

1-1-2002

# Back to the Future? Canada's Experience with Constructive Engagement in Cuba

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## Recommended Citation

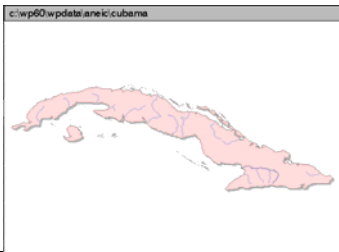
Bell, Michael; Rothman, Eugene; Schiff, Marvin; and Walker, Christopher, "Back to the Future? Canada's Experience with Constructive Engagement in Cuba" (2002). *Institute for Cuban & Cuban-American Studies Occasional Papers*. 21.  
<http://scholarlyrepository.miami.edu/iccaspapers/21>

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**BACK TO THE FUTURE?  
CANADA'S EXPERIENCE WITH  
CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT  
IN CUBA**

**Amb. Michael Bell  
Eugene Rothman  
Marvin Schiff  
Christopher Walker**

**ICCAS Occasional Paper Series  
September 2002**



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Cuban-American Studies  
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Back to the Future?  
Canada's Experience with  
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**by Amb. Michael Bell  
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## CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	5
Methodology & Project Team	5
Methodology	
Project Team	
Background	6
Trade History	
Toward Revolution	
The Roots of Constructive Engagement	10
The Genesis of an Independent Policy	
The Cuban Missile Crisis	
The Pearson Government 1963-1968	
The Trudeau Government 1968-1984	
The Mulroney Government 1984-1993	
The Fall of the Soviet Union	
Current Canadian Policy	15
The Chretien Government 1993-present	
Cuba and The Human Security Agenda: A Rocky Start	
New Initiatives	
The Canada-Cuba Joint Declaration	
Implementation of the CCJD	
Lessons Learned	22
Assessing Construction Engagement	
Bases for Assessment	
The Domestic Value and Cost of an Independent Policy	
The Canadian-American Relationship	
Human Rights	
Trade	
Options & Conclusions	27
Options	
Conclusions-Lessons Learned	
Appendix A: The CCJD	29

- This paper examines Canada's policy of "constructive engagement" with Cuba and its effectiveness.
- Canada's overall declared objective in Cuba has been to encourage its peaceful transformation into a society with genuinely representative institutions, a full respect for human rights, and an open economy.
- Unlike most Western countries, Canada did not end relations following the 1959 revolution. Consequently, the relationship is an interesting example of maintaining relations with a problematic government while trying to change it through constructive engagement.
- While protecting its economic interests, Canada has been acting in accordance with Canadian diplomatic precedents.
- Among Canadian diplomats that deal with Cuba there is ambivalence toward constructive engagement.
- The editorial position of the major Canadian national newspapers disagreed with Canada's policy of constructive engagement and argued that it was morally reprehensible to support one of the world's more repressive regimes with development assistance and investment.
- Human rights and democratic development should not be compromised for the sake of maintaining a dialogue.
- While Canadian diplomats devoted much time to human rights as part of their policy of constructive engagement, consistent results were nearly absent.
- Canadian policy and the resulting trade benefits for Canada have only encouraged and bolstered the Castro regime and have thus not contributed to Cuban prosperity or democracy to any tangible degree.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this paper is to examine Canada's policy of "constructive engagement" with Cuba and to assess its effectiveness. What were its positive outcomes and what were its negative outcomes? What were the costs and benefits of an independent policy? To answer those questions, there first must be an analysis of what Canada has sought to achieve through constructive engagement, followed by an assessment of whether this indeed has been achieved.

Canada's overall declared objective in Cuba has been to encourage its peaceful transformation into a society with genuinely representative institutions, a full respect for human rights, and an open economy. Through its development cooperation and political consultation at all levels, Canada has sought and continues to seek to prepare the way for a peaceful transition when Fidel Castro departs as President.

Canada's formal relations with Cuba commenced in 1945. Unlike most Western countries, it did not end relations following the 1959 revolution. Consequently, the relationship is an interesting example of maintaining relations with a problematic government while trying to change it through constructive engagement.

This paper traces the trajectory of Canadian policy towards communist Cuba, explores recent developments in that relationship and assesses some of the costs and benefits of Canada's current policy of constructive engagement.

## ***METHODOLOGY AND PROJECT TEAM***

The following is a brief description of the analytical approach of this study and the contributions of the respective team members to this project.

### ***METHODOLOGY***

The first stage of this project consisted of a review of the evolution of the Canada-Cuba relationship and the foundations of constructive engagement. This was based on diplomatic and open source materials, and interviews with decision makers. This stage was followed by an analysis of current Canadian policy - its successes and failures - with the intention of assessing the overall effectiveness, and possible future direction, of Canada's ongoing policy of constructive engagement.

### ***PROJECT TEAM***

The Justice Solutions project team was drawn from the ranks of its senior associates in the fields of diplomacy and human rights.

- ***Michael Bell.*** Ambassador Bell served as Canada's ambassador in Russia, the Netherlands and Peru. In addition, Ambassador Bell was the Assistant Deputy Minister for Latin America and the Caribbean in Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. At Justice Solutions, Ambassador Bell is responsible for foreign policy analysis and wrote the relevant sections of this paper.
- ***Eugene Rothman.*** Dr. Rothman, Justice Solutions' President, has been involved in all of the organization's major projects outside of Canada. He was responsible for the research design and editing of this paper
- ***Marvin Schiff.*** Mr. Schiff has worked as a journalist in North America, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. He was the founding Director of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission and was a professor of journalism. Schiff is Vice President for Training and Social Policy at Justice Solutions. He served as the human rights consultant for the project.
- ***Christopher Walker.*** Mr. Walker is a senior researcher and writer at Justice Solutions Ltd. Walker has worked on major Justice Solutions projects in the Middle East, Latin America and Canada. He was senior historical researcher and helped write and edit the paper.

## ***BACKGROUND***

Historically, trade and investment have played important roles in the relationship between Canada and the Caribbean. However, when Fidel Castro took power in 1959, Cuba was hardly what one might call a major Canadian trading partner. Nonetheless, economic ties between the countries stretch back over two centuries, form the foundations for future diplomatic relations and provide its context.

## ***TRADE HISTORY***

Sporadic maritime trade with the Caribbean in the mid-1800s gradually became more established as the Canadian Confederation matured. Early Canadian politicians recognized Cuba's trade potential – Canadian lumber and fish for Cuban sugar - and sent a delegation to Havana in 1866. Cuba's investment climate became more attractive with the defeat of the Spanish in 1898 and the ensuing American invasion. Canadian companies and banks began to more aggressively pursue contracts and investments in Cuba. Trade steadily increased

between the two nations until the end of the First World War, still mostly in Cuban Sugar and Canadian lumber and fish.

In the 1930s, a combination of factors slowed this growth. The Machado dictatorship and the worldwide economic depression, together with closer U.S.-Cuban ties, meant that by the outbreak of the Second World War, the value of annual Cuban-Canadian trade had dropped to around \$1.4 million dollars, almost half the annual average in the 1920s.<sup>1</sup>

Disruptions in trade patterns wrought by the Second World War meant more opportunities for Cuban sugar in the Canadian market and sugar became “a major impetus for developing bilateral trade relations.”<sup>2</sup>

After the war, both Canada and Cuba signed the 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, making trade easier and more significant than ever before. Yet the relative importance of the Cuban market to Canada should not be overstated. In the immediate postwar years, “the value of Canadian exports to Cuba never represented more than 2 percent of national foreign trade.”<sup>3</sup>

Two-way trade in 1960 amounted to about \$20 million (Cdn). There was considerable growth of trade in the 1970s and Cuban officials during that period emphasized repeatedly that the Canadian market was important for them, as Canada was a reliable source for goods and capital.

In 1969 the value of two-way trade was \$48 million and by 1981 it had increased to over \$648 million. The trade balance continued to tip in Canada’s favour, with imports from Canada accounting for between 65% and 80% of the total dollar value of Cuba’s annual trade during the period.<sup>4</sup>

From the mid-1980s on, Canada began to lose some of its market share in Cuba to competitors from Europe and Latin America. By 1994, only 4 per cent of Cuban imports came from Canada, while 11 per cent of Cuba’s exports were destined to Canada. At the same time, however, Canadian firms were starting to invest seriously in the tourism and natural resource sectors. The former was a logical response to the large number of Canadians, currently estimated at more than 200,000 annually, who flee the winters of Canada for the sunny beaches of Cuba.

In the resource sector, the most important venture is the nickel extraction operations of Sherritt Gordon. Nickel accounts for almost

***The value of Canada’s annual exports to Cuba is less than the value of half a day’s shipments to the United States.***

<sup>1</sup> John M. Kirk and Peter McKenna, *Canada-Cuba Relations: The Other Good Neighbor Policy* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1997) 17-18.

<sup>2</sup> Kirk and McKenna, 19.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Foreign Relations, Government of Cuba, in Kirk and McKenna, Table 4.1.



half of Cuba's exports to Canada and is an important foreign exchange earner for Cuba. Cuba was also particularly pleased to find Canadian partners like Canada Northwest Energy (a wholly owned subsidiary of Sherritt) and Highridge Exploration, who have helped convert the major part of the island's power generation to petroleum and whose experience in dealing with heavy crude with high sulphur content has been important.

It is true then that trade, tourism and investment have been, and continue to be, important factors in the relationship between Canada and Cuba. But to put the matter in perspective, the value of Canada's annual exports to Cuba currently is less than the value of half a day's shipments to the United States. Cuban trade, therefore, while significant, did not qualify Cuba as a major Canadian trading partner.

### ***TOWARD REVOLUTION***

Also relevant to Canada-Cuba relations is how Canadians see themselves and their country, especially in contrast to the United States. Canadians believe they are different from Americans, more inclined to liberalism than their neighbours, and feel the need to be seen to be different. Their image of Canada, for example, is of a nation of peacekeepers and, more recently, peace-builders; they see Canada as an "honest broker" among the nations, unlike the United States which they see as a world leader, often with an agenda of its own in world affairs. It is therefore not surprising that public support for human rights and democratic development have held a special place in Canadian foreign policy.

The various Canadian prime ministers and ministers of foreign affairs have each had a unique impact on foreign policy - some greater than others. The nature of their relationships with American counterparts has been an important factor in this respect. However, Canada generally follows the rule of recognizing countries rather than governments and, in accordance with that rule, Canada would probably have recognized whoever was in control in Cuba in 1959.

Throughout the 1950s and into Cuba's revolutionary period, Canada's foreign policy revolved around ensuring economic stability in Cuba. Canada's representatives in Havana realized that an unstable Cuban market was not one in which Canadians would invest. The result was "hands-off" diplomacy and tentative support for the Batista regime.

The Canadian Ambassador, Hector Allard, remarked, in 1957, that:

In this context, Batista has offered the stability demanded by foreign investors and despite the depreciation of his position resulting from the

activities of Fidel Castro he is still the best hope for the future.<sup>5</sup>

As Castro's rebel movement grew and the Batista regime collapsed, the Canadian position remained fairly constant. Neither Cuban leader, however, enjoyed the full confidence of the Canadian government. Allard disagreed with Batista's repressive government. Yet he also did not think Castro possessed sharp political faculties. In hindsight, it appears the Canadian Government miscalculated the Cuban political landscape. Allard's reports to Ottawa contained "poor political analysis," and grossly underestimated the revolution's momentum.<sup>6</sup>

An additional factor in the formation of Canadian foreign policy prior to the revolution was the diplomatic position of the United States. As the Cuban revolution progressed, the United States became less involved in the Cuban economy and more wary of political developments on the island. Nonetheless, Canada did expect the United States to remain involved in Cuba's future to some degree. It therefore saw no need to distance itself from American support of Batista. However, with the passage of time this convergence changed and it is likely that Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's difficult relationship with President Kennedy made the decision to take a different tack from Washington easier.

When Castro finally assumed power in Cuba in January 1959, public opinion in Canada was guardedly optimistic, as reflected in this excerpt from a *Toronto Star* editorial:

If one is to judge by the men appointed to the provisional cabinet, Castro favors a government that is liberal, slightly left of centre, and with a middle-class tinge...Men like this are the elements for a good as well as democratic government of Cuba. Let us hope that in their new power they do not lose their idealism.<sup>7</sup>

After Castro executed leaders of the Batista government, such sentiments waned, both in newspaper editorials and in the Diefenbaker government. Yet in the early stages of Castro's reign, Canada's approach remained cautious. Indeed, Diefenbaker's government essentially maintained the pre-revolution diplomatic status quo, despite the fact that as 1960 wore on, it became clear that Cuba was establishing strong ties with the communist world.

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<sup>5</sup> Hector Allard quoted in *ibid*, 28.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 32.

<sup>7</sup> "Purge in Cuba," *Toronto Star*, January 9, 1959.

## ***THE ROOTS OF CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT***

### ***THE GENESIS OF AN INDEPENDENT POLICY***

Canada was one of the only countries not to sever ties with Cuba after the revolution. In addition, it did not follow the United States' embargo policy imposed in October 1960. The reasons for these positions are threefold.

First, Canada believed that it was protecting its economic interests while at the same time acting in accordance with established Canadian diplomatic precedents. The main

Canadian exports to Cuba were cod and lumber; sugar was the main Cuban export. The Batista government favoured American products with lower tariffs, but as Castro's revolution progressed and the Cuban-American relationship soured, Canada appeared to gain a distinct trade advantage. Canada's diplomatic approach seemed to lend momentum to that trend.

***Canada was protecting its economic interests while at the same time acting in accordance with established Canadian diplomatic precedents.***

As longtime Canadian diplomat Charles Ritchie put it:

Of course, economic interests are the concrete reasons for the policy, but in the background is a philosophical difference as to how best to deal with Communist countries, and our position, though obscurely defined, is basically different from the United States.<sup>8</sup>

Second, Castro did not nationalize most Canadian assets in Cuba. For those that were, compensation was offered and accepted. Canada, therefore, did not consider joining the United States' embargo in its immediate national interest.

But Prime Minister Diefenbaker was careful not to allow his government's position to damage relations with the United States. His government did ban the export of "strategic goods" to Cuba, and he took care not to let Canada be used as a way of circumventing the U. S. embargo:

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<sup>8</sup> Charles Ritchie quoted in Kirk and McKenna, 41.

[Canada aims] to maintain the kind of relations with Cuba which are usual with the recognized government of another country. It is, of course, not our purpose to exploit the situation arising from the United States embargo, and we have no intention of encouraging what would in fact be bootlegging of goods of United States origin.<sup>9</sup>

Third and as mentioned earlier, personal animosity between Prime Minister Diefenbaker and President Kennedy reinforced Canada's independent Cuba policy. Diefenbaker was a staunch nationalist and found Kennedy's approach to Canada condescending.

A further explanation for Canada's position originated in the domestic Canadian political environment of the time. As Diefenbaker expert H. Basil Robinson notes, the "domestic political advantages of adopting a policy independent of the United States were not lost on the prime minister."<sup>10</sup>

### ***THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS***

Canada's Cuba policy faced its biggest test in October of 1962, when the United States discovered Soviet missile sites on the Caribbean island. While some historians suggest that Canadian reaction to the crisis was prudent, balanced and effective, the Canadian public of the time was not so forgiving. Prime Minister Diefenbaker's handling of the crisis likely contributed to his electoral defeat the next year.

Shortly after Kennedy's famous televised address of October 22, Diefenbaker called for United Nations inspectors to examine the Soviet missile sites. In Washington, the prime minister's statement was interpreted, according to authors John Kirk and Peter McKenna, as "a lack of faith in carefully collected evidence by U-2 spy planes and a lack of confidence in Kennedy's ability to handle the rapidly escalating situation."<sup>11</sup>

The Canadian public was likewise unimpressed. On October 24, an editorial in the *Globe and Mail* reflected general Canadian opinion:

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<sup>9</sup> House of Commons Debates, Dec. 12, 1960, quoted in H. Basil Robinson, *Diefenbaker's World: A Populist in Foreign Affairs* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989) 147.

<sup>10</sup> Robinson, 145.

<sup>11</sup> Kirk and McKenna, 61.

Any attempt to sit on the fence in this period of crisis, to remain uncommitted, would be interpreted around the world as a rebuke to the United States and as aid and comfort for her enemies. Such a course is unthinkable.<sup>12</sup>

Yet the Diefenbaker government was slow to react to the crisis and appeared confused throughout. Kirk and McKenna write that as a result, the crisis deepened the rift between Diefenbaker and Kennedy and harmed the Canada-U.S. relationship:

The very fact that Canada continued to trade with Cuba and retained diplomatic relations with Havana [after the crisis] ... was, in Washington's eyes, proof positive that Canada could not be trusted during John Diefenbaker's tenure.<sup>13</sup>

### ***THE PEARSON GOVERNMENT: 1963-1968***

Canada's diplomatic relationship with Cuba did not advance much under Lester Pearson's Liberal government, despite both a Cold War détente and a steady increase in trade.

Early on, the Pearson government concluded in a position paper that "any attempt to isolate Cuba, diplomatically or economically, would probably be unsuccessful." Yet the same position paper acknowledged - and agreed with - Kennedy's earlier request that "the Canadian government would do or say nothing to show support for the Castro government."<sup>14</sup>

There were domestic developments, too, that bumped Cuba from Pearson's priority list. A sluggish economy coupled with emerging nationalism in Quebec preoccupied the Pearson government and drew much of its attention away from foreign affairs.

Throughout the 1960s, Canada maintained its foreign policy position that governments with popular support should receive diplomatic recognition. Yet Pearson's policies toward Cuba showed no effort to strengthen bilateral ties.

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<sup>12</sup> Globe and Mail, October 24, 1962, p.6.

<sup>13</sup> Kirk & McKenna, 63.

<sup>14</sup> "Papers for the Meeting Between Prime Minister Pearson and President Johnson," January 13, 1964, quoted in Kirk and McKenna, 83.

## ***THE TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT 1968-1984***

This period is the most significant in the development of the Canada-Cuba relationship. Pierre Trudeau, elected prime minister in 1968, abandoned many of the previous government's foreign policies, including Pearson's indifference to Cuba. Trudeau favoured a "pragmatic and realistic" approach to foreign affairs, wanting Canada "not so much to go crusading abroad as to mobilize at home our aspirations, energies and resources."<sup>15</sup> That pragmatism included developing "alternative trading relations." His initiative toward Cuba, argue some historians, should therefore be read as "merely another comparatively small facet of a multifaceted strategy of trade diversification."<sup>16</sup>

That diversification, in the form of expanded trade with Asia, Europe, and Latin America, was branded by Trudeau as the "third option," and formed an important element of his foreign policy.

***Reactions from Canadians  
to Trudeau's Cuba visit  
were less than approving.***

In 1970, quite unexpectedly, Canada's relations with Cuba proved useful to defuse domestic tensions. Cuba agreed to take Quebec Liberation Front (FLQ) members who had kidnapped British diplomat James Cross and bargained his freedom for their safe passage out of Canada.

Trudeau's 1976 visit to Cuba was probably the high point of Canada-Cuba relations in those early years, though the reaction from many Canadians was less than approving. His visit was judged to be ill-considered given Castro's military adventures in Angola. His major address to the Cuban public, which ended with a "Viva Castro", convinced many Canadian businessmen that their prime minister was even farther left on the political spectrum than they had feared. While the leaders' discussion agenda did include difficult items such as Cuba's military presence in Angola, these were not allowed to disturb the positive atmosphere of the visit.

Following that visit, however, the Canadian Government decided to make Cuba ineligible for Canadian development assistance. The modest bilateral program was terminated that same year, while funding from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) ended three years later. Even after Cuba had terminated its African adventures it remained ineligible for some years, due to Canadian policies linking development assistance with human rights and good governance. It did, however, receive disaster relief in the summer of 1993 under a special Ministerial decision. (Countries ineligible for aid can receive such assistance on a case-by-case basis.)

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<sup>15</sup> Robert Bothwell and J. L. Granastein. *Pirouette: Pierre Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 13.

<sup>16</sup> Kirk & McKenna, 90.

### ***THE MULRONEY GOVERNMENT 1984-1993***

Washington probably stood its best chance of getting Canadian support for a tougher line on Cuba during the ten years of Progressive Conservative government when Prime Minister Brian Mulroney was courting the United States and the government's only real U.S.-Canada priority was the negotiation of the Free Trade Agreement. Americans involved in those negotiations would have noted that while the Canadian government called itself conservative, it would not be allowed to forget Canada's commitment to social services and social justice.

The most significant policy decision the government took relative to Cuba during that time was probably the decision for Canada finally to occupy the chair that had waited so long for it in the Organization of American States (OAS). Mulroney stated that the OAS was key to hemispheric cooperation, which his government viewed as "integral" to Canada's international interests. That decision brought a new and influential player into the debate on whether the other countries of Latin America should restore diplomatic relations with Havana and whether Cuba should be re-admitted to the OAS.

### ***THE FALL OF THE SOVIET UNION***

The collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s and the struggles of Eastern European countries to break free from Moscow were and remain important factors affecting the leadership in Havana. The chaos, corruption and violence seen there repeatedly appear in conversations and consultations between Canadians and Cubans as something Cubans seemed to want to avoid in their own transition. That and the loss of their national educational and medical systems appeared to loom large in the minds of many Cubans, according to conversations reported back to Ottawa.

With the loss of Soviet economic support in 1989, Cuba faced a painful economic crisis. Living standards dropped sharply and its carefully constructed social infrastructure deteriorated. The Cuban Government's inadequate response to this in Canadian eyes reflected, on the one hand, the policy debate within the Cuban leadership on how far to take reform and, on the other hand, the simple fact that the government was not equipped by experience or training to design an economic recovery strategy. This realization strengthened Canadian policy-makers' belief that they had to renew pressure for economic and political reform and provide training in these areas in preparation for the inevitable end of the Castro regime.

While some progress was subsequently made on the development of economic planning expertise, the pace of reform on the political side was more limited. In 1994 the Canadian embassy estimated that there were 200-300 political prisoners in Cuba and that orchestrated harassment of dissidents continued. However, they

were encouraged that arrests appeared to have declined (although minimally), that a few prominent dissidents had been released and that some had even been allowed to travel.

In terms of the structure, a number of new NGOs appeared that were judged to be genuinely independent of the government and the Communist Party. There was even some evidence of debate within the leadership on the possibility of having more than one centre of political power in Cuba. The focus of these discussions, however, was on events in Eastern Europe and the common concern was that any form of uncontrolled loosening would run the risk of the chaos that followed the Soviet collapse.

At that time, Canadian observers saw little sign within Cuba of organized opposition to the leadership, despite considerable popular unhappiness over the economic situation. According to some Canadian observers, many Cubans seemed to value their achievements in health and education services and appeared concerned that these might be lost in any radical leadership change.

## ***CURRENT CANADIAN POLICY***

### ***THE CHRETIEN GOVERNMENT: 1993-PRESENT***

In October 1993, the Liberals took power under Jean Chretien, ending almost ten years of Progressive Conservative government that had put considerable emphasis on building a more friendly and cooperative relationship with Washington.

Six months after taking office, the new Liberal foreign minister, Andre Ouellet, instructed his department to take a more positive position in the development of relations with Cuba. Canada increased its development assistance budget and signaled its desire to become more engaged through high-level visits, through more public questioning of Washington's Cuba policy, through its vote on the UN embargo resolution and in the Prime Minister's comments at the Summit of the Americas in Miami.

***Chretien's policy initiatives  
were well received in Canada  
and attracted limited  
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Washington.***

To balance this approach, a strong stance was maintained on human rights in bilateral dialogue and through support for United Nations resolutions. These policy initiatives were well received in Canada and attracted limited expressions of concern from Washington.



In 1995, Canada marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of diplomatic relations with Cuba. The modest assistance program focused on economic reform and Cuba was eager to get Canadian expertise in areas such as tax policy, external debt, and investment codes, as well as in the Central Bank, National Accounts and the Finance Ministry.

Following the collapse of its special relationship with the Soviet Union, Cuba's economy contracted sharply. Under some pressure, the Cuban government introduced a number of economic policy reforms, such as expansion of farmers' markets, labour law reform, increased access of farmers to agricultural land; new tax laws, and the liberalization of the foreign exchange regime. On the human rights front, Canada was encouraged by Cuba's apparent willingness to accept some technical assistance from the United Nations following the visit in November 1994 of the UN Commissioner of Human Rights. Yet there was still no indication of any move to multi-party democracy.

On the diplomatic front, Cuba was making overtures to rejoin the Organization of American States. While several other countries had joined Canada and Mexico in supporting this proposal, Washington and a number of others remained opposed.

On the agenda for senior official consultations in February 1995, therefore, were a review of Canadian and Cuban objectives, development cooperation, trade and industrial activity, human rights, fisheries, international security, hemispheric issues, United Nations issues – e.g. reform and Cuban behaviour – removals agreement and visits. Meetings were also held at the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank, the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and with the President of National Assembly.

In the spring of 1995 Ministers Ouellet and Stewart, the ministers responsible for foreign policy and international development, reaffirmed that, with respect to Cuba, Canadian foreign policy interests were advanced by lessening tension in the hemisphere and by consolidating beginnings of a seemingly peaceful transition in Cuba. Canada considered that it had a special role, given its 50 years of continuous bilateral relations. Canada believed it had a real opportunity to exercise diplomacy and to play a stabilizing role.

### ***CUBA AND THE HUMAN SECURITY AGENDA: A ROCKY START***

Lloyd Axworthy was the most recent foreign minister to devote serious time to the Cuba file. His "Human Security Agenda" was well suited to the Canada-Cuba relationship. Axworthy hoped to reform the Cuban economic and political institutions and to train young technocrats to prepare the country for the possible transition to democracy. Implicit in this objective was the need to influence the leaders of the regime to begin to move toward a more democratic model.

The Minister's project did not get off to a very good start. Fidel Castro's appearance in his military uniform at Vancouver airport en route to the Far East a month earlier irritated Ottawa. In February, the Cuban leadership took decisive action to suppress activity of new umbrella group of Cuban activists and dissidents called Concilio Cubano. At least 150 members were held for varying lengths of time and two key figures were given harsh prison terms. The shooting down of two American aircraft owned by the Brothers to the Rescue raised Cuban-American tensions and made Cuba an issue in the 1996 presidential campaign.

Finally there was Raul Castro's hard-line speech in late March, a speech full of rhetoric that went beyond simply attacking independent thinking and efforts to build a civil society. It signaled a genuine crackdown. The Cuban leadership, it seemed, had concluded that it must demonstrate more resolve in stopping growing softening of Communist Party political control.

Dissidents who in the past had spoken with officials at the Canadian Embassy were told to stay away. It proved difficult then for the embassy to continue with many of its ongoing activities and programs including support for activities of human rights activists and academics, who were experiencing increased repression. Cuban officials began applying a much narrower interpretation of trade and investment rules. The embassy had to assist Canadian businesses with commercial irritants and faced new limits on its Canada Fund grass-roots and human rights activities. Nor was it clear for some time if the new repressive atmosphere was part of a longer-term phenomenon. The Canadian Ambassador informed Cuba that the atmosphere strengthened the hand of critics of Canada's policy of constructive engagement and made it difficult for Canada to fight the imposition of the U.S. Helms-Burton law on relations with Cuba.

There was also deep disillusion among other diplomatic missions in Havana. The European Union took a more cautious approach and broke off negotiations on a wide-ranging accord after an embarrassingly unproductive February visit by EU Commissioner Manuel Marin. Mexico then postponed a planned visit by President Castro. A tightening of export credits limited the efforts of numerous European countries, notably Spain, Germany and the Scandinavian countries, to develop tourism projects in Cuba.

### *NEW INITIATIVES*

With this as a backdrop, Cuba's Vice President Lage wrote to Axworthy suggesting a private meeting in Europe to build the relationship. Lage insisted that despite Raul Castro's remarks, Cuba remained very much open for business and committed to economic reform. Axworthy went to the meeting with a number

of objectives: to clarify the Cuban position given Raul Castro's speech, and to emphasize to Lage that recent political messages from the Cuban leadership had a negative impact on the Canadian public and created serious concern about the future of the relationship. Furthermore, he told Lage, they worked against Canada's efforts to limit damage from Helms-Burton by undermining constructive engagement.

While Ottawa detected no turning back on fundamentals of economic or political reform, the political perspective had clearly stiffened. To test the Cuban position, Axworthy outlined Canada's interest to do more work in the area of good governance and sought the Lage's agreement to promote this within the leadership- quite a challenge for Lage since some Cuban leaders saw such interventions as an affront to their sovereignty.

In August 1996, Axworthy reported to the Prime Minister that President Clinton had appointed a Special Envoy to consult with America's allies on future cooperation on Cuba. Axworthy noted that Canada had consistently criticized Cuba's human rights performance and pressed for a positive response. He cautioned however, against being overly optimistic about these initiatives.

Later that year official consultations took place to see if the time was right for Axworthy to visit Cuba. The consultations were described by the Canadian side as positive and productive. A key objective in these talks was to determine the extent of Cuba's willingness to work with Canada on specific projects and activities leading to more openness in Cuban society.

In this respect, some progress was made, even on difficult subjects of human rights and democratic institutions. Cuba agreed to open a structured dialogue on human rights and accepted a proposal for a visit by the Canadian Commissioner of Human Rights, Maxwell Yalden. There were also agreements to exchange judges and law professors, for parliamentary technical exchanges and for use of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights for some activities. Other areas – labour practices, the release of prisoners, democratic reform, and the freeing up of registration practices for Cuban NGOs – proved more difficult. The Canadian side had difficulty on some bilateral issues too – a foreign investment agreement, removals, and compensation for Canadian insurance companies.

The Yalden visit took place in November and Yalden was impressed by the efforts the Cubans seemed to be making. In a letter to Foreign Minister Robaina following the visit, Yalden welcomed his confirmation that Cuba was considering establishing a human rights mechanism. A joint consultative mechanism, said Yalden, was a key element of any plan for a joint Canada-Cuba assistance plan.

This plan could include exchanges between the Canadian House of Commons and the Cuban National Assembly, exchanges relating to the judicial system, and

other activities designed to facilitate the work of Cuban and Canadian NGOs. Yalden recognized, however, that there were limits as to how far Cuba would go on implementing human rights mechanisms that were independent of the government or the Communist Party. Yalden noted that it was difficult to engage in dialogue with Cuba about a problem it didn't even recognize existed.

### ***THE CANADA-CUBA JOINT DECLARATION***

Late in January 1997, Axworthy flew to Havana at the invitation of Foreign Minister Robaina for a two-day visit culminating in the signature of the Canada-Cuba Joint Declaration (CCJD) (See appendix A).

This declaration contained 14 initiatives, the first five of which constituted a significant expansion and diversification of the bilateral relationship. Canada recognized that these were sensitive areas for Cuba and that publication of a commitment to cooperate with a foreign country in these areas was unprecedented. The deal offered a real opening to the practical sharing of Canadian experience and a window on areas of Cuban political life that had previously been closed to foreigners. The declaration was important, yet it was recognized that implementation would be both incremental and gradual.

Washington was not pleased with these new developments. It expressed disappointment that Canada had not placed more emphasis on human rights and democratic development. In particular, the United States argued that Canada should have insisted on some concrete progress such as public commitment to penal code reforms and permission for NGOs to operate more freely. Canada was also criticized for not making conditionality part of its package, as the Europeans did. The U.S. strongly suggested that the Canadian initiative lent legitimacy to Cuba's totalitarian judiciary and National Assembly.

Europe and Latin America, on the other hand, seemed to support Canada's initiative, although there were skeptics. Even some Cuban dissidents were reported to be supportive of the strategy.

Canadian officials were not moved by American concerns, and responded that they appreciated the need for concrete results, but that Canada's approach was an incremental and evolutionary one. Canada had pushed the Human Security Agenda further than any other country, but it was a process that could not be forced much beyond the current pace. It was a policy that was supported by the Cuban government, the Cuban Catholic Church, Canada's former Commissioner of Human Rights and, apparently, many Cubans. According to the Canadian embassy, Cubans had made a choice to accept fewer civil and political rights in return for political stability.

While there may not have been hard conditionality in the Joint Declaration, Ottawa insisted on regular progress reviews. The first of these was held in September 1997. In preparation for that meeting, the Canadian embassy in Havana remarked that Cuba was more of a nationalist state than the classic totalitarian Communist state. Its reading of the leaders on economic reform suggested that they had as a model the Scandinavian countries of the 1970s or Canada's mixed economy.

There was much concern among the same leaders over the threat of chaos and violence and the threat of loss of Cuba's social programs. Counterbalancing this was the fact that political prisoners were still being released only at the regime's whim. Also, there was no real progress toward genuinely representative institutions, although Yalden noted somewhat greater openness at the municipal level.

### ***IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCJD***

A few months later, and with a new ambassador in place, the Canadian embassy reported that the overall implementation of the CCJD was going well and that the Cuban side was generally cooperative. They pointed to the release of father and son dissidents Ishmael and Guillermo Samba, and the holding of a seminar on children's rights, as important results. Cuba, however, was not happy with Canada's planned co-sponsorship of the U.S. resolution on Cuba's human rights record at the UNHCR, or on the lack of progress on some other elements of the CCJD.

In late 1997, Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade undertook its first annual review of the CCJD. It was reported that useful results had begun to emerge, providing a basis for further work. The review identified three clusters of action items within the Declaration's Action List, categorized according to political sensitivity.

Work was well advanced on items 10-14, the so-called "softer side". The Memorandum of Understanding between Health Ministers had been signed and the audio and sports agreements were ready for signature. The food aid was close to exhausted. The only item in this group on which progress could not be reported was item 13, the exploration of possibilities for joint research and cooperation on health and environment projects in developing countries, testimony perhaps to the Canadian International Development Agency's dislike for three-sided projects.

Items 6-9 presented more of a challenge, but results were emerging. Cuba had signed one and would shortly sign another four of the basic conventions on international terrorism as well as considering signing the remaining five. The renewal of the anti-hijacking agreement was signed. The bilateral sports

agreement was ready for signature. Anti-narcotics cooperation continued in a discreet but effective manner. Good progress was made on the economic policy items with tax policy added to the outline and a revised course was being developed on modern business accounting principles and procedures.

Items 1 to 5 of the CCJD were the most difficult, but these had always been things that Canada believed would take more time. Cuba, however, was being very cautious, but the Canadian side was encouraged nonetheless. A draft of the Umbrella Dialogue Fund Memorandum of Understanding was close to completion. A copy of the Hathaway Report on legal and judicial cooperation had been given to the Cubans. Parliamentary technical team visits were under way. The Citizens' Complaints Commission proceeded slowly. Canada was pushing for a follow up visit by Yalden's successor at the Canadian Human Rights Commission, but Cuba was delaying its response. However, the visit of former British Columbia Ombudsman Stephen Owen was approved for February.

Authors of the Department of Foreign Affairs' review cautioned, however, that one should not underestimate the barriers to exchanges on human rights. Canada moved cautiously and anticipated that the seminars proposed for 1998 would allow for more pointed exchanges, especially regarding multilateral human rights instruments.

The winter of 1998-99 proved to be another tense period for Canada-Cuba relations as Cuba took a step backward on human rights observance and Fidel Castro, in a diatribe at the Pan American Games, described Canada as "enemy territory". This was probably as a result of Cuban defections during the games that were held in Canada. Still, those Canadian non-government policy analysts consulted by the Department supported Canada's continuing political and economic engagement.

In September 1999, Canada's ambassador to Cuba spoke at a roundtable in Ottawa and focused on four themes:

- The resilience of the Cuban political system. He attributed it to a combination of nationalism, improved food availability, targeted investment in tourism and electric power, plus greater cohesiveness of political and military elites and the recruitment of younger members to the Communist Party;
- Cuba's renewed activist foreign policy in Latin America, described as "medical diplomacy" for its emphasis on the Cuba's social services, was gaining it new friends in those countries;

- Cuba's miscalculation of deep dismay felt by Canada over the July Four trial of four dissidents, and its resultant anger at the tough Canadian response;
- The importance of continuing Canada's policy of constructive engagement, not to produce dramatic change overnight, but to foster a smooth political transition.

Meanwhile, Ottawa found more and more countries renewing their relations with Cuba and looking with interest at Canadian policy. A number of Latin American countries re-established diplomatic relations with Havana, and an abrupt 180-degree turn in Madrid enabled the European Union to move toward engagement.

## ***LESSONS LEARNED***

### ***ASSESSING CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT***

Even among the Canadian diplomats who dealt with Cuba or deal with it today there is ambivalence towards constructive engagement. Some conclude that it does not work. Others paraphrase Winston Churchill and suggest that it is the worst policy except for all the rest.

The fact is that Canadian and American approaches have different objectives. The U.S. embargo and associated policies aim to end the Castro regime. The Canadian policy aims to moderate the behaviour of the Castro regime and to prepare Cuba for democracy after Castro. When measured against objective criteria, such as effectiveness in achieving stated goals and objectives, both policies appear to be failures.

***Even amongst the country's diplomats who were dealing with Cuba or deal with it today there is ambivalence towards constructive engagement.***

And how does Canadian policy stand up when measured against its own objectives? There are many different opinions among Canadians. A round table organized by the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development in January 2000, brought together academics, NGO representatives, development and foreign policy officials. It produced a broad spectrum of views on the effectiveness of current Canadian policy, its appropriateness, its negative side and the need for changes. It concluded with a number of recommendations:

- Canadian policy toward Cuba should remain positive and constructive, but should be tougher when necessary to advance key objectives;

- Canadian policy should target the generation of young leaders who are likely to lead Cuba through and after transition;
- Canada should push for the legalization of small private enterprise activities as part of an economic reform program;
- Canada should look at the role the Cuban military could play in transition;
- Human rights and democratic development should not be compromised for the sake of maintaining a dialogue;
- Canada should seek to organize a group of like-minded countries from Europe and the Americas to coordinate a Cuba policy;
- Foreign Affairs should increase the consultations with Canadian interest groups.

Canadian media weigh in periodically on Ottawa's Cuba policy, too. An analysis of the press done the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1998, which as indicated above was a particularly difficult time for constructive engagement with Cuba, suggested that most journalists in Canada seemed to agree that poverty and systemic disregard for human rights in Cuba needed to be addressed. Opinion varied, however, as to how to promote change on the island. While some articles favoured the Canadian approach of constructive engagement, the editorial positions of the major national papers generally disagreed. They argued that it was morally reprehensible to support one of the world's more repressive regimes with development assistance and investment.

A further assessment of the effects of Canada's policy follows, and falls into four broad categories- the Canadian-American relationship, human rights, trade, and the value of an independent policy.

### ***BASES FOR ASSESSMENT***

In judging the policy, it is important to assess the sources of information, the crude and refined intelligence, upon which policy is based. As might be expected in a police state where the sources of information available to foreigners, even diplomats, are controlled, bits of intelligence are often transformed into supposedly reliable product. Views from the Canadian chancery in Havana are



occasionally presented as broad views of the entire Cuban countryside. Comments at an Embassy garden party are given the weight of *vox populi* and conversations with selected dissidents are offered as reflections of a national consensus.

Diplomatic reports from Havana based on limited idiosyncratic information, commenting that “Cubans believe...,” “all Cubans feel...,” etc. become part of the background of policy development. And, of course, these kinds of comments can be made by both those supporting Canadian policy and those opposed to it.

Finally, the issue of bureaucratic bias and commitment to an approach that might not be viable, must also be considered in any policy assessment. Does the policy have legs of its own, or is it being kicked across the field by bureaucrats with a policy agenda whose successors may not share their commitment to it? This bureaucratic factor, especially the competition among officials to gain the Minister’s attention for their region, can be very powerful in effecting policy formulation.

Finally, there is the cluster of political factors – how the issue affects the public’s support for the government, the perception of an independent foreign policy and the impact of Canada-U.S. relations on people’s lives and well-being, must also be factored into any policy analysis.

### ***THE DOMESTIC VALUE AND COST OF AN INDEPENDENT POLICY***

Constructive engagement with Cuba is consistent with Canada’s wider foreign policy approach, and as such is seen by many Canadians as a projection of Canadian values and ideals. Moreover, while constructive engagement has caused some international diplomatic friction, especially between Canada and the United States, it is often cited on the domestic front as an example of an independent Canadian foreign policy, a popular cause in a country almost obsessive about national identity. At the same time, Canada’s Cuban community is small and what political influence it does hold is mostly at a municipal level in major centres such as Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. Canadian leaders and policy-makers therefore are keenly aware of the domestic political implications of the policy. The question, then, is whether Canada’s foreign policy objectives- namely a democratic and prosperous Cuba - have been enhanced or restricted by the parameters of domestic politics.

In addition, although trade with Cuba is not substantial enough to warrant a large political lobby, both the nickel and tourism industries are seen to have some interest in the continuance of established Canadian policy.

Canadians are likely more concerned with American reaction to Canada’s Cuba policy than with measuring the effectiveness of the policy itself.

## ***THE CANADIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP***

It is impossible to extract Canada's relationship with Cuba from its larger North American context. In that sense, many view Canada's stance as a running commentary on the corresponding American position. As such, the effects of Canada's Cuba policy have been somewhat detrimental to a U.S.-Canadian relationship that is strong in most other respects. Undoubtedly, the tension created by this diplomatic triangle was greater during the Cold War, when Canada's policy held wider diplomatic, economic and security implications.

Yet while Canada's relationship with Cuba has rarely posed a serious threat to friendly relations with the United States, differences in Canadian and American policies have even very recently caused diplomatic friction between the two countries. Continued disputes have arisen over intelligence sharing, Castro's visits to Canada, and especially over the perceived application in Canada of American law prohibiting trade with Cuba.

An additional factor, one that has only become particularly relevant in the post September 11<sup>th</sup> era, is the impact the Canada-Cuba relationship had on recent Canada-U.S. relations in the area of security and intelligence. While not an overwhelmingly serious issue, this did introduce tensions with respect to the sharing of intelligence in the region.

The impact of Cuba on Canada-U.S. relations as a whole is a complex issue, the different elements of which warrant serious study and analysis. This should include diplomatic, trade and security fields as well as the different actors in the field of public policy - the presidency, Congress, commercial interests and the media. While such a detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this paper, suffice it to say that Canada bore a definite cost for its relationship with Cuba in terms of the impact on its critical relationship with its southern neighbour.

## ***HUMAN RIGHTS***

For some, this continues to be the weakest point of the Canadian approach. The fundamental state of human rights in Cuba has remained largely unchanged over the past ten years. The number of people imprisoned for crimes of a political nature remains high and there is an overall lack of freedom of expression, assembly, association and due process of law. While Canadian diplomats devoted much time to these problems as part of their policy of constructive engagement, there were few consistent results.

Canada, however, has consistently co-sponsored UN resolutions critical of Cuba's human rights performance, both in the Committee on Human Rights and the UN General Assembly (UNGA). In its regular consultations with the Cuban

government on human rights issues, Canada has voiced strong criticism at all levels concerning cases involving harsh sentences for political crimes, has expressed concern over the conditions in which political prisoners were held and has sought to halt the use of conditional release. Canada has pushed for the establishment of independent human rights institutions and for the legal registration of human rights groups. The Canadian embassy maintains contact with a variety of non-governmental groups, human rights activists and the religious community.

Without minimizing continuing concerns about human rights, though, Canadian officials note some positive factors in terms of human security in Cuba. Despite a difficult economic situation, Cubans continue to enjoy, albeit with some deterioration of service, some of the more widely accessible systems of health, education and social security in the Americas. Priority is placed on seeing that children are well fed, healthy and given broad educational opportunity. Laws against the exploitation of children are vigorously enforced. Women have played a leading role in Castro's Cuba and enjoy a legal status equal to that of women in developed countries.

*While Canadian diplomats devoted much time to human rights as part of their policy of constructive engagement, consistent results were nearly absent.*

There are signs of an apparent emerging civil society in Cuba, although most Cuban organizations would not satisfy international norms, for example, in terms of autonomy from the state. Some Canadians maintain that Cuban achievements, although limited, should be recognized in an assessment of the bilateral relationship.

### ***TRADE***

Trade has, at times, been one of the many factors driving Canada's diplomatic approach to Cuba. Ensuring a stable market for Canadian goods was likely a contributing factor in the initial decision to recognize the Castro government. However small the trade between Canada and Cuba is, in relative terms, its continued flow, primarily in nickel and tourism, is clearly enhanced by the policy of constructive engagement.

Another important consideration is the fact that at the root of Canadian policy is the belief that change is advanced by engagement with all aspects of Cuban society, including of course, its economy. Yet linking Canadian trade with any increase in the Cuban standard of living or quality of life is difficult, by virtue of

the very nature of the Cuban economic and political system. Indeed, it may be argued that Canadian policy and the resulting trade benefits have only encouraged and bolstered the Castro regime and have thus not contributed to prosperity or democracy to any tangible degree.

Last, there appears to be some irony in the Canadian approach, for if the liberalization of Cuba – the avowed purpose of Canada’s policy - is realized, the stability of the Canadian share of future Cuban markets could be in danger. The volume of American trade, facilitated by U.S. proximity to the island, may simply overwhelm Canadian efforts to take advantage of an open Cuban economy.

## ***OPTIONS & CONCLUSIONS***

### ***OPTIONS***

The principal option suggested in discussions of Canada’s position on Cuba among NGOs, academics and others is a toughening of existing policy rather than its complete abandonment. This would respond to the critics who say that Canada is too soft on Cuban human rights abuse and repression. It could involve more conditionality on existing programs, a reduction in official contacts, and stronger criticism of Cuba’s human rights record in the international sphere. Such a policy shift would make clear Canada’s concerns on human rights and democratic development and would respond to some of the NGO criticism. It might also garner support and goodwill from interested members of the political and commercial elites in the United States.

On the other hand, such a change might undo Canadian efforts at building influence with the Cuban leadership, and would likely be loudly criticized by another body of NGOs and academics. It could harm Canada’s commercial interests and other interests where Canada has traditionally relied on Cuban support and it could affect Canada’s reputation for independence in its foreign policy throughout the hemisphere and beyond.

Other policy options such as adopting an incremental approach, or building a much more substantial relationship are raised periodically in foreign policy discussions, but under serious analysis are seen to entail far more costs than benefits, particularly in terms of the Canada-U.S. relationship, which is going through a difficult period with a number of high-visibility issues where Canada needs a good relationship with the U.S.A.

### ***CONCLUSIONS – LESSONS LEARNED***

Canadians and their government have been dealing with Castro’s Cuba for over forty years now. It has never been an easy relationship. Although Canadians

generally differ from many Americans in their view of some of revolutionary Cuba's achievements, especially in the early years, they dislike Cuba's repression and its abuse of human rights. But when asked about alternatives, most would say that it is important to continue constructive engagement. Isolation, they feel, would be the wrong strategy and would only increase the distance between the expatriate Cubans and those who have remained behind. Further, many believe that lifting the U.S. embargo might alleviate the current political impasse. At the same time, a substantial number would argue for a firmer policy with respect to the Cuban regime.

In the end, the impact of the past and the direction in which Canadian policy might move in the future, largely depends on a given point of departure. If that point, as in the case of the American side of the equation, is concern for "regional security", it seems that the result will be obvious. If, on the other hand, Cuban policy is seen within the context of an independent Canadian "human security" policy, the results may be different. These, then, form the antipodes of Canada's Cuban experience in light of the lessons learned.

And, yet, it doesn't seem that much has been learned in terms of "lessons" concerning the merits of the U.S. and Canadian policies on Cuba, either individually or relative to one another. Neither seems to have come near achieving its avowed aims nor to have been an abject failure. But while much may not have been learned by way of any "lessons", perhaps the experience of the past 40 or more years suggests that an approach combining the U.S. and Canadian policies might be more productive - indeed, may have been somewhat productive already, though not intended. Is it possible that the U.S. and Canadian policies, taken together and working in tandem could have a liberalizing effect on Cuba, if not on the top echelons of Castro regime, then on lower levels and younger people who might rise to the top as Castro's day wanes or once Castro is gone?

On one hand, the U.S. has demonstrated the hardship that isolation can impose and Cuba's need, in the absence of Soviet support, for a strong patron. Canada, however, has shown Cuba that relations with Western nations do not necessarily mean renewed exploitation of Cuba or the surrender of worthwhile Cuban institutions. When the inevitable dialogue eventually opens between the Cubans and Americans - very possibly facilitated in its early stages by Canada as a result of its continued engagement with Cuba - the combined impact of U.S. and Canadian policies may well come into play. Perhaps, therefore, tacit co-ordination of U.S. and Canadian policies might be the way to go in future.

## ***APPENDIX A: The Joint Declaration of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Canada and Cuba***

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, visited the Republic of Cuba on January 21 and 22, 1997, responding to an invitation made to him by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, His Excellency Roberto Robaina Gonzalez. Minister Axworthy met with senior representatives of the Cuban Government, with whom he had the opportunity to exchange views on various issues of the bilateral relationship, the realities of both countries and international relations.

Both Ministers reaffirmed the high value of the longstanding and uninterrupted bilateral relationship between Canada and Cuba since its establishment in 1945. They underscored the fact that Canada-Cuba relations have always emphasized the importance of maintaining a frank and open dialogue in a spirit of mutual respect, not only on issues in which both sides agree, but as well on issues on which they differ.

The Ministers emphasized their mutual commitment and their right to conduct international relations on the basis of the defense of International Law . They reiterated the commitment to peace of their respective peoples and their common endeavours to promote social justice in an atmosphere of stability and unity, based upon the consensus of their respective citizens.

Ministers Axworthy and Robaina stated that as a result of the continuing development in bilateral relations and high-level discussions which have taken place in the past few months, Canada and Cuba have agreed to advance towards new initiatives within the framework of their bilateral relationship. These initiatives encompass a wide range of political, economic and social issues.

In this context, they had the opportunity to assess a number of areas in which both governments have agreed to work jointly. Among these areas, the following examples can be cited:

- Cooperation in the area of the administration of justice and the judicial-legal system, including exchanges of judges and judicial training;
- Support exchanges between the House of Commons and the National Assembly, focusing on the operations of both institutions;
- Exchange of experiences between both countries relating to the Cuban intention to strengthen within the National Assembly of People's Power a Citizens' Complaints Commission;

- Broadening and deepening cooperation on the issue of human rights, which will include the preparation of seminars on diverse matters of mutual interest, academic exchanges between officials, professionals and experts, as well as sharing experiences and positions on the work of the specialized organizations of the United Nations;
- Supporting the activities of Canadian and Cuban non-governmental organizations within the framework of bilateral cooperation between both countries and in accordance with the laws and regulations of each country;
- Continuation of macroeconomic cooperation, with an initial focus in the areas of taxation and central banking, while studying joint areas in which Canada might continue to support the Cuban policy of economic reform;
- The negotiation of a Foreign Investment Protection and Promotion Agreement;
- Further collaboration on narcotics interdiction, including the negotiation of a bilateral accord;
- The establishment of bilateral conversations on the issue of international terrorism and its prevention;
- The negotiation of a Memorandum of Understanding between Health Canada and the Ministry of Public Health of Cuba;
- The negotiation of an audio-visual co-production agreement;
- The renewal of a bilateral Sports cooperation accord;
- The exploration of possibilities for joint research and development and cooperation projects in developing countries in the areas of health and environment;
- The provision of food aid in response to the damage caused by Hurricane Lili.

Ministers Axworthy and Robaina welcomed these initiatives as a further example of the constructive collaboration which exists between both their respective governments and looked forward to continuing to work in the future on bilateral cooperation on a broad range of economic and social issues.

*Havana, January 22, 1997*

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