

## Review article

# 'Ending the hegemonic presumption'?

## Recent writings on US–Cuban relations\*

MICHAEL DUNNE

**Encyclopedia of Cuban–United States relations.** By **Thomas M. Leonard.** Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland. 2004. 288pp. Pb.: £44.50. ISBN 978 0 78644 582 0.

**Constructing US foreign policy: the curious case of Cuba.** By **David Bernell.** London and New York: Routledge. 2011. 200pp. Index. £85.00. ISBN 978 0 41578 067 4. Available as e-book.

**US policy towards Cuba: since the Cold War.** By **Jessica F. Gibbs.** London and New York: Routledge. 2011. 224pp. £85.00. ISBN 978 0 41543 747 9. Available as e-book.

**Cuba: what everyone needs to know.** By **Julia E. Sweig.** New York: Oxford University Press. 2009. 304pp. Pb.: £11.99. ISBN 978 0 19538 380 5.

**The changing dynamic of Cuban civil society.** Edited by **Alexander L. Gray and Antoni Kapcia.** Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida. 2008. 208pp. £53.50. ISBN 978 0 81303 192 7.

**Political disaffection in Cuba's revolution and exodus.** By **Silvia Pedraza.** New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2007. 382pp. Pb.: £19.99. ISBN 978 0 52168 729 4.

**A contemporary Cuba reader: reinventing the revolution.** Edited by **Philip Brenner, Marguerite Rose Jiménez, John M. Kirk and William M. LeoGrande.** Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. 2008. 432pp. Pb.: £21.95. ISBN 978 0 74255 507 5.

**U.S.–Latin American relations: a new direction for a new reality.** By **Charlene Barshefsky and James T. Hill.** New York: Council on Foreign Relations. 2008. 64pp. Pb.: £8.99. ISBN 978 0 87609 411 2.

**Shifting the balance: Obama and the Americas.** Edited by **Abraham F. Lowenthal, Theodore J. Piccone and Laurence Whitehead.** Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press. 2011. 193pp. Pb.: £16.99. ISBN 978 0 81570 562 8. Available as e-book.

\* Abraham F. Lowenthal, 'The United States and Latin America: ending the hegemonic presumption', *Foreign Affairs* 55, Oct. 1976, pp. 199–213.

## Introduction

For over half a century, and so for longer than the traditional Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, the United States has waged a Cold War against the Cuba which emerged from the revolution of the late 1950s to early 1960s.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the US–Cuban Cold War became ‘hot’ very early on, when the CIA sponsored an armed invasion by Cuban exiles (known outside Cuba as the ‘Bay of Pigs’) and then instigated a series of covert sabotage operations (Operation Mongoose) to subvert the revolution, including the attempted assassination of its iconic leader, Fidel Castro.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, in their efforts to reverse the Cuban revolution, the Americans threatened worldwide nuclear war to remove Soviet missiles installed to prevent a second Bay of Pigs. This later event (‘the Cuban missile crisis’, but known in Cuba as the ‘October crisis’), whose fiftieth anniversary fell some months ago, came much closer to the apocalypse which Washington and Moscow risked over Berlin or the Middle East at different times in their decades-long confrontation.<sup>3</sup> What can account for this American hostility to a country about the size of Tennessee?<sup>4</sup> And if the responsibility for the continuing Cold War is shared between the two countries, what has been done and can be done on either side to improve relations? The works under review answer some of the historical puzzles and provide more or less explicit policy options for change on the American side—for none believes the status quo is desirable. Since these books roughly divide into those written for the knowledgeable and those directed at the interested newcomer, it may be helpful to offer a series of historical pointers to the Cuba which emerged, to extreme American distaste, at the end of the 1950s.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clara Nieto, *Los años de la guerra y las guerras de los años: Cuba–Estados Unidos y América Latina* (Bogotá: Ediciones Uniandes, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Jim Rasenber, *The brilliant disaster: JFK, Castro, and America’s doomed invasion of Cuba’s Bay of Pigs* (New York: Scribners, 2011). For an early account in various editions by the revolutionary government, see *Playa Girón: derrota del imperialismo*, 4 vols (Havana: [Ediciones Revolución], 1961–2).

<sup>3</sup> For lessons continuing to be deduced and ‘myths’ uncovered, see Michael Dobbs, ‘The price of a 50-year myth’, *New York Times*, 15 Oct. 2012; Leslie H. Gelb, ‘The lie that screwed up 50 years of U.S. foreign policy’, *Foreign Policy* 196, Nov. 2012, pp. 24–6; Martin Walker, ‘Missiles and myths’, *The World Today* Oct./Nov. 2012, p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> The collection of essays published by members of the Centro de Estudios sobre Estados Unidos at the University of Havana: *El conflicto Estados Unidos–Cuba* (Havana: Editorial Félix Varela, 1998) discusses some of the topics in this article, e.g. periodization, migration, the blockade and Helms–Burton. For a similar agenda, see Morris Morley and Chris McGillion, *Unfinished business: America and Cuba after the Cold War, 1989–2001* (Cambridge and New York: CUP, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> ‘Latin’ Americans can bridle at the use of the unqualified term ‘Americans’ as the epithet for the United States of America; whereas in much discourse emanating from ‘Latin’ America the chosen word for the people and characteristics of the US is *norteamericano* or, more precisely, *estadounidense/estadunidense* (in the Spanish or Portuguese forms). Marcelo Santos, *O poder norte-americano e a América Latina no pós-guerra fria* (São Paulo: Annablume, FAPESP, 2007). For a hemispheric study, see Lester D. Langley, *The Americas in the modern age* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2003), esp. pp. xi–xii. Langley contrasts the competing visions of the Americas held by José Martí and Theodore Roosevelt: see esp. chs 1–2. For a classic in this metonymic tradition, see the essay published in 1900 by the Uruguayan José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel*, edited with an introduction by Gordon Brotherston (Cambridge: CUP, 1967). Mónica Szurmuk and Robert M. Irwin, eds, *Diccionario de estudios culturales latinoamericanos* (México DF: Siglo XXI, 2009), provides entries on e.g. *raza, etnicidad*; while on the problematics of the term ‘Latin America’, see José C. Moya, ed., *Oxford handbook of Latin American history* (New York and Oxford: OUP, 2011), introduction.

## Geography and history: the where and the when

For four centuries after the Iberian opening-up of the Americas, Cuba was part of the Spanish empire. Unlike the Spanish colonies from present-day Argentina and Chile north to Mexico, Cuba (the 'ever-faithful isle') did not seek independence in the early nineteenth-century wars of liberation.<sup>6</sup> But the Americans had their acquisitive eyes upon 'the key to the Gulf of Mexico', the 'bulwark of the New World', in the phrases of the time. In the year President James Monroe proclaimed his eponymous Doctrine, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams foresaw the days when the 'laws of political ... gravitation' would draw Cuba towards the United States.<sup>7</sup> Until the American Civil War (1861–5) significant numbers of Cubans and Americans worked for annexation, even to the point of armed invasions, which popularized the term 'filibuster'. But anti-slavery forces in the northern United States had no wish to bring slave-holding Cuba into the Union—a sentiment given even greater weight after the defeat of the Southern Confederacy. But *controlling* Cuba, that was a different matter altogether. Meanwhile, many *criollos* (the descendants of Spanish settlers) looked to the United States to support them in their efforts to break free of the Spanish crown, either to become an independent, sovereign state or to join the North American Union.

Cuban historiography records three wars of independence in the second half of the nineteenth century: 1868–78, the Ten Years' War; the *Guerra Chiquita* or Little War, 1879–80; and, by far the best-known, the war of 1895–8.<sup>8</sup> But the latter war, in which the great Cuban nationalist hero, José Martí, was killed, ended not in full independence but in American control.<sup>9</sup> Having intervened in the brutal conflict, the US government signed the 1898 peace treaty with the Spanish government, thereby cutting out the rebels and imposing conditions (subsequently incorporated into the Cuban constitution) which stated *inter alia* the 'right [of the US] to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence [and for] the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property and individual liberty'.<sup>10</sup> For some three decades Cuban independence was formally qualified

<sup>6</sup> Vanessa Michelle Ziegler, 'The revolt of "the ever-faithful isle": the ten years' war in Cuba, 1868–1878', PhD dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Adams to Hugh Nelson, US Minister to Spain, 28 April 1823. For the context, see David C. Hendrickson, *Union, nation, or empire: the American debate over international relations, 1789–1941* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2009), ch. 9.

<sup>8</sup> An excellent introduction to the history and historiography of Cuba until the 'special period' of the 1990s (see below) is the selection of material from the multi-volume *Cambridge history of Latin America*: see Leslie Bethell, ed., *Cuba: a short history* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993). Bethell's four collaborators are among the proverbial giants of Cuban historiography. For a recent survey of literature on the US destruction of the Spanish empire in the Caribbean (and Pacific), see Mark R. Barnes, *The Spanish-American War and the Philippine insurrection, 1898–1902: an annotated bibliography* (New York and London: Routledge, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> John Lawrence Tone, *War and genocide in Cuba, 1895–1898* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> A quotation from the notorious and multi-clausal Platt Amendment, originally part of a US Army appropriations act of 1901. Many official texts are reprinted in Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la enmienda Platt: una interpretación de la realidad cubana*, 3rd edn (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1973). The first, two-volume edition was published in 1935. See also the work of the prolific Cuban American, Louis A. Pérez Jr, *Cuba under the Platt Amendment, 1902–1934* (Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh University Press, 1986). For a Cuban study of the (first) US occupation, see Marial Iglesias Utset, *Las metáforas del cambio en la vida cotidiana: Cuba, 1898–1902* (Havana: Ediciones Unión, 2003).

by such restrictions, short-handed as the Platt Amendment; and under them the US military intervened on three separate occasions. Eventually in 1934 President Franklin D. Roosevelt rescinded the textual bulk of the Platt Amendment as part of his ‘good neighbor’ policy, but not those terms which had assigned the United States a naval station in Guantánamo Bay—a military facility which it retains, and the site of its detention centre for terrorist suspects since 9/11.

Words on the page are one thing; effective local forces are another: *eso es harina de otro costal*.<sup>11</sup> Despite the abrogation of the Platt Amendment, for the next quarter-century the United States continued to control the Cuban economy and its political life, most of the time working through its point-man, former sergeant later colonel Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar.<sup>12</sup> Batista was the archetypal *caudillo*: the Latin American ‘strongman’, invariably with a military background, capturing power through a *golpe* (*coup d’état*) and then ruling autocratically, with or without an official position.<sup>13</sup> Since the turn of the twentieth century the US used such authoritarian figures in exercising its power throughout Latin America, objecting to them (and subverting them, if necessary) only when these *caudillos* inclined to the populist left: Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán in Guatemala in the 1950s, or Hugo Chávez Frías in present-day Venezuela.<sup>14</sup> Coming to power by way of a *golpe* does not determine American behaviour: witness Augusto Pinochet in Chile in 1973.<sup>15</sup> What counts is whether the *golpistas* will serve American interests, politically, economically and strategically.<sup>16</sup>

## Periodization and Cuban–US relations

The works under review concentrate upon the period from the onset of the Cuban revolution to more recent times, though four in particular offer varying analyses of pre-revolutionary Cuba. Thomas Leonard’s *Encyclopedia of Cuban–United States relations* is structured through an alphabetical listing of key moments, movements and personalities. A brief introduction covers nineteenth- and twentieth-century history; while a bibliography, a chronology and suggestions for audio-visual and online sources complete the text. The index helps to track connections; but inevitably there are slips and some striking omissions: ‘filibuster’, for example; or the *mambises*, who fought the independence wars. Names of people and organizations get jumbled (Valera in the index should be Varela; James Bolton is correctly identified as John on p. 42; various student and sonorous action groups get omitted, muddled or attributed strange Spanish titles); while the key Roosevelt Corollary

<sup>11</sup> The Spanish *flour from another sack* becomes the English *different kettle of fish*.

<sup>12</sup> Frank Argote-Freyre, *Fulgencio Batista: from revolution to strongman* (New Brunswick, NJ, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> For *caudillismo* and Castro, see Frank Tannenbaum, *Ten keys to Latin America* (New York: Vintage, 1966), esp. chs 8–10. The first edition was published in 1962.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Grow, *U.S. presidents and Latin American interventions: pursuing regime change in the Cold War* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008).

<sup>15</sup> A. Uribe, *El libro negro de la intervención norteamericana en Chile* (México DF: Siglo XXI, 1974).

<sup>16</sup> Grace Livingstone, *America’s backyard: the United States and Latin America from the Monroe Doctrine to the war on terror* (London: Latin America Bureau, 2009).

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to the Monroe Doctrine is correctly dated to 1904 in the main text, it is implicitly misdated in the chronology. A reviewer must acknowledge that it is easier to spot slips in a book than to record all the correct or uncontentious entries. But then no one (as Leonard would surely agree) should ever rely upon one source. With this thought in our collective minds, we shall not overlook earlier efforts to provide comparable information and analyses: those by Louis Pérez and Jaime Suchlicki (both cited by Leonard) for example, and the handsome, wide-ranging, two-volume work edited by Pérez and three colleagues, which was published just before Leonard's *Encyclopedia*.<sup>17</sup>

Next on the chronology scale comes David Bernell with *Constructing US foreign policy: the curious case of Cuba*, half of whose text discusses Cuba, Latin America and the US in general terms from hemispheric colonial times until the Barack Obama years. Bernell's analysis, along with that of Jessica Gibbs (who, in *US policy towards Cuba: since the Cold War*, reviewed in *International Affairs* 87: 5, skims over similar ground to reach her period of scrutiny between the end of the Cold War and the Obama years), requires detailed discussion. These two short works, published in a new series by Routledge and addressed to both 'scholars [and] students', are somewhat heavy-going, for substantive as well as stylistic reasons, perhaps betraying their origins in dense postgraduate studies or earlier monographs.<sup>18</sup> How very different is the fourth book in this quartet, that by Julia Sweig, *Cuba: what everyone needs to know* (reviewed in *IA* 87: 1). An insider in the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), participant in blue-ribbon commissions on US policy towards Cuba and long-time student of the 'pearl of the Antilles', Sweig writes with confidence and clarity: deep scholarship carried lightly.<sup>19</sup> An established advocate, Sweig knows how to describe and prescribe. So what do Bernell, Gibbs and Sweig say?

To answer this question we need to construct the twentieth-century chronology, and especially the post-revolutionary years, that these and our other authors employ. Sweig gives us the main framework: first, the years to Batista's ousting at the turn of 1958-9; second, 'the Cuban Revolution and the Cold War, 1959-1991', the final date denoting the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union; then third, two sections covering (i) the years from 1991 until the provisional resignation of Fidel Castro in 2006 from his official positions; and finally (ii) the leadership of Castro's brother, Raúl. Within Sweig's four-part schema, scholars (herself included) have drawn some more precise lines, usually determined by economic conditions in Cuba or by events abroad. Thus the first dozen years of the revolution are given

<sup>17</sup> Luis Martínez-Fernández et al., eds, *Encyclopedia of Cuba: people, history, culture*, 2 vols (Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood Press, 2003); Jaime Suchlicki, *Historical dictionary of Cuba*, 2nd edn (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2001); Louis A. Pérez Jr, *Cuba: an annotated bibliography* (New York and London: Greenwood Press, 1988); and more generally, David W. Dent, *Historical dictionary of U.S.-Latin American relations* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005); J. Pope Atkins, *Handbook of research on the international relations of Latin America and the Caribbean* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> Routledge Studies in US Foreign Policy, edited by Inderjeet Parmar and John Dumbrell.

<sup>19</sup> Julia E. Sweig, *Inside the Cuban Revolution: Fidel Castro and the urban underground* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); *Friendly fire: losing friends and making enemies in the anti-American century* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2006).

prominence for the failed attempt to maximize the harvesting and export of sugar, which once constituted the bulk of Cuban foreign earnings. The following decade of the 1970s is seen to represent the highpoint of Cuban involvement overseas, especially in the anti- and post-colonial struggles within Africa. But most important for our writers is the period from the collapse of the USSR until the mid-1990s, when the Cuban economy nose-dived owing to the withdrawal of Soviet subsidies and (particularly) eastern European markets, once virtually guaranteed within COMECON.<sup>20</sup> And it was during the 1990s that the United States intensified its own Cold War against Cuba.

## Questions and (some) answers

Sweig's analysis is presented in a series of 120-plus questions and answers. Some are simple, or at least simply phrased: 'Who was José Martí?' Others appear unanswerable, unless at book-length: 'How did race relations figure into [*sic*] Cuba's political development during the prerevolutionary period?' The format is not novel; but the substance and the range are.<sup>21</sup> Packed with information, Sweig's well-written work acts as a narrative complement to Leonard's *Encyclopedia*. She is not afraid to criticize Cuba (along with the US) on human rights, for example, or policies in Africa and Latin America (pp. 93–6, 107–17). Sweig gives as much space to the years since the end of the Cold War as she does to the preceding two centuries; but then this is where current foreign attention lies. As Alexander Gray and Antoni Kapcia begin their volume, *The changing dynamic of Cuban civil society*: 'Most analyses of Cuba since 1990 focus on the big issues'. From the perspective of US–Cuban relations these 'big issues' include the two major legislative additions in 1992 and 1996 to the US embargo begun in the early 1960s; the 1994 refugee crisis and Cuban emigration in general; the Cuban role in the politics of Andean South America, understood as Venezuela westwards to Ecuador; and the general policy area which the Americans call 'terrorism', i.e. the violence of their enemies, whether state-sponsored (as in the 'axis of evil') or freelance (as in Al-Qaeda). On other big issues, such as the viability of the Cuban revolution (and its true meaning), not least as reflected in the transition from Fidel to Raúl Castro, Sweig is as clear as possible in what is a minefield of controversies. To adapt the words of a senior member of the PBS news channel, writing on a related subject: Sweig's Q&As 'simultaneously clarify and complicate the reductive portrait' of contemporary Cuba.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> COMECON: the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, founded in 1949 between a number of 'command economies'. For a wide-ranging and authoritative account, see David Ibarra and Jorge Máttar, eds, *La economía cubana: reformas estructurales y desempeño en los noventa*, 2nd edn (México DF: CEPAL, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> Carmen R. Alfonso Hernández, *100 preguntas y respuestas sobre Cuba* (Havana: Editorial Pablo de la Toriente, 1996). For Martí, see Hernández, pp. 61–3. The literature on Martí, himself prolific, is enormous: for a study written by a self-described US-born Cuban American, see Lillian Guerra, *The myth of José Martí: conflicting nationalisms in early twentieth-century Cuba* (Chapel Hill, NC, and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Alfred J. López, *José Martí and the future of Cuban nationalisms* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2006).

<sup>22</sup> Ray Suarez, 'Latin lessons: who are Hispanic Americans, and how will they vote?', *Foreign Affairs* 91, Sept./Oct. 2012, pp. 134–41, esp. p. 135.



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Unfortunately, the same compliments cannot be paid to the books by Bernell and Gibbs. Both are critical of American policy; but this is not the issue from a reviewer's perspective, however much the reviewer may share the judgement. Rather the issue is the nature and handling of the material examined. Bernell comes with strong credentials, having worked for the US government, taken his various degrees at prestigious universities and being active in important environmental debates. But his short book (consistent with the publisher's brief) straddles two conflicting approaches. The first method, informing chapters one to three, blends unfavourable description of Latin America and Latin Americans by contemporary North Americans with the unfortunate adoption of post-modern and post-colonial theorizing, which undermines the empiricism logically necessary to present the caricatures and to contrast pejorative images with reality. Bernell's argumentative point is that US policy-makers and the public that backs or at least condones misplaced policies do not know the real Latin America. But how can this argument be made if Latin America is itself unreal, a figment of ignorant and prejudiced minds? This is 'magical realism' misapplied to political realism. Perhaps more to the historiographical rather than theoretical point, such deconstruction (if the term be allowed) has been done so much better and at far greater length, both at the hemispheric level and with regard to Cuba itself.<sup>23</sup>

The second part of Bernell's work covers the 'Reagan era' (p. 68) through to more recent times and asks whether there will be 'an Obama way for US-Cuban relations?' (pp. 137-44). Roland Barthes & Co. are not completely abandoned (pp. 70, 101-103) but the discussion is more concrete, examining for example what the Reagan administration meant by the 'Moscow-Havana Axis' (p. 95), with a hint—surely correct—that the defensive rhetoric against Moscow and Havana was a rephrasing of the expansionist side to the Monroe Doctrine (p. 97). Chapter five, 'Waiting for Fidel ... and now Raúl', with its literary allusion, discusses less the transfer of power and authority from Fidel to Raúl but rather more the two major pieces of anti-Cuban legislation of the 1990s: the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 (perhaps better known by the name of its House sponsor, Robert Torricelli of New Jersey) and the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, known to the world less by its own sobriquet of the LIBERTAD Act but rather as the Helms-Burton Act after its sponsors, Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina and Representative Dan Burton of Indiana.<sup>24</sup> Since these two pieces of quite extraordinary legislation form (along with the issue of migration) the substance of Jessica

<sup>23</sup> Louis A. Pérez Jr, *Cuba in the American imagination: metaphor and the imperial ethos* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), cited by Bernell. See also Lars Schoultz, *That infernal little Cuban republic: the United States and the Cuban Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009). Earlier accounts of North and South American stereotypes and the making of US policy include: John J. Johnson, *Latin America in caricature* (Austin, TX, and London: University of Texas Press, 1980); Eldon Kenworthy, *America/Américas: myth in the making of U.S. policy toward Latin America* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); Fredrick B. Pike, *The United States and Latin America: myths and stereotypes of civilization and nature* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1992). Such ideas are surveyed in Ricardo D. Salvatore, *Imágenes de un imperio: Estados Unidos y las formas de representación de América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2006).

<sup>24</sup> Torricelli's Senate co-sponsor was Bob Graham of Florida. Leonard, *Encyclopedia*, provides clear details: pp. 61-3.

Gibbs's book, we shall discuss these three topics below. So what then will be the 'Obama way'? Bernell (along with Sweig) is cautiously optimistic, citing relaxations of the embargo and an expressed wish to 'amend ... a Cuba policy that has failed for decades to advance liberty or opportunity for the Cuban people' (p. 138). Does this sound good to liberal ears? Perhaps. But then liberal is not a particularly favoured word or concept in the US; and, as Lars Schoultz comments, such language shows the insistence of successive administrations (backed, we may add, by effective forces in the Congress) not to 'concede to Cubans the right of self-determination',<sup>25</sup> another good, old-fashioned ideal, of course; but the history of more than two centuries has shown that 'Washington' (in Bernell's metonym) and Americans far beyond today's Beltway manage quite comfortably to invoke their own revolutionary slogans while devaluing the comparable aspirations of others (p. 148).<sup>26</sup> As Cubans argue: it is not literary deconstruction that is needed but political destruction—of these hypocritical pretensions, of this 'hegemonic presumption'.<sup>27</sup>

## Embargo and emigration

Or, we might say, *bloqueo y balseros*: for Cubans (to speak collectively) insist that the island is subjected to a blockade, an act of war in traditional international law;<sup>28</sup> while the most serious recent episode in the post-revolutionary history of Cuban emigration occurred in 1994 (framed by the Torricelli and Helms–Burton acts), when tens of thousands of Cuban *balseros* used small craft, rubber dinghies and home-made rafts (*balsas*) to escape across the Straits of Florida.<sup>29</sup> These three events, their origins and ramifications, form the core of Jessica Gibbs's study, which concludes with an analysis of the George W. Bush presidency and its Cuban policy. With a common format, the short works by Gibbs and Bernell clearly come from the same stable; but their 'form' is quite different. Whereas the two distinct parts of Bernell's book do not support one another, Gibbs's methods are much more consistent. She begins with a few lucid pages of introduction on the making of US foreign policy: the Executive, the Congress, their frequently conflictual roles, the influence of lobby groups, and similar familiar topics—though they have a much longer life of academic scrutiny and outside denunciation than her bibliography may suggest. Then follows a first chapter of quite amazing compression, packing decades into paragraphs until we get to the end of the Cold War and the reader's sense, induced by Gibbs, that anything may be possible for the future of US–Cuban relations.

<sup>25</sup> Schoultz, *That infernal little Cuban republic*, p. 567.

<sup>26</sup> For an inadvertent depiction of Janus-faced Washington, see Lowenthal, 'The United States and Latin America', *passim*.

<sup>27</sup> Jesús Arboleya Cervera, *Cuba y los Estados Unidos: un debate ahora* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2004); Luis Suárez Salazar, *América Latina y el Caribe: medio siglo de crimen e impunidad, 1948–1998: los rostros de Abel* (Havana: Editorial José Martí, 2001).

<sup>28</sup> Andrés Zaldívar Diéguez, *Bloqueo: el asedio económico más prolongado de la historia* (Havana: Editorial Capitán San Luis, 2003).

<sup>29</sup> Not a new sense to an established word: see Ernesto Rodríguez Chávez, 'Tendencias actuales del flujo migratorio cubano', *Cuadernos de Nuestra América* 10 (July–Dec. 1993), pp. 114–40, esp. pp. 125–9.



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However, we have already learned through Gibbs of the Cuban American lobby, especially in Florida but also strong in New Jersey. The catch-all term is invariably used of those early post-revolution refugees and the first-generation descendants who wanted the overthrow of Castro. Now more than 20 years after the end of the Cold War that original animus has waned, the passing of time and the advent of younger and especially US-born Cuban Americans have done their work. But at the end of the Reagan years and with victory declared in the Cold War, the influence of the lobby, especially through its most prominent and influential grouping, the Cuban American National Foundation, was great, certainly sufficient to tighten the US embargo begun 30 years earlier.<sup>30</sup> The moment seemed right: the collapse of the USSR led to a collapse of the subsidized Cuban economy, with an estimated fall of some 40 per cent of Cuban GDP. The crisis was so great that the Cuban government proclaimed a 'special period in time of peace' (we might say 'a state of national emergency') to cope with severe shortages of all goods and even the onset of malnutrition.<sup>31</sup> A presidential election took place in 1992; Florida was one of the larger states in the Electoral College; George Bush Sr and his Democratic opponent, Bill Clinton, were looking for votes. The legislative result: the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, aka the Torricelli Act. Gibbs knows the story—can we say, almost too well? For Spanish-speakers have the same idiom and talk of not seeing the wood for the trees; and so much is packed into her coverage which could be usefully elaborated: the battle within Congress over restricting presidential discretion; the arguments of those who claimed that further immiseration of the Cuban people would lead to the popular overthrow of Castro and not a demographic catastrophe and civil war; the extra-territorial aspects of the act, which sought to punish other states for trading with Cuba. But, as Gibbs may respond, these and other aspects of Torricelli could and have produced many more pages. So it is and has been with Helms–Burton, which generated more foreign and even domestic opposition as American courts were opened (under Title III) to adjudicate suits for damages arising from revolutionary actions.<sup>32</sup> Yet here again compromises were made in Washington; and the Executive was empowered to suspend such provisions for reasons of 'national interest'.

One theme which runs through Torricelli and Helms–Burton also characterizes migration between Cuba and the United States: what we may call the

<sup>30</sup> Patrick J. Haney and Walt Vanderbush, *The Cuban embargo: the domestic politics of an American foreign policy* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005), esp. chs 4–5.

<sup>31</sup> For the *período especial en tiempos de paz*, see Ana Julia Jatar-Hausmann, *The Cuban way: capitalism, communism and confrontation* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1999), esp. chs 4, 9. Jatar-Hausmann's family were refugees from the Batista period. At the time of writing she was a senior member of the Washington-based Inter-American Dialogue, one of the think-tanks (along with e.g. the Brookings Institution and the CFR) trying to reframe the US–Cuban confrontation. For a Cuban anthology, see José A. Moreno et al., eds, *Cuba: Período especial: perspectivas* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1998). Cf. Paolo Spandoni, 'Cuban economic policies, 1990–2010: achievements and shortcomings', in Javier Santiso and Jeff Dayton-Johnson, eds, *Oxford handbook of Latin American political economy* (Oxford and New York: OUP, 2012), pp. 168–90; while economics and politics form the background to Ariana Hernandez-Reguant, ed., *Cuba in the Special Period: culture and ideology in the 1990s* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

<sup>32</sup> Joaquín Roy, *Cuba, the United States, and the Helms–Burton Doctrine: international reactions* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000).

instrumentalism of both Havana and Washington. From the point of view of both Havana and Washington, emigration shows the Cubans voting with their feet. Rhetorically, Washington encourages such a flow of the discontented; Havana has described such emigrants in hostile terms, while sometimes encouraging the movement as a form of safety-valve (Gibbs, chapters three to four). Initially, the refugees were described as *gusanos*; when they or their descendants returned, bearing gifts and dollars, they became *mariposas*; from grubs they had been transformed into butterflies. At times, the US government, the Congress no less than the president, has encouraged travel to Cuba; likewise, Washington has made the 'remittance' of dollars sometimes easier, sometimes harder and less generous. Behind the American changes of policy lies a wider ambivalence: is it better to encourage 'outreach' and 'people to people' contact, and thus weaken the revolution by the presumed comparison with life and riches in the United States? Or is it better, more efficacious, to deny such contacts, continue the isolation, tighten the noose, 'put the hammer down' (Gibbs, chapter two)? The answer will emerge largely from the attitudes of Cuban Americans and the diminishing electoral weight this small but influential group of Latinos exercises.

### Cubans abroad and at home

Gibbs, a younger scholar writing 'outside the monster' (as Martí might have said), has taken on a dense mass of issues, some specific to Cuba, others much more long term, in that Aladdin's cave/hornets' nest which is Washington politics.<sup>33</sup> Silvia Pedraza, on the other hand, presents us with the results of over two decades of research and personal involvement.<sup>34</sup> Her offering is a weighty ethnographical account of the four main 'waves' of Cuban emigration to the United States. The first wave flowed from the initial reaction to the Revolution, ending with the privileged status granted to Cuban refugees under the Cuban Adjustment of Status Act of 1966; the decade following marked the second wave; then came the *Mariel* crisis of 1980, which saw some 120,000 Cubans entering the United States; and, finally, the *balseros* of 1994, numbering perhaps one-quarter of the *Marielitos*, who made it across the Florida Straits as both Washington and Havana blamed the other for failing to regulate legal migration.<sup>35</sup> While plotting these stages in the Cuban 'diaspora', Pedraza is concerned to record the changing reasons for and expectations of leaving Cuba, drawing on the experiences of 120 interviewees. Two characteristics of the diaspora emerge, one not very surprising, the other rather delicately talked about—when not avoided. The predictable feature is the

<sup>33</sup> 'I have lived inside the monster': Martí, 18 May 1895, the eve of his death: see Pedro Álvarez Tabío, ed., *José Martí: antología mínima*, 2 vols (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1972), vol. 1, pp. 209–12. For Martí's famous essay, 'La verdad sobre los Estados Unidos' (published in March 1894) see Álvarez Tabío, ed., *José Martí: antología mínima*, vol. 1, pp. 407–11.

<sup>34</sup> Silvia Pedraza, *Political disaffection in Cuba's revolution and exodus* (New York and Cambridge: CUP, 2007), a volume in the puzzlingly entitled Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics.

<sup>35</sup> Felix Roberto Masud-Piloto, *From welcomed exiles to illegal immigrants: Cuban migration to the U.S., 1959–1995* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996). The 1966 Act, known as the Cuban Adjustment of Status Act, had the evocative acronym of CASA (Spanish, of course, for home).

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divisions, generational and political, within the group known simply as Cuban Americans, though the collective electoral inertia is still benefiting the Republicans, especially in southern Florida, in contrast to those known *simpliciter* as Latinos or Hispanics, who incline to the Democrats.<sup>36</sup> The other aspect is the 'darkening' and ageing of Cuban society, as more of the lighter-skinned and generally better-off and younger Cubans continue to seek a new life in the United States (Pedraza, chapters five and eight).

What is the life that is being left behind? This is half the subject of the anthology edited by Philip Brenner and his colleagues, *A contemporary Cuba reader*, the other half being Cuban foreign relations, especially with the United States but also with Canada and the European Union. One minor gripe before the virtues of this collection are discussed: the credits, i.e. the sources of the readings (predominantly articles from scholarly journals), are printed separately in no obvious order alphabetically or chronologically—perhaps to hide the date of their original publication? But on substance, this collection can be recommended as a wide-ranging entry into many aspects of recent Cuban life and politics. The introduction itself, subtitled 'History as prologue', provides good coverage of the years before the Special Period; while William LeoGrande's analysis of the 1960 to 1980s (chapter three) sets the scene for part three detailing private as well as public/governmental responses to the interconnected economic, political and social crises of the early 1990s.<sup>37</sup> Any collection of over 50 items in varying styles is going to be uneven; but with some of the 'big hitters' (*figuras más destacadas*) in US–Cuban studies represented here, there can be few better places to start the quest for what it means to live in Cuba and to be Cuban after the revolution and in the shadow of the United States: the perennial question of identity or more specifically, *cubanía* or *cubanidad*.<sup>38</sup> So we can read Alejandro de la Fuente on 'race and discrimination'; Jorge Domínguez on US–Cuban relations; Susan Eckstein on 'dollarization' and (with a Cuban colleague) 'Cuban American homeland ties'; Michael Erisman on Cuban foreign policies; Damián Fernández on Cuban identity (on both sides of the Straits); John Kirk and Peter McKenna on Canadian policies; Joaquín Roy on the role of the European Union; and Julia Sweig deploring the misleading models of regime 'transition' that Cuba's critics bring to their programmes for change on the island.<sup>39</sup> From inside Cuba we hear from, among others, Jaime Lucas Ortega y Alamino, Cardinal Archbishop of Havana; Rafael Hernández, editor of the

<sup>36</sup> For these alignments, see particularly Suzanne Oboler and Deena J. González, eds, *The Oxford encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*, 4 vols (New York: OUP, 2005), and, more generally, Michael Kazin, ed., *The Princeton encyclopedia of American political history*, 2 vols (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010). Cf. Juan Gonzalez, *Harvest of empire: a history of Latinos in America*, rev. edn (New York: Penguin, 2011).

<sup>37</sup> For the current position, see e.g. Jorge I. Domínguez et al., eds, *Cuban economic and social development: policy reforms and challenges in the 21st century*, David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2012).

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Mauricio de Miranda Parrondo, ed., *Cuba: sociedad, cultura y política en tiempos de globalización* (Bogotá: Centro Editorial Javeriano, 2003); Louis A Pérez Jr, *On becoming Cuban: identity, nationality and culture*, with a new preface by the author (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Elvira Antón Carrillo, 'Ideas of race, ethnicity and national identity in the discourse of the press during the Cuban Revolution', in Par Kumaraswami, ed., *Rethinking the Cuban Revolution nationally and regionally: politics, culture and identity* (Oxford: Wiley, 2012), pp. 5–21, esp. pp. 16ff.

<sup>39</sup> Brenner et al. list their relevant works, pp. 407–13.

influential journal *Temas*; dancers, film-makers and poets; and—need we add?—Fidel Castro, though addressing the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development briefly, rather than fellow Cubans for hours.

Margaret Crahan's essay (Brenner, chapter 37) on religion and 'civil society' is regrettably short; but this latter topic forms the core of the Gray and Kacpia compilation, *The changing dynamic of Cuban civil society*. Essentially a study of Cuba during and then influenced by the *período especial*, the various chapters combine theory and empiricism to pick apart the meaning of the term 'civil society' in a Cuba characterized by 'high levels of centralization ... and grass-roots participation' (introduction). Phrased differently by those who might be called in a parliamentary system the 'loyal opposition', the aim seems to be to identify and enlarge 'islands of autonomy' inside an 'authoritarian regime'.<sup>40</sup> The Gray and Kacpia book is an impressive contribution to the series on contemporary Cuba from the University Press of Florida edited by John M. Kirk of Dalhousie University, noted for his work on Cuban foreign policy.<sup>41</sup> But it is pleasing to record here the contribution of one scholar who has done as much as anyone this side of the Atlantic to advance Cuban studies: Antoni Kacpia, director of the University of Nottingham's Cuba Research Forum.<sup>42</sup> Kacpia and his contributors dig deeper into political theory than any of the other works under review; but the question remains: why this concentration upon such a problematic issue? Perhaps the answer lies in the insistence of the United States, through such disingenuous legislation as Torricelli and Helms–Burton, to impose US ideals (if not practice) upon Cuba as a condition for lifting the embargo.<sup>43</sup>

## Agenda for change

Our final two books, different in structure but politically complementary, call for the lifting of the embargo and a general relaxation of tensions (as Russian-speakers called *detente*) between the US and Cuba, with Washington to take the lead. The brief report on *U.S.–Latin American relations* by the Council on Foreign Relations Task Force was published in the year of Obama's election; the Brookings volume *Shifting the balance* surveys the first two years of his presidency; and each represents yet another effort to shift US policy, in the hemisphere at large and regarding

<sup>40</sup> Samuel Farber, *Cuba since the Revolution of 1959: a critical assessment* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011), pp. 222–67, esp. p. 262, quoting members of a 'new [Cuban] left-wing critical current'. Faber describes contemporary Cuba as a Stalinist/Soviet-type society, *passim*.

<sup>41</sup> H. Michael Erisman and John M. Kirk, eds, *Redefining Cuban foreign policy: the impact of the 'Special Period'* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006).

<sup>42</sup> See, e.g., Kacpia, *Cuba: island of dreams* (Oxford: Berg, 2000); 'Political change in Cuba: the domestic context of foreign policy', in Erisman and Kirk, *Redefining Cuban foreign policy*, pp. 23–48; 'Defying expectations: the external profile and activism of the Cuban Revolution', in Gian Luca Gardini and Peter Lambert, eds, *Latin American foreign policies: between ideology and pragmatism* (New York: Palgrave, 2011), pp. 179–95. *A contemporary Cuba reader* acknowledges the work of another British scholar, Emily Morris (formerly of the Economist Intelligence Unit and now at the Institute of the Americas at UCL), in unravelling Cuban statistics.

<sup>43</sup> The essay by Lowenthal, which provides the title of this article, is a classic case of a denunciation of US policy which itself invokes the idealistic rhetoric of the American political canon: see the concluding paragraphs (with numerous references) of Michael Dunne, 'Exceptionalism of a kind: the political historiography of US foreign relations', *International Affairs* 87: 1, pp. 153–71.

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Cuba in particular.<sup>44</sup> The CFR report examines four issues and four countries: poverty, security, migration and energy as topics (the first three being linked through drug-trafficking); Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela and Cuba are the major sites of contention.<sup>45</sup> The report's recommendations may be summarized as a call to abandon old ways of thinking and to maximize the use of multilateral organizations.<sup>46</sup> But on Cuba, Charlene Barshefsky and James Hill say, the United States can and should act *unilaterally* and end 'a half-century of ... sanctions, whether designed to destabilize or overthrow the regime ... or bring liberal democracy to the island' (pp. 72-4).<sup>47</sup> The excellent collection of articles in *Shifting the balance* covers some of the same ground but much more intensely: Bolivia, Colombia, Haiti and Honduras are added to the country files; and more attention is given to the militarization of policies, e.g. through Plan Colombia, and the success of Latin Americans in creating their own multilateral bodies such as the Union of South American Nations and the Rio Group.<sup>48</sup> As Brenner et al. and Sweig provide fine introductions to present-day Cuba, Abraham Lowenthal and his collaborators offer an informed and sharply edged survey of major issues 'south of the border' in relation to the United States, showing both the gap between the promising rhetoric of the newly elected Obama and the lack of progress in the areas discussed by the CFR. The contrast between the more open-minded Obama at the 2009 Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain with the 2012 version in Cartagena, when he ruled out negotiating with Cuba on a basis of sovereign equality and without preconditions, provides further evidence for the continued salience of the Cuban factor in US electoral politics.<sup>49</sup>

As we have seen, an American desire to control Cuba is as old as the Monroe Doctrine. What 'control' might mean has changed over time, as indeed have

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Mark P. Sullivan, *Cuba: issues for the 112th Congress*, 6 Oct. 2011 (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, 2011).

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Brian Loveman, ed., *Addicted to failure: U.S. security policy in Latin America and the Andean region* (Lanham, MD, and Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006); Joseph S. Tulchin et al., eds, *El rompecabezas: conformando la seguridad hemisférica en el siglo XXI* (Buenos Aires: Promoteo Libros, 2006); and three volumes with a common format dealing with migration, trade and regional security, edited by Ana Cristina Lizano Picado and Jairo Hernández Milián, *América Latina y la segunda administración Bush: un debate* (San José: Editorial Juricentro, FLASCO, 2008).

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Jorge I. Domínguez and Rafael Fernández de Castro, eds, *Contemporary U.S.-Latin American relations: co-operation or conflict in the 21st century* (New York and London: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>47</sup> Julia Sweig and Margaret Crahan were part of the Task Force. Cf. Donna Rich Kaplowitz, *Anatomy of a failed embargo: U.S. sanctions against Cuba* (Boulder, CO, and London: 1998); Marifeli Pérez-Stable, *The United States and Cuba: intimate enemies*, An Inter-American Dialogue Book (New York and London: Routledge, 2011), esp. ch. 5.

<sup>48</sup> The three editors/authors had collaborated on a previous Brookings study with a comparable brief: *The Obama administration and the Americas: agenda for change* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 2009). For a similar scope, see Russell C. Crandall, *The United States and Latin America after the Cold War* (Cambridge and New York: CUP, 2008). On the (continued) 'militarization' of US policy, see Santiago Millán, ed., *Las tropas norteamericanas y la geografía del saqueo: América Latina, Mercosur y Paraguay en la mira* (Asunción: BASE-IS, 2005); and for multilateralism, see Gordon Mace et al., eds, *Inter-American cooperation at a crossroads* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011); Luiz Alberto Moniz Bandeira, *Brasil, Argentina e Estados Unidos: conflito e integração na América do Sul: da Triplíce Aliança ao Mercosul, 1870-2003*, 2nd edn. (Rio de Janeiro: Revan, 2003), esp. ch. 15. UNASUR (Unión de Naciones Suramericanas) or UNASUL (União de Nações Sul-Americanas), was formally established in 2008, over 20 years after the Rio Group was formed.

<sup>49</sup> 'Americas meeting ends with discord over Cuba', *New York Times*, 15 April 2012; Andrew Cawthornes and Brian Ellsworth, 'Latin America rebels against Obama over Cuba', Reuters, 15 April 2012.



interpretations of Monroe's injunctions. US leadership, hegemony, domination, imperialism, '(re)-colonization': all have been embraced or denounced and, whether plausibly or implausibly, made synonymous with Monroe.<sup>50</sup> Though the doctrinal term has now (finally?) been abandoned by Washington as beyond hemispheric repair, a rhetorical tradition continues within Latin America and among critics of US policies, often adding metaphorical wings to the Colossus of the North and reminding us that Monroe's contemporary, Simón Bolívar, offered a different prospect for the Americas.<sup>51</sup> Such criticisms of what has sometimes been described more favourably as an 'asymmetrical relationship' do not come, of course, only from those 'south of the border' or across the Straits of Florida.<sup>52</sup> Meanwhile, for the US-Cuban relationship a more specific vocabulary has been created, emphasizing the problematical and often conflictual relationship which can characterize virtually neighbouring states.<sup>53</sup> In an echo of President William McKinley, who called for the declaration of war against Spain in 1898, we read of 'intimate' and frequently hostile ties binding the US and Cuba in an unequal yet symbiotic relationship.<sup>54</sup> All the authors under review, without exception, wish this relationship of neighbours to be based upon mutual respect and state sovereignty.<sup>55</sup> Only then can the controversies of the past be resolved. This too

<sup>50</sup> Stewart Brewer, *Borders and bridges: a history of U.S.-Latin American relations* (Westport, CT, and London: Praeger, 2006); Brian Loveman, *No higher law: American foreign policy and the western hemisphere since 1776* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Thomas F. O'Brien, *Making the Americas: the United States and Latin America from the age of revolutions to the era of globalization* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2007); Martin Sicker, *The geopolitics of security in the Americas: hemispheric denial from Monroe to Clinton* (Westport, CT, and London: Praeger, 2002); and the excellent bibliographical work, Mark T. Berger, *Under northern eyes: Latin American studies and U.S. hegemony in the Americas, 1898-1990* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995).

<sup>51</sup> Luís Fernando Ayerbe, *Los Estados Unidos y la América Latina: la construcción de la hegemonía* (Havana: Casa de las Américas, 2001); Stella Calloni and Víctor Ego Ducrot, *Recolonización o independencia: América Latina en el siglo XXI* (Buenos Aires: Norma, 2004), esp. chs 1, 4; Ana Esther Ceceña, ed., *Hegemonías y emancipaciones en el siglo XXI* (Buenos Aires: CLASCO, 2004); Claudio Fuentes, ed., *Bajo la mirada del halcón: Estados Unidos-América Latina post 11/9/2001* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos; Santiago, FLASCO, 2004), esp. pp. 229-40; Kyle Longley, *In the eagle's shadow: the United States and Latin America*, 2nd edn (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2009); Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the eagle: Latin America, the United States, and the world*, 4th edn (New York: OUP, 2012). For Bolívar, see Edmundo A. Heredia, *La guerra de los congresos: el Pan-Hispanismo contra el Panamericanismo* (Córdoba: Junta Provincial de Historia, 2007); Luis Suárez Salazar et al., *Las relaciones interamericanas: continuidades y cambios* (Buenos Aires: CLASCO, 2008).

<sup>52</sup> For a 'historical perspective' (from a once-familial source) on the 'asymmetrical relationship' and 'interdependence', see Vladimir P. Sudarev, *Vzaimozavisimost' i konflikt interesov: SSHA i Latinskaia Amerika: vtoraiia polovina XX veka* (Moscow: Institute for Latin American Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, 2000), esp. pp. 13-31; and, very recently from across the Straits, Carlos Alzugaray Treto, 'The origins of the Missile Crisis: an asymmetrical confrontation in a Cold War context', paper to the Institute for the Study of the Americas, University of London, 16 Oct. 2012.

<sup>53</sup> Actually contiguous, of course, on land: Olga Miranda Bravo, *Vécinis indeseables: la base yanqui en Guantánamo* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1998).

<sup>54</sup> One year after the US had 'assumed before the world a grave responsibility for the future good government of Cuba', President William McKinley further declared that the 'new Cuba yet to arise from the ashes of the past' would 'be bound to [the USA] by ties of singular intimacy and strength': Annual Message to Congress, Dec. 1899.

<sup>55</sup> For neighbourliness and its antonyms, see e.g. Michael LaRosa and Frank O. Mora, eds, *Neighbourly adversaries: readings in U.S.-Latin American relations*, 2nd edn (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007); Alan McPherson, *Intimate ties, bitter struggles: the United States and Latin America since 1945* (Washington, DC: Potomac, 2006); Louis A. Pérez Jr, *Cuba and the United States: ties of singular intimacy*, 3rd edn (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2003); Henry Raymond, *Troubled neighbors: the story of U.S.-Latin American relations from FDR to the present*, A Century Foundation Book (Cambridge, MA: Westview, 2005); Wayne S. Smith, *The closest of enemies: a personal and diplomatic account of U.S.-Cuban relations since 1957* (New York: Norton, 1987).



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is the position of the Cuban government. Have we, though, to acknowledge that the 'hegemonic presumption' is as strong as ever and that 50 years of Cold War have no end in sight?

