittee, it could not have been far from his mind that the gulf between the United States government and the Cuban government was growing. Cuba was struggling for an independence denied since it became an autonomous state in 1902. Washington was awash with political anxieties that the United States had completely lost control of the situation. Many in Congress, and within the Eisenhower Administration, were determined to muzzle the revolution and bring it back under U.S. control.

Within the American Colony in Havana these changes in policy and personnel did not go unnoticed. Worry over U.S.-Cuban relations intensified rapidly. Increasing numbers of Colony members moved back to the United States and reports on the revolution were tempered in their enthusiasm. Coverage on the exodus of U.S. citizens back to the United States increased in the society pages of the Colony newspapers. Some members of the American Colony explained their departures as occupational transfers, while others offered no explanation. A rapid increase in departures announced in the Times of Havana during July and August 1959 reflected both a mounting frustration with the tension between Washington and Havana and a fear of the unknown that was embodied in the new Cuban government. Doris Frank, who had first come to Cuba from Brooklyn in 1935 at the age of eight with her

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63 Ibid.
family left in June of 1959 with her husband and newborn son. As an American Jew, she explained that just fifteen years removed from the Holocaust many Jews within the American Colony feared the rise of totalitarianism under the new Cuban government.\textsuperscript{64} Feeling forced to choose between two nations they viewed as home, more were beginning to choose the United States.\textsuperscript{65} Despite this concern, the brother and sister-in-law of Mrs. Frank stayed until the following March with their two children as did her parents.\textsuperscript{66}

Coverage of the events that summer was mixed in the expatriate press.\textsuperscript{67} The \textit{Times of the Havana} framed the issue as follows: “The task of reporting the news thoroughly is not always a pleasant one…We would be failing in our duties if we did not adequately reflect the fact that relations between Cuba and the U.S. have grown steadily worse in recent weeks.”\textsuperscript{68} The \textit{Havana Post} and the \textit{Times of Havana} commented upon the growing separation between the two governments. \textit{Times} reporter Henry Goethals wrote on the day of President Urrutia’s resignation,\textsuperscript{69} “Worsening Cuban-American relations hit possibly their lowest point in half a

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\item Interview of Doris Frank by Samuel Finesurrey, January 24, 2013, Telephone.
\item Interview of Doris Frank by Samuel Finesurrey, January 24, 2013, Telephone.
\item Significantly, in regards to the Agrarian Reform Bill, this law might have been a surprise for U.S. citizens living in the United States, this law was far less of surprise to the expatriate community in Cuba. Castro had been advocating land redistribution since his 1953 trial defense, \textit{History Will Absolve Me}. For more see Tad Szulc, \textit{Fidel: A Critical Portrait}, (New York: William Morrow and Company, INC., 1986), 296.
\item When internal disputes between Prime Minister Fidel Castro and President Manual Urrutia caused, at least momentarily, both men to resign, the people took to the streets demanding the return of Castro. In a well-orchestrated power swing on July 17, 1959, Prime Minister Castro resigned denouncing President Urrutia, which forced the Cuban President to resign. Castro returned to his post as was demanded by a massive public demonstration on July 23. The reasoning behind the removal of Urrutia for the U.S. press agencies was tied, at least in part, to his stance against communism. \textit{The New York Times} emphasized this when quoting Castro after the Prime Minister had resigned, “I am not a Communist and neither is the revolutionary movement, but we do not have to say we are anti-Communist just to fawn to foreign powers…the President suspiciously pictures himself as the champion of anti-communism.” (“Cuban Crisis: Castro Ousts President,” \textit{The New York Times}, 19 July, 1959, E1.) While in the American Colony the actions of Urrutia were framed as problematic. (“Cabinet
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century in the wake of the Díaz Lanz testimony before a Senate subcommittee in Washington D.C. in which the former Cuban Air Force commander [who had worked for, and then fled, the Revolutionary government] charged that Fidel Castro and members of his government are Communists.” The author continued, “the newspaper Revolución, official organ of the 26th of July Movement said in a scathing front page editorial yesterday that Cuba is being ‘concretely threatened’ by the United States.” Another article covered the outrage that Castro directed at Secretary of State Christian Herter. Speaking to the OAS in August, Fidel Castro challenged Herter, who was reflecting on a failed expedition of private Cuban citizens attempting to ignite revolution abroad “while in the Americas the need is to speak of hunger.” The Cuban Prime Minister continued that Herter made “no mention of the horror that the tyranny of Dominican strong man Rafael Trujillo signifies.”

The framing of the articles and editorials reflected the growing discontent and fear of the Colony members. Despite their growing ambivalence toward the revolutionary government, the Colony press continued to emphasize instances of solidarity between the Community, the Cuban government and the Cuban people. In July 1959, the Times of Havana reported that “half a million cheering, machete-wielding Cuban farmers, whom Castro described as ‘many more soldiers for the revolutions,’ demanded his return to the top

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Hails Unity As Dorticos Named President: ‘Urrutia’s House’ Coming Tumbling Down,” Times of Havana, 18 July, 1959, 1.) Front-page prominence was placed on the “holding back on the signature of laws passed by the cabinet” by Urrutia and his “[collection of] a $100,000 per year salary, ‘just like Batista’” as reasons for his break with Castro. (“Castro Says Ex-Pres. ‘Bordered on Treason,’” The Havana Post, 18 July, 1959, 1.)


government post,” following his resignation which ushered President Urrutia out of office.

The *Times of Havana* affirmed,

> what we have known all along: that the average Cuban farmer—humble well behaved and friendly—is a credit to his country…The Times was happy to co-operate by granting lodging to a few campesinos. Many others in the colony extended the helping hand of friendship. It was not a matter of politics—just a way of reciprocating for the warm hospitality always available in the interior of Cuba.\(^{73}\)

Many American Colony members, while expressing friendship with the Cuban farmers, also tried to project a strong sense of cohesion that persisted between their community and the Cuban people.

Another editorial accused the United States Senate of turning the Díaz Lanz hearing into a “three-ring circus,” thus increasing the recent “venomous criticism” by Cubans against the United States government. An opinion piece read, “Nevertheless, it is our firm conviction that the traditional friendship between Cubans and Americans will overcome these obstacles.” The piece ended with a plea for “officials on both sides of the Florida straits [to] refrain from rocking the boat.”\(^{74}\)

Because their numbers were growing thinner as 1959 dragged on, it is likely that the editorial boards of these papers wanted reaffirm to their fellow expatriates that this was the Cuba they called home, these were still the Cubans whom they considered their friends. By assuring the American Colony of its place in Cuban society, they were encouraging the continuation of the Colony itself. Together, the community of expatriates could advocate for a role in this rapidly changing Cuba, and perhaps to challenge public perceptions of the new government in the United States. However, if their numbers continued to dwindle, their collective voice would undoubtedly weaken.


The *Times of Havana* took on a parallel task of trying to reaffirm the rapport of Cuba and the United States to the Cubans themselves. It did this by attempting to steer journalists in the Cuban press away from attacks against the United States. “The Times of Havana is distressed to read frankly anti-American editorials in the usually friendly Cuban press.” Eager to affirm the sturdy relationship between Cubans and people of the United States, the editorial sought to reassure readers “that the friendship that exists between the peoples of Cuba and the U.S. is too deep to be jeopardized by any such attacks in the press.” Hyperbolic statements of this international friendship reflected strong concern about the longevity of these bonds.

Meanwhile, back in the U.S. during the summer of 1959, many papers engaged in a full-scale campaign to vilify the Cuban government. Referring to the Agrarian Reform law, one editorial summarized, “If Dr. Castro really wants to attract American capital, stimulate private investment in industry, and increase the living standard of his people, he is certainly on the wrong track.” Referencing the resignation of the moderate president Manuel Urrutia, *The New York Times* emphasized how Cuba was falling from the geopolitical orbit of the United States. *The Times* also judged the crises between Urrutia and Castro as reaching “the climax in tension…when Dr. Urrutia recently reiterating his opposition to communism, accused the Communists of damaging Cuba.” *The Wall Street Journal* joined the journalistic assault:

For some time Fidel Castro has been the hope not only of many Cubans but also of many in this country who thought that at last Cuba—and maybe other Latin lands—was going to get a decent

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government. This weekend Mr. Castro smashed those hopes. Castro’s Cuba after nearly seven months of his rule, is a shambles.\(^{78}\)

The mere acceptance of Communism by Castro, even while he did not embrace it, drew the ire of the U.S. press agencies.

The continued existence of the shrinking American Colony was also challenged by an increased anxiety expressed on Capitol Hill about the direction of the Cuban government. Worse still was a growing concern about the effects of the Cuban revolution beyond the Cuban borders. On July 13 Representative Brazilla Reece detailed just how serious the situation was when she explained that Cuba “has become dominated and is being run by Communists…it seems that if he [Castro] is not a Communist, he is being used by communists, and the results are the same. Fidel Castro has been [an] absolute dictator since January 1, 1959.”\(^{79}\) Putting the problem in a global context the Congresswoman continued,

There are many people who believe that the United States is being challenged in this hemisphere by Russia, and it behooves us to take necessary steps to keep this hemisphere free. The recently enacted Cuban agrarian reform law could well be a deliberate Communist effort to block the flow of American capital to all Latin America, create eventual chaos, and soften the hemisphere for communism.\(^{80}\)

A week later Olin Johnston addressed his fellow Senators, expressing his fear of the expropriation of U.S. property on an even larger scale than was currently being proposed by the Cuban government. “The Cuban situation might well develop into a pattern to be used in the future by any nation involved in even a small revolutionary movement, to seize for its own use the properties of our U.S. citizens in that particular country. It is well to remember that U.S. foreign investments in Latin American countries now total over $12 billion.”\(^{81}\)


\(^{79}\) 105 Congressional Record, July 13, 1959, 13236.

\(^{80}\) Ibid.

\(^{81}\) 105 Congressional Record, July 14, 1959, 13967.
According to many in Congress and within the U.S. press, not only the loss of Cuba from the U.S. sphere of influence, but the entire hemisphere was at stake.

Aware of the growing friction between the Cuban revolution and many Washingtonian policymakers as well as many U.S. based journalist, elements of the American Colony searched for a means to reconcile these forces before hostilities permanently destroyed its way of life. In the late summer of 1959, one issue seemed to rekindle the hopes of those within the American Colony seeking reconciliation: cultivating U.S. tourism to Havana. The Cuban government was joined by the expatriate community in a campaign to encourage U.S. citizens to experience all Cuba had to offer. The *Times of Havana* admitted its involvement in building the tourist industry. “One of the cornerstones of the editorial policy of the *Times of Havana* has been to encourage and promote tourism in Cuba.”82 To the American Colony, tourism seems to have signified a potentially fruitful and mutually beneficial relationship between the United States and Cuba. If they could entice U.S. citizens to visit, vacation and build memories and experiences on the island, the link between the United States and Cuba would be fortified. The heavy traffic of tourism could function as a trans-national insurance policy for these expatriates. If tourism was lucrative, their bi-national identities would be secure.

In August 1959, the Cuban government announced a $200 million investment in tourism. The American Colony almost certainly breathed a collective sigh of relief. The pressure to choose between home and homeland loosened just a bit.83 When it learned that Cuba would be hosting the American Society of Travel Agents in October, the convention

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brought with it a new hope for relations.\textsuperscript{84} This community of expatriates in Havana had survived a stormy summer. It began preparations to ensure the lifeline between Cuba and the United States would not be a failure. This travel agency convention would be a dazzling success; it needed to be.

\textsuperscript{84} Franklin, 22.
CHAPTER IV

Hemingway

Ernest Hemingway sat at the Floridita staring into a tall daiquiri. Perhaps the most famous U.S. expatriate in Cuba, he often retreated to this Havana club to drink away the recurring arguments with his wife Mary. He had only recently returned to Cuba, his home of twenty years. Thronges of fans and reporters met him at José Martí International Airport. Asked what he thought of increasing U.S. hostility toward the island, he kissed the Cuban flag and spoke with raw criticism of U.S. policy. New York Times reporter Herbert Matthews, a friend of Hemingway, wrote his colleagues at the paper, “Ernest Hemingway is still the great hero of the Cuban people. He is staying at his home [in Cuba] working as a deliberate gesture to show his sympathy and support for the Castro revolution. He knows Cuba and the Cuban people as well as any American citizen. I was glad to find that his ideas on Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution are the same as mine.”

A loyal U.S. citizen, Hemingway and so many others watched with frustration as relations between the United States and Cuba began to deteriorate. In the past Hemingway had aggressively thrown his reputational weight behind the interests of the U.S. government. During the rise of fascism in Europe he organized a pro-U.S. private intelligence network in Cuba to counter one formed by the pro-axis groups on the island. He did this with the permission and eventual support of then U.S. Ambassador Spruille Braden. Now, however, he was compelled to voice his support of the Cuban revolutionary government. In a letter to

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United States General Charles T. Lanham, Hemingway insisted, “I am a good American and have been to bat for my country as often as most—without pay and without ambition. But I believe completely in the historical necessity of the Cuban revolution.”

Hemingway had been married in Cuba, had many Cuban friends and actively supported the ousting of Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista. Hemingway even played baseball on a local team with Dr. José Luis Herrera who would join the new Cuban government. After the assumption of power by the revolutionary government, Hemingway announced, “the Cuban people now have a decent chance for the first time ever.” As hurricane season approached in the second half of 1959 there seemed to be hope swirling in amongst the winds of autumn. Perhaps relations between the two nations were on the upswing.

The devotion Hemingway exhibited toward Cuba was reflected throughout the American Colony. U.S. expatriates living in Havana expressed loyalties to both nations. This balance, however, became far harder to sustain by October 1959. The travel agency convention represented, for many of these American Colony members, an opportunity to calm the tensions of the past nine months and build a strategic economic basis for a shared future. In the eyes of the American Colony the problems between the two nations would dissipate through a groundswell of person-to-person interactions. If they could just entice these travel agents with the best version of Cuba, tourism would increase, political strains would ease and the U.S. community living in Havana would not be forced to choose between home and homeland.


CHAPTER V
Tourism in Hurricane Season

The fall of 1959 began with optimism for the community. On September 4 Ambassador Bonsal and Fidel Castro sat down for five to six hours for a much-anticipated conversation on U.S.-Cuban relations. On October 8 the Times of Havana reported that the U.S. Ambassador met with Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl Roa Garcia for close to an hour. It seemed as if the storms of summer had been weathered. The news improved further when it was confirmed that the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) would be coming to Cuba.

A large number of community members knew this was an opportunity to impress a group vital to bolstering tourism on the island. Arm-in-arm, the Cuban government and the American Colony set to work. They organized volunteers from the Colony to “offer their cars and their time to aid with chauffeuring the wives of the ASTA convention members.” They were joined by delegates from the Canadian embassy courted the group of tourist experts while Ambassador Bonsal prepared to host the visitors at the Country Club. The guests were invited to Catholic mass in English, the women amongst them encouraged to attend


89 “Bonsal and Roa Chat For Hour,” Times of Havana, 8 October, 1959, 1.

90 “Volunteers Needed For ASTA Meet,” Times of Havana, 8 October 1959, 7.

musical performances at the Women’s Club. Representatives of the Mothers Club, the Lyceum and Lawn Tennis Club, and the Menorah Sisterhood attended planning meetings to determine how they would graciously entertain the spouses of ASTA members. An editorial in the Time of Havana expressed with anticipation the excitement that could be felt throughout the Capital city: “the big day has arrived, and delegates to the 29th Annual Convention of the American Society of Travel Agents began registering in Havana today for a week of festivities and a careful look at the new Cuba.” Appealing directly to the new visitors, the piece continued, “Enjoy yourselves and come back often. You will always receive a typically warm Cuban welcome.” On the cover of the paper that same day an advertisement read “Asta, We Love You.” Airline companies, beer and cigarettes corporations, posh hotels as well as Reader’s Digest South America, realtors, and producers of condensed milk all made sure to buy up ad space welcoming the travel agents.

The Cuban government was fully committed to ensuring the success of the ASTA convention. The Cuban “revolutionary government, its people, its hotels and tourist promoters today have one sole thought and one purpose: ‘Welcome, ASTA, to Cuba.” The agents were to be accommodated at some of the most elite hotels in the city including the Hotel Nacional, Havana Riviera, The Havana Hilton, and The Capri. A 1.5 million dollar

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95 Times of Havana, 17 October, 1959.


renovation of the airport terminal was rushed to completion in time for the arrival of the group. The police coordinated with translators, office personnel and the Boy Scouts, all of whom sported ASTA badges. Cash registers were filled with “tourist dollars” and an award was given to a local bartender for creating the best “ASTA Cocktail.”

The Cuban Tourist Commission bought full-length advertisements in the expatriate papers that read, “Welcome, Amigos.” As one headline so aptly noted, “Things Are Looking Up.” And they were. The Cuban government and the Cuban people were working in conjunction with the American Colony to convince this vital group of the Island’s virtue. This group of travel agents could ensure the success of tourism in Cuba and thus the continued friendship of the U.S. and Cuban Governments. So when Colony members took to their beds on the night of October 20, with four days of the convention remaining, the members of the American Colony had reason to be ecstatic. It seemed as if the Cuban government was truly committed to improving relations with the United States, securing the tenuous place of the American Colony within revolutionary Cuba. Things were indeed looking up, that is, of course, until things began falling from the sky.

On October 21, 1959, former Cuban Air Force Chief Pedro Luis Díaz Lanz took off in his plane from the United States and flew over Havana. This was the same Díaz Lanz who had accused the Cuban government of being run by communists in front of the United States Congress just a few months earlier. What was dropped from his plane is contested. What is


100 *Times of Havana*, 17 October, 1959.

known is that forty-five people were injured and two were killed. In the next few days the work accomplished between the American Colony and the Cuban government would be near completely undone. *Revolucion*, the “official voice of the 26th of July Movement,” led with a story entitled “The Airplane Left from the United States.” Prime Minister Castro called for a massive rally to show strength against “bombings of Cuban soil from U.S. bases.” In the lead article for the *Times of Havana* Henry Goethals reported, “Bombardments [verbal from Castro] of recent days have made members of Havana’s substantial American Colony a bit jumpy. They’re not used to shot, shell and hot words flying across the Straits of Florida.”

The American Colony grew tense. Some within the community tried to reassure their fellow community members that this was “a moment of extreme emotion which […] I think] will soon pass.” Others were not so confident. One American resident who had observed the massive rally staged in protest of the U.S. based attack expressed a more general unease, “For yanks who have called Cuba home for many decades and have always considered Cubans as virtual half-brothers, the week’s events were deeply puzzling and touched with disbelief.” Alongside their Cuban neighbors, large segments of the American Colony had just spent weeks preparing for what many considered the last best hope for improved relations between Washington and Havana, only to watch it slip away through weak or

102 Franklin, 23.


104 Henry Goethals, “Pueblo Answers Fidel’s Call In Rally Protesting Planes; Yanks Hope For the Best,” *Times of Havana*, 26 October, 1959, 1.


106 Ibid.
unenforced airplane regulations on the part of the U.S. government and extremely bitter rhetoric in response by the Cuban Prime Minister.

This rhetoric rattled many within the American Colony. Some had lived in Havana for decades, taken Cuban spouses, made Cuban friends and sent their children to schools with Cuban classmates. Now the leaders of this nation spewed hatred toward the roots of this American Colony. Resident J. Bruce Swigert painfully recalled the shift. He had been “delighted when Castro arrived in Havana” and “actually sent a small contribution to him in the Sierra Maestra.” Yet as the tone of the government changed, he noticed, “those who criticized the U.S. or denounced Americans were praised.”107

A prominent member of the Jewish Community in Havana, originally from Belarus, who granted this author an interview on the condition of anonymity, remembered the reactions of her close Jewish friend from the United States. Her friend, like Swigert and the overwhelming majority of the U.S. community in Havana, originally sympathized with the revolution. But the chants of “Cuba Sí, Yankee No,” bore a profound effect on the increasingly precarious relationship this young woman had with the revolution and the Cuban people. It would not be long before she and her family departed from the island.108

This shift did not happen over night. It had been building for months. For members of the American Colony in Havana, the foundational October Crisis was not in 1962, better known in U.S. textbooks as the Cuban Missile Crisis, but in 1959. October 1962 marked a significant and highly publicized moment of political crisis at a time when most knew where they stood. October 1959 launched a crisis of identity, place, community and belonging.


108 Interviewee will remain anonymous due to mutual agreement by Samuel Finesurrey, June 6 2012, Havana, Cuba.
After struggling to salvage for what many of them had been their only home for decades, the members of the Colony suddenly found themselves subject to attacks. Many, perhaps naively, had hoped for an international compromise between Cuba and the U.S. for ten months so that they could remain in Cuba. While the community was not ready to resign from Cuba, the tenor and landscape of the challenge before them had become far more daunting. The hostility on both sides was more aggressive, and they were stuck in a rapidly disappearing middle ground as two nations charged towards one another with torches ablaze, set to unleash a political conflagration.
CHAPTER VI

The Fall of Hope

Events in the weeks and months that followed the Díaz Lanz raid did little to instill confidence in the American Colony. The hope of retaining home they had fought so hard to preserve seemed more and more unattainable. The Cuban press and government would increase its vilification of perceived U.S. imperial efforts. At the same time the U.S. government was attempting to secure its interests on the island, more openly alienating the Cuban government by attempting to stymie efforts by the revolution to exert its autonomy.

Colony members watched as Ernesto “Ché” Guevara sold the gold Cuba had been saving in Fort Knox and transferred the funds to Swiss and Canadian banks in November 1959. By the end of January President Eisenhower sought the authority to cut the Cuban sugar quota. In February the Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Anastas Mikoyan signed a major trade agreement with Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro. Meanwhile air raids by Cuban exiles flew over the island, destroying Cuban sugarcane fields.109 On March 4, 1960, the Belgium ship La Coubre, which was carrying “forty-six tons of grenades and ammunition” to Cuba, exploded leaving, depending on the source, somewhere between forty-four and seventy-three dead with 206 to 345 wounded.110 This Cuba was quite distinct from the one many of these Colony members had grown up in.

109 Franklin, 23-27.

In April 1960, the Cuban government began the process of expropriating the remaining lands owned by United Fruit. On May 7 Cuba and the U.S.S.R. reestablished relations for the first time in eight years. By the end of that month Cuba called upon the U.S. oil companies operating in Cuba to refine Soviet oil. When the U.S. companies refused, on June 28 Cuban officials ordered the nationalization of those refineries. In response the United States Congress enacted a measure to authorize the termination of the Cuban sugar quota. The Cuban government escalated the stakes by nationalizing all U.S. business and commercial property on the island. On August 6, the Cuban government went a step further by nationalizing all agrarian and industrial ventures that were U.S. owned. The end was clearly approaching the American Colony.

Conversations about the Cuban government within the America Colony had changed dramatically. Critiques of the revolution from within the expatriate community escalated in both frequency and ferocity, paralleling attacks exchanged between Cuban leaders and U.S. officials. Periodically an editorial in the press of the Colony would applaud the United States government for its patience, encourage the Cuban government to reform some policy, or voice sympathy with Cuban people for some tragedy like the Díaz raid. There was, however, no longer evidence much hope within the Colony for the restoration of positive relations between the two governments.

In November 1959, just about a year before the paper closed down, the Times of Havana wrote an editorial declaring its hope “that Cuba will tire of this course of action and get on with the worthwhile projects it has announced.” The next day, in a note to

111 Franklin, 26-27.

Ambassador Bonsal, the Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs Raúl Roa García tried to make it clear that the frustration with the United States was not directed at her people but at her government.

The Cuban people always made distinctions between the official Spain and the real Spain, and hence never confused the Spanish people with the government structure that deprived them of their most fundamental rights and freedoms. Likewise, they have always distinguished between the United States of Cutting and that of Lincoln, and therefore never did confuse, nor do they now confuse, the American people with the power structure…

Yet Colony members were growing disillusioned by the rhetoric of the Cuban government and populace, which had been growing more critical of the U.S. and exploded in its condemnation after the October debacle. They watched helplessly as their lives and identities, within a secure community of Cuban society, were dismantled.

By January 1960 the revolutionary government increased its control over local press agencies provoking reaction from the American Colony. An editorial in the Times of Havana challenged the ethics and integrity of the Cuban revolution with charges of censorship. In a piece entitled “Press Submits To An Indignity”

Two daily newspapers were forced by their employees to publish material against their will. The material in question was a paragraph which says more or less that a specific story is untrue and violates journalistic ethics. Certainly, these employees must realize that they, themselves, are guilty of serious violations of journalistic ethics when they force such a paragraph down the throats of the newspaper management. Freedom of the press protects a newspaper’s right to publish and its right NOT to publish material…We respectfully urge the Cuban government to take the necessary steps to correct this situation.

On January 14, 1960, the headline for the Times of Havana read, “Cuban Press Steps Up Attacks Against U.S.” Washington was now being blamed by the Cuban press for not

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113 Raúl Roa to Philip Bonsal, 13 November, 1959, U.S. Council of Foreign Economic Policy, Office Of the Chairman: Records, 1954-61, Randall Series; Subject Subseries, Box 4, Folder Cuba, Dwight Eisenhower Presidential Library.

controlling the raids being carried out against Cuba. In March, with the explosion of *La Coubre*, the Cuban government charged Washington with sabotage.

Compounding the growing discontent of the American Colony, Cuban officials, who were considered allies to the American Colony, including Treasury Minister Rufo López-Fresquet, were being replaced by officials not “well known in Havana’s Anglo-American community.” With Cuban journalists and government officials attacking the United States government and the removal of Cuban officials who were seen as moderate and friendly, the devastating reality of tensions between home and homeland was becoming alarming clear to Colony members.

The summer of 1960 would offer no reprieve for an American Colony, which was searching for the extension of an olive branch from either side. The voices of the press reflected the dismay of these expatriates. Relations would continue to deteriorate. The community was growing smaller, and less cohesive. Reflecting, on July 11 Vice President of the American Club Gottfried K. “Go” Smith plead with those colonists who remained to eat at the Club’s restaurant: “it is only by patronizing the dining room that we can hope to cut down the substantial loss that we sustain every month…Our overhead and food costs have gone up during the past year and, you must know, our membership has dropped off.” Despite the dwindling size of the American Colony and its more desperate attitude, there was still hope by some in salvaging the relationship between the two nations they loved, and by extension the Colony itself. An editorial on July 18, 1960 expressed this tenor.

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Although it seems awfully late in the day, the Times continues to plead for the ultimate understanding between two friendly peoples. We simply refuse to believe that a historical friendship cannot survive a bad year, and we go ahead on that thesis. The situation between the United States and Cuba requires the patience and attention of our best minds. If democracy is a good product, then it is up to all of us to make it work.\textsuperscript{118}

By October, desperation had set in and many at this point knew it was a matter of time before relations severed. The Havana Post ended Cuban operations on September 7, leaving the Times of Havana as the sole multi-weekly voice for the American Colony. The Times dissolved its operation on November 3, 1960, but not before publishing a sober editorial on the presidential race between Vice President Richard Nixon and Senator John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

The Times of Havana, and independent overseas voice, feels obligated to take a strong stand in the coming elections up home. It is time to stand up and be counted, and the Times wants to be counted with Kennedy and Johnson. There has been a wondrous lack of creative diplomacy in Washington since 1952, and the succeeding years have cost us dearly. The Eisenhower administration has simply not been able to handle the job...The countries that we know will not accept a Nixon wave through a closed window in lieu of fair play...for thousands of us who live in Cuba, the slipshod Washington tactics have fallen far short of the challenge of the ‘50s...We may yearn for the good old days, but they just don’t live here anymore. History is not going to stand still and reminisce while we tell each other that we are decent people... IF you have an investment in Latin America, IF you have part of your heart in Cuba, THEN it becomes your duty to see to it that the Kennedy-Johnson ticket gets elected. And if you cannot vote, then write your relatives and your friends in the States and tell them the facts...From where you live here in this rich island, deep in the grief that 1960 brought you, you have become an expert witness to foreign affairs. Now the world needs your testimony. The Times asks that you do all you can to see to it that Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Johnson become our next chief executives, and may god grant them wisdom.\textsuperscript{119}

The victorious the Kennedy-Johnson ticket would be no more capable of dealing with the Cuban crisis than its predecessors. On April 17, 1961, in Kennedy’s third month in office, nearly 1,200 men, armed and trained by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), landed at Playa Girón to begin what would become known in U.S. textbooks as the Bay of Pigs Invasion. Within seventy-two hours, these forces were defeated as was any lingering

\textsuperscript{118}“Need for Understanding,” Times of Havana, 18 July, 1960, 7.

\textsuperscript{119}“An Editorial,” Times of Havana, 11 October, 1960, 1.
hope that a U.S.–Cuban friendship could be rekindled without violence.\textsuperscript{120} While preparation for the invasion had begun under Eisenhower, the fact that Kennedy’s administration allowed it to be carried out underscored that Washington was not changing its policy.

\textsuperscript{120} Franklin, 40-41.
CONCLUSION

While the story of the U.S. Colony in Havana has been relatively buried in the historic record, for decades historians and political scientists have analyzed the relationship between Washington and U.S. corporate interests extensively. The evidence reveals a strong cooperative relationship between the United States government and its corporate leadership, severely limiting the feasibility of success in the efforts espoused by the American Colony to influence the Eisenhower administration.

A list of priorities for the U.S. stance toward Cuba was filed in preparation for the National Security Council meeting of March 10, 1960. Originally the list read: “A. Guantanamo Naval Base? B. The effect on our relations with other Latin American countries? C. Denial of Cuba to the influence and control of hostile interests? D. U.S. business interests? E. U.S. citizens?” The administration eventually adjusted the list to place the “Safety of U.S. citizens” was placed above “U.S. business interests.” Initially, however, business interests were placed in higher priority, over the safety of United States citizens. If the lives of the average Colony member were initially listed as the lowest concern of the U.S. government, having their interests taken seriously would prove to be an unimaginably daunting task.

On June 23, 1960, a Vice President of the United Fruit Company Sam Baggett authored a report with other leading U.S. businessmen who had interests in Cuba. Collectively recognized by the Eisenhower Administration as “The Consultants on Latin American for 1960,” these businessmen produced a massive report, over fifty pages, enumerating eight central recommendations, all of which would eventually be pursued by the U.S. government against the Cuban government:

1. Join with other American nations in an effort to expose the world the Communist regime in Cuba and help the Cuban people regain their freedom.
2. Send strong note on expropriations to Cuban government with the warning that U.S. expects Cuba to compensate American property owners, as required by international law.
3. Start campaign of “truth” propaganda to Cuban people, via radio and news media, exposing Castro as a Dictator and listing freedoms which have been taken away from them.
4. Consult with other American countries to bring Cuban situation before OAS, condemning Cuba for its aggressions and seeking to impose sanctions under treaties.
5. Impose exchange and trade controls on Cuba, thereby cutting off her dollar build-up, which is being used to purchase armaments.
6. Start action through Department of State for elimination of premium on Cuban sugar, either by taxes or authority for CCC to be sole purchaser.
7. Aid and encourage opposition elements within Cuba to overthrow the present Communist regime and regain internal control.
8. Seek State Department issuance of a White Paper on Cuba indicting the present regime for the suppression of freedoms in the country, and its various aggressions outside the country, which threaten the peace, and security of the hemisphere.122

By the summer of 1960, when this report was issued, the fight for friendship and thus survival championed by the American Colony, while not completely conceded, had already been lost. The corporate influence, along with the geopolitical threat of a neutral or Soviet-leaning Cuba, proved to be an insurmountable obstacle for Colony members hoping for and at times actively pursuing reconciliation. Most had left the island long before the October Crisis of 1962, with many earlier even before the CIA backed Bay of Pigs Invasion in April of 1961. The challenge of the personal relationships between the Eisenhower administration

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and major U.S. business leaders with interests in Cuba was perhaps the greatest obstacle for
the community.

William H. Claflin, President of the Soledad Sugar Company, received a two-page
letter from Secretary of State Christian A. Herter in early 1960 explaining the official
position of the State Department and the Eisenhower Administration on Cuba. The letter was
the longest of the hundreds of letters written by Secretary Herter in the month of February
that could be found by this author in the collection of correspondences concerning the
Secretary at the Eisenhower Presidential Library.123 Secretary of Secretary Herter took it
upon himself to advise Claflin about the policy and progress of the United States with respect
to corporate property being nationalized by the Cuban government.

Harold S. Geneen, President of the International Telephone & Telegraph Corporation,
that had massive interests in Cuba before the revolution, sent a letter on August 26, 1960, to
Postmaster General Arthur Summerfield marked personal "as per our understanding of the
unofficial nature of our discussion. Before a final decision is made on policy and a time set
for its announcement, I still believe that it would be helpful to all concerned if we, as a
group, had an opportunity to discuss it with the president for his complete understanding."124

On August 27, the very next day, the Postmaster General sent his reply,

Your timely and cogent analysis of the implications of the recent Cuban expropriations not only for the
investors immediately affected but also for United States foreign economic policy, has been brought to
the personal attention of President Eisenhower and Under Secretary of State Dillon. The subject of
protecting American private investment overseas has been one of continuing concern to the White
House and the Department of State...Your letter indicates that you and several of your colleagues are

123 Letter to William H. Claflin, 75 Federal Street, Room 1006, Boston 10, Massachusetts., February 17, 1960,
[Chronological File] November, 1959 (1), Box: 8, Folder: [Chronological File] February 1960 (1). Dwight
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124 Letter to Harold S. Geneen of From International Telephone & Telegraph Corporation on August 27, 1960,
from Arthur A. Summerfield Post Master General. Summerfield, Aurthur E.: Additional Papers 1908-1970,
Box: 37, Postmaster General Miscellaneous Correspondence (2), Dwight Eisenhower Presidential Library.
prepared to advance suggestions for additional governmental action in this area, and to set forth possible ways in which private industry can help reduce Latin American aid costs and make that program more effective. I understand that Acting Secretary of State Dillon has arranged to meet with you to discuss any suggestions you have... The solution to this very difficult problem, in my opinion, can only be found by combining the best thinking of the Administration and the leaders of business, such as yourself.\footnote{Ibid.}

The Postmaster General explicitly confirmed the role of business leaders in designing foreign policy. Unfortunately for Colony members, this author found no such official recognition or appreciation of their knowledge as a resource for policy making by the United States government.

The relationship between government and business has been central to U.S. foreign policy in Latin America, as well as throughout the rest of the world. This dynamic has been analyzed, theorized and written about by many distinguished scholars with respect to the geopolitical region and Cuba specifically. This is not news to anyone today. Nevertheless, the intimate interdependence of corporations and U.S. government would have been a surprise in 1959 and 1960 to the residents of the U.S. Colony in Cuba, who were doing everything in their power to secure their place in Cuban society. This was an ambition ultimately disregarded by the Washington power structure.

The Cuban Revolution retained its power and has no diplomatic relations with the United States since. From within the perspective of the American Colony, however, this ending of the story was not obvious until at least October 1959. Many within the community hoped and organized, for their own self-interest and their neighbors’, to ensure that relations between the United States and Cuba would not deteriorate. They advanced awareness and pled for patience and understanding on both sides. These deeply informed, perfectly credible and knowledgeable U.S. citizens who were living in Cuba were systematically ignored by the
Eisenhower administration while the opinions of business leaders operating from afar were actively cultivated. The failure of the American Colony to ensure the survival of its community against the massive weight of political and corporate forces aligned against it was a tragic ramification to be tallied among the countless others that fell victim to the diplomatic divorce of the United States and Cuba.
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