

CUBAN FOREIGN POLICY: The Question of Maturity of Analysis

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- FROM CONFRONTATION TO NEGOTIATION: U.S. RELATIONS WITH CUBA.* By PHILLIP BRENNER. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1988. Pp. 118. \$24.95 cloth, \$7.95 paper.)
- REAGAN ON CUBA: SELECTED STATEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT.* By the CUBAN AMERICAN NATIONAL FOUNDATION. (Washington, D.C.: Cuban American National Foundation, 1986. Pp. 50. \$3.00.)
- THE EVOLUTION OF THE CUBAN MILITARY, 1492-1986.* By RAFAEL FERMOSELLE. (Miami, Fla.: Ediciones Universal, 1987. Pp. 585. \$21.95 paper.)
- CUBA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST.* By DAMIAN FERNANDEZ. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1988. Pp. 160. \$19.95.)
- CUBAN-AMERICAN RADIO WARS: IDEOLOGY IN INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS.* By HOWARD H. FREDERICK. (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing, 1986. Pp. 203. \$34.50.)
- POLITICAL HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM: CUBA AND NICARAGUA.* By PAUL HOLLANDER. (Washington, D.C.: Cuban American National Foundation, 1986. Pp. 32. \$3.00.)
- IMPERIAL STATE AND REVOLUTION: THE UNITED STATES AND CUBA, 1952-1986.* By MORRIS H. MORLEY. (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Pp. 571. \$59.50 cloth, \$16.95 paper.)
- FOLLOW THE LEADER IN THE HORN: THE SOVIET/CUBAN PRESENCE IN EAST AFRICA.* By WILLIAM E. RATLIFF. (Washington, D.C.: Cuban American National Foundation, 1986. Pp. 22. \$3.00.)
- THE CLOSEST OF ENEMIES: A PERSONAL AND DIPLOMATIC ACCOUNT OF U.S.-CUBAN RELATIONS SINCE 1957.* By WAYNE S. SMITH. (New York, N.Y.: W. W. Norton, 1987. Pp. 308. \$19.95 cloth.)
- FIDEL CASTRO AND THE UNITED STATES PRESS.* By JOHN P. WALLACH. (Washington, D.C.: Cuban American National Foundation, 1987. Pp. 26. \$3.00.)

The Cuban Revolution has always had a unique capability to inflame powerful passions, particularly in the United States. Indeed, no other twentieth-century country aside from the Soviet Union (and perhaps China) has aroused as much American paranoia and hostility over so

long a time as Castro's Cuba has for the past thirty years. This fact of life is aptly captured in Wayne Smith's book title, *The Closest of Enemies*, which evokes much more than the geographical proximity involved. Nor has the battle been joined only at the governmental level. The academic community too has been drawn (by choice or circumstance) into the fray, with the result being that Cubanology has frequently taken on a strong partisan flavor that has exposed it to charges of scholarly immaturity. Recognizing some probable degree of validity in these accusations in the past, this review essay will survey a sample of recent publications on Havana's foreign policies in an attempt to determine to what extent such criticisms may still be valid.

Evaluation Criteria

Trying to determine the degree of analytical maturity in any field is inevitably a risky business. Dissatisfaction will always be expressed over the standards used to make judgments: some analysts will insist that the criteria are invalid or incomplete or both, while others will complain that they have been applied inappropriately or unfairly. These problems cannot be resolved here, for they would require a foray into methodological modeling that lies far beyond the modest scope of this review. Instead, a few criteria will be proposed as reasonable, although admittedly imperfect, measures for addressing the question of "maturity of analysis" in contemporary Cuban foreign policy studies.

Nonpolemical Approach / This criterion does not require writers to be totally neutral about the Cuban Revolution. Indeed, it is probably next to impossible to assume such a stance because the problems involved in data collection compounded by widely divergent views concerning the basic motivations behind Havana's behavior have created a situation in which nearly any conclusion about the island's international relations involves a judgment call that may be perceived as having political implications. U.S. scholars are particularly susceptible to this phenomenon due to the high-charged animosity that has permeated the Washington-Havana relationship over the past three decades. Under such conditions, interpretive findings take on partisan connotations because they generally will be used to support the position of some ideological faction, thereby drawing academics into policy debates. Thus the key question to ask about Cuban specialists is not whether their efforts are politically neutral (they are not) but whether their positions on sensitive issues are presented responsibly: they must make a serious attempt to base their analysis on a comprehensive survey of the available material in order to avoid creating the impression that data are being used selectively to reinforce certain preconceptions. In short, analysts are best advised to

operate inductively instead of deductively lest the only result be increased posturing on all sides.

Analytical Multidimensionality / Sophistication is normally deemed to be a handmaiden of maturity. Applied to the realm of analyzing international relations, sophistication entails recognizing the fact that foreign policy results from complex, highly dynamic interactions among a large set of primary and intervening variables, all of which must be carefully examined before any conclusions can be reached regarding the exact nature of a country's role on the world stage. At the opposite (and clearly unacceptable) end of the spectrum lies single-factor analysis, which unfortunately has often plagued Cuban studies. Consider, for example, the tendency of the "Great Men" theorists, especially those in the Fidelophobe category, to attribute practically any development in Havana's foreign policy to Castro's personal preferences or quirks. Certainly, it would be grossly naive to underestimate the immense influence that Castro has always exerted. But the Revolution has undergone a process of institutionalization that has interjected multiple organizational players into the decision-making arena. Moreover, even in those instances where the buck stops on Castro's desk, his reactions will be influenced by a wide range of elements that lie beyond his control. Thus to view Havana's international relations solely as some kind of psychodrama involving the externalization of Castro's personality, frustrations, and ambitions may appeal to devotees of political soap operas, but it makes little practical sense.

Issue-Area Diversity or Multiple Levels of Interactional Analysis / It is perfectly legitimate for highly specialized projects to focus on a nation's international affairs in a single issue area at only one level of analysis. In most cases, however, scholarly goals are much more ambitious, and hence analytical maturity demands that at least one of these two characteristics be present. Therefore, if one chooses to work at the bilateral level by concentrating on Cuba's dealings with the United States or the Soviet Union, issue-area diversity should be pursued on the grounds that overlapping policy spheres require analysts to operate to some extent within these interfaces. For example, Cuba's economic ties with the USSR cannot be fully understood in isolation from the two countries' political and military relations. To try to separate these aspects would be an exercise in futility and would also evidence a low degree of conceptual sophistication. Conversely, if one's scope is limited to a specific issue area, such as Havana's developmental aid programs, it becomes advisable to incorporate various levels of analysis because the Cubans are likely to have somewhat distinct goals and to behave differently as their policy shifts from one plateau to another. Moreover, a strong case can be made for a

linkage approach based on the principle that what happens at one level of foreign affairs will be affected by what is or has been occurring at others. Ideally, issue-area diversity will be combined with multiple levels of analysis to produce truly high-quality macroperspectives on Cuban foreign policy.

Immaturity in the Study of Cuban Foreign Policy

After applying the standards discussed above, it becomes rather clear that much of the early scholarship on the Cuban Revolution could be deemed immature. Indeed, during the 1960s the ideological polemics that permeated the field sometimes appeared to have transformed it into an exercise in demonology in which normally staid academics could be found trading political insults and accusing one another of professional dishonesty. While this state of affairs was unusual, it was understandable given the controversy that has always swirled around revolutionary Cuba and the heated emotions it has unleashed. Moreover, the Fidelistas tended to exacerbate the situation by using almost purely ideological rationales to justify their actions, thereby helping to generate a climate that virtually forced observers to take sides.

In this highly charged atmosphere, single-factor approaches to Havana's foreign policy were common. Opponents of the Revolution were influenced by the proposition advocated by hard-line Cold War warriors that the messianic element in Marxism inevitably leads to a lust for conquest, and they therefore looked upon Castro's government as simply another typical communist state committed to subversion and aggression. Perceived as such, Cuba represented to these observers a threat that had to be contained at least and preferably eliminated. When operating on these assumptions, little if any serious consideration was given to the possibility that less diabolical explanations of Cuba's behavior might be possible, based on considerations such as security concerns or nationalistic sentiments. Meanwhile, those who were sympathetic toward Fidelismo frequently adopted a similarly one-sided stance, portraying Castro's Cuba as an anti-imperialistic white knight whose every move on the world stage was rooted in its commitment to social justice and proletarian internationalism. According to this perspective, revolutionary altruism was seen as reigning supreme within the inner circles of Cuban leadership, while the more pragmatic aspects of their international initiatives (which often followed the best realist tradition by being based on cold calculations of Cuba's vital national interests) tended to be overlooked.

The ideological bickering diminished somewhat in the 1970s, creating an opening for beginning to explore some of the less melodramatic aspects of Cuban foreign policy. While such inquiries lacked the atten-

tion-grabbing pyrotechnics of earlier works and therefore usually reached only a limited audience, they nevertheless were (and still are) crucial in providing practitioners as well as academic specialists with a far more accurate overview regarding the nature and dynamics of Havana's international relations. Perhaps the best example of this genre in the 1970s was Edward González's article on factionalism and bureaucratic in-fighting within Cuba's foreign-policy hierarchy.¹ Yet despite such progress toward greater sophistication, immature analyses continued to be published, as was graphically demonstrated during the latter half of the 1970s when Cuba startled the world by launching unprecedented operations in Angola and later Ethiopia. Only a few observers recognized this turn of events as a major redefinition of Havana's international role whose explanation demanded careful consideration of a wide range of causal variables. Many others, however, were content to employ a crude single-factor analysis that has become known as the "surrogate thesis." According to this notion, the Soviets have so thoroughly penetrated Cuba's decision-making structures by capitalizing on its socioeconomic and security vulnerabilities that the USSR effectively controls every aspect of Cuban domestic and foreign policies. In short, Havana is presented as little more than a puppet dancing to the Kremlin's tune, meaning that Cuba's overseas agenda (in Africa or elsewhere) is essentially a function of its dependency on and its subservience to the USSR. This perspective is admittedly "tidy" and appeals to those inclined to blame almost any international development that they do not like on a Moscow-orchestrated conspiracy, but such an interpretation has contributed little to appreciating the increasingly sophisticated face that Cuba has been showing the world.

Growing Maturity in Cuban Foreign Policy

Paradoxically, while the study of Cuban foreign affairs was mired in immaturity during the 1960s and 1970s, the policies themselves were becoming much more complex. In essence, the subject was developing faster than those who were supposed to be experts on it.

Although Havana's international scenario was probably always more intricate than many realized, in the first ten years after the Revolution the Cubans themselves often painted a somewhat simplistic picture of their concerns and activities. Specifically, they were prone to emphasize almost exclusively their ideological quarrels with both the superpowers and their dedication to promoting revolutionary armed struggle throughout the Western Hemisphere. Thus Fidelismo assumed a highly romantic aura, with the Cubans being portrayed as heroic insurgents defying unbelievable odds in their struggles against the Yankee, Russian, and Latin American establishments.

In reality, however, Havana's activities became quite complex, especially in the late 1970s. While the Cubans did not abandon their radical principles and particularly their commitment to proletarian internationalism, they added several new dimensions to their international profile. For example, as early as 1963 Havana demonstrated its determination to shed its historical identity as a purely hemispheric power by sending combat units to help Algeria (which had won its independence from France the previous year) in a border dispute with Morocco. Although settlement of the conflict prevented these forces from seeing any action, there is no reason to believe that Havana was less than completely serious in its apparent willingness to become militarily involved in North Africa. Subsequently, Cuba established an extensive network of state-to-state linkages in the Arab world and in sub-Saharan Africa. Unfortunately, however, the full extent and significance of such conventional diplomacy tended to be overshadowed by the controversy surrounding Havana's role in the Ethiopian-Somalian war (1977-1978) and especially in Angola, where since 1975 it has maintained an expeditionary force ranging from twenty to fifty thousand troops.

This Mideastern-African emphasis has been symptomatic of Cuba's entry into the larger realm of Third World politics. Having initially focused on Latin American problems, Havana soon began to address itself primarily to those issues that ranked high on the list of priorities of developing countries. In particular, Cuba became a leading advocate of the concept of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) and tried to become a catalyst in achieving greater Third World unity vis-à-vis the debt crisis. Cuba's goal was to establish the North-South axis on a par with East-West relations in its global perspective.

Two aspects of Cuba's growing Third World concerns that have been publicized less but are equally significant have been Cuban developmental aid programs and mediation efforts. Havana's approach to socio-economic assistance has been labor-intensive rather than capital-intensive, revolving around its large pool of doctors, teachers, agronomists, and other specialists. Under a standard arrangement, Cuba provides technical personnel whose main function is to get projects off to a strong start and to train local cadres to take over. Host governments assume financial responsibility for the Fidelistas' living expenses and for supplying whatever logistical support is necessary, but this cost may be waived in cases of hardship or for diplomatic or ideological reasons. By 1979 Havana had placed more than fourteen thousand aid personnel throughout the Third World, with 57 percent of them stationed in sub-Saharan Africa. In September of 1987, Castro announced in a speech that Cuba had two thousand doctors working abroad totally free of charge, more than the UN's World Health Organization. On the international mediation front, Havana's first major foray occurred in 1977, when Castro attempted

repeatedly during an extensive African tour to resolve the Eritrean insurgency in Ethiopia and the Somalian-Ethiopian dispute over the Ogaden Desert. When these efforts failed, Havana threw its support behind the Mengistu government in Addis Ababa. More recently in 1980–1981, Cuba sought unsuccessfully to play the peacemaker in the Iran-Iraq war.

Other moves to establish cordial bilateral ties with a wide spectrum of Third World countries have included a campaign to normalize Cuban relations with most Caribbean and Latin American states. Havana has also broadened its participation in mainstream (as opposed to strictly radical left-wing) international organizations. It has been especially attracted to functional associations and institutions like the Group of 77, which concentrates on trade and development matters. Unquestionably, however, Cuba's greatest success in multilateralism came in 1979 when Cuba was chosen to head the Movement of Nonaligned Nations, thereby establishing its leadership credentials on the global stage.

All this expanded activity suggests that the motivations as well as the mechanisms of Havana's behavior overseas have become much more multifaceted. As a result of interaction across a broad continuum of causal variables, Cuba is now pursuing an ambitious agenda in many different venues. As a result, the crucial question to be asked in this review essay is whether the study of Havana's foreign policy has achieved a comparable degree of subtlety or have observers simply continued to rely on old approaches and formulas? In attempting to answer this question, the "maturity criteria" explained previously will be applied to each work under review to determine which of the following classifications is appropriate: definitely unacceptable with regard to being mature (mainly due to excessive polemics or blatant unidimensionality); borderline with regard to being mature (applies especially to those efforts that have problems with issue-area diversity or multiple levels of interactional analysis but are otherwise solid); or definitely acceptable with regard to being mature. The proportion of works reviewed that survive this process of elimination should provide a fairly good indication of the current level of sophistication in the field.

Evaluation Review

The Cuban American National Foundation, which was organized in 1981, publishes four or five short monographs annually, some of which contain very useful material. Too often, however, the foundation's announced intent of basically informing the reading public about Cuba falls prey to the lure of propagandizing against the Revolution. Three of their four publications in the sample typify this unfortunate propensity for going beyond legitimate advocacy scholarship to polemical grandstanding.

Reagan on Cuba: Selected Statements by the President, containing excerpts from the years 1977 to 1983, holds no surprises whatsoever. The Fidelistas are portrayed in the worst possible terms: as Soviet mercenaries in Africa (p. 13), as torturers of U.S. prisoners of war in North Vietnam (p. 13), as the main cause of violence and instability in Central America (pp. 22–23), as deeply involved in the hemispheric drug trade (p. 28), and as one of the world's paramount supporters of international terrorism (pp. 45–46). Reagan evidently entered the White House convinced that the Cuban Revolution represented evil incarnate, and despite evidence of his flexibility in other areas (such as his willingness to respond favorably to Gorbachev's overtures and to begin formal contacts with the PLO), there is no indication that eight years in office changed his mind one iota. *Reagan on Cuba* is a testament to that myopia and thus contains little in the way of sophisticated insights into Havana's foreign policy, although much about the Reaganites' paranoia on the subject.

Paul Hollander's choice of topic in *Political Hospitality and Tourism: Cuba and Nicaragua* is fascinating, but sadly, his treatment of it is not. Rather than analyzing in any depth the impact that such activities might have in the larger context of cross-cultural exchanges and bilateral state relations, Hollander castigates the hosts for trying to impress their guests and the visitors for being dumb enough to fall for such ploys. More serious are his charges that the Sandinistas and especially the Fidelistas employ devious control techniques deliberately designed to deny their guests a chance to acquire accurate impressions about life in radical socialist societies.

The Cubans naturally try to put their best foot forward. So do North Americans—very few visitors to the United States get guided tours (official or otherwise) of the Bedford-Stuyvesant slums in New York City, the soup kitchens for the homeless in Los Angeles, or similar low points on the U.S. social landscape. But Hollander claims that the Cuban government, unlike U.S. authorities, actually prevents its invited guests from exploring on their own by dictating their itinerary and assigning an escort who makes sure that they never deviate from it. This might be true in some cases, yet my own experience in Havana (corroborated by others who have been there) included plenty of free time to roam the city at will, an opportunity denied to most U.S. citizens not by the Cuban government but by Washington's refusal to allow them to travel freely to Cuba. In any case, beyond the individual experiences on which Hollander selectively focuses lie more important issues like the role that tourism might play in ameliorating tensions between countries. Unfortunately, Cuba-bashing takes precedence over such questions in *Political Hospitality and Tourism*.

The Hollander approach is largely replicated in John Wallach's *Fidel Castro and the United States Press*, this time with Castro playing the ego-

maniacal manipulator and much of the U.S. media community, especially the naive liberals, playing the dupes. Like any effective modern politician (including Ronald Reagan, the “Great Communicator”), Castro attempts to use the media to get his message across to domestic and foreign audiences. The fact that he often does so successfully obviously irks Wallach. But the analysis would have been much more useful had it refrained from the timeworn practice of castigating the press for allowing itself to be used and instead probed such topics as the extent to which the media can and perhaps should be employed as a mechanism for informal summity by leaders who are precluded by circumstances from pursuing conventional direct contacts. Wallach chose instead to engage in essentially the same behavior that he finds so reprehensible when practiced by Cubans—political propaganda.

Perhaps the most difficult work to classify is William Ratliff’s *Follow the Leader in the Horn: The Soviet-Cuban Presence in East Africa* because it seems to have a “split personality.” On the positive side, Ratliff departs from the tradition of the Cuban American National Foundation by toning down the anti-Cuban polemics considerably. Sometimes he backslides, as in his insistence on characterizing shifts in Havana’s attitudes toward some governments and especially insurgent groups as “betrayals” rather than considering the real possibility that such moves represent normal reactions to changing circumstances or pragmatic acknowledgements that previous positions were incorrect. On the whole, however, Ratliff avoids ideological shrillness and does not blatantly slant material for partisan purposes. Moreover, he recognizes that Cuba’s policies in the Horn of Africa operate at various levels and therefore must be viewed in the context of the island’s relations with the two superpowers, various subnational organizations like the Eritrean secessionists, and the larger African community.

These assets are counterbalanced, however, by Ratliff’s attraction to the surrogate thesis, which suggests unidimensionality in his interpretation of the motivations behind Havana’s behavior. He is not an inflexible devotee of this point of view in that he concedes that Cuban initiatives can involve various currents and nuances. Nevertheless, in Ratliff’s scenario almost everything seems to come back to Havana’s connection with Moscow, as exemplified by his contention that “Castro’s abandonment of the Latin American guerrillas in the late 1960’s, of the Somalis and Eritreans less than a decade later, and perhaps of the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen in 1986, all occurred in cooperation with the Soviet Union. The African betrayals, in particular, reflected Castro’s conviction that what is good for the Soviet Union is, by and large, good for Cuba as well, at least in international terms” (p. 20). This proclivity combined with occasional lapses into gratuitous antirevolutionary rhetoric creates just enough uncertainty about *Follow the Leader in the Horn* to place it in the borderline category regarding maturity of analysis.

Howard Frederick's *Cuban-American Radio Wars: Ideology in International Telecommunication* is undoubtedly the most methodologically sophisticated of the works under review in its application of modern statistical content analysis to its chosen subject. But despite the specialized expertise that Frederick brings to bear and his broader ambitions to illuminate "the wider 'war of ideas' being waged today on many levels and in many channels" (p. 2), this monograph does not represent a truly sophisticated treatment of Havana's foreign affairs according to the criteria being employed here.

The most obvious problem is that Frederick fails to incorporate either issue-area diversity or multiple levels of analysis into his work because he limits his scope to one single aspect of revolutionary Cuba's dealings with Washington. Frederick insists that he is trying to make a major contribution to formulating a macrotheory of the role of ideology in international communications, but he actually never goes much beyond the initially narrow paradigm. Equally debilitating is the lack of conceptual coherence in this approach. Rather than systematically following a central theme, Frederick dabbles in a number of essentially disparate subjects. He begins with a historical survey of U.S.-Cuban tensions over media issues and then switches to a rather abstract philosophical discussion regarding the ideological dimensions of international communications and propaganda. The study culminates by examining the content of three weeks of radio broadcasts and reaching the hardly surprising conclusion that the programs reflect the ideological hostility and rivalry existing between Washington and Havana. While the work includes some interesting information and ideas, the inconsistent format in which they are presented tends to distract attention from their significance. Basically, then, *Cuban-American Radio Wars* proves once again that complex quantitative techniques do not necessarily guarantee impressive results.

At first glance, Rafael Fermoselle's *The Evolution of the Cuban Military, 1492-1986* would seem to possess all the necessary ingredients for mature analysis: it is nonpolemical, examines a range of variables affecting the current configuration and long-term evolution of the island's armed forces, and pursues inquiries at various levels of interaction. On closer inspection, however, it becomes apparent that although Fermoselle reveals a lot about the development and nature of the Cuban military establishment, his analysis of its impact on the actual content of Cuba's foreign policies is somewhat superficial.

Fermoselle is at his best when providing historical narrative and relating Havana's military capabilities to such factors as the state of the nation's economy, the dynamics of the Cuban-Soviet link, and the degree of domestic support for overseas commitments. Yet the mere existence of strong armed forces does not necessarily lead to growing militarization of a country's international relations. To ascertain the extent to which such

potential influence is or may be transformed into policy outcomes, the interplay between the military establishment and other actors in the decision-making process must be explored (as was done in the previously cited article by Edward González), along with other considerations that might function to restrain or facilitate the armed forces' effectiveness at bureaucratic in-fighting. On the whole, Fermoselle does not devote much attention to such matters. For example, he notes that the military contingent in the Revolution's upper leadership echelons was reduced by the Cuban Communist party at its Third Congress in 1986, but he does not address the obvious question of why the armed forces seemed to be losing political clout when their status was growing according to such conventional indicators as hardware, manpower, and budgets. This kind of egregious analytical oversight prevents *The Evolution of the Cuban Military* from rising above the rank of borderline maturity.

The four works that I find acceptable according to my criteria of mature analysis are diverse in character, although all but one deal mainly with U.S.–Cuban relations. In all four cases, however, each author's personal feelings about Havana's track record (which are quite strong in some instances) do not affect adversely the effort to present a comprehensive, responsible analysis of Cuban foreign policies since the Revolution.

Of the three works focusing on U.S.–Cuban affairs, Morris Morley's *Imperial State and Revolution: The United States and Cuba, 1952–1986* is the most theoretical and the most ideological. Its keystone is the concept of the imperial state, which Morley defines as “a state with boundaries for capital accumulation located far beyond its geographic limits” (p. 1). In his view, the Cuban Revolution represented a fundamental challenge to Washington's efforts to maintain the island within such boundaries and consequently triggered a cycle of animosity that has yet to run its course. The main problem with such an approach, at least from the perspective of this review, is that by using relations between Havana and the United States as a case study to develop the imperialist state idea, Morley tends to devote more analytical attention to American foreign policy than to Cuban policy. Nevertheless, because of the immense impact that Washington has always exerted, *Imperial State and Revolution* makes an important contribution to understanding the difficulties confronting revolutionary Cuba in its struggle to define its role in a world dominated by superpowers.

Phillip Brenner's *From Confrontation to Negotiation: U.S. Relations with Cuba* reflects the outlook of a policy advisor rather than a theoretician. He is basically interested in explaining the main factors (internal and external) that influence the two countries' behavior toward one another and in clarifying the major issues that must be addressed to normalize the situation (including Havana's ties to the USSR, Central America, Radio Martí, and the American economic embargo). Having accomplished these

goals rather successfully, Brenner concludes that Washington is primarily responsible for the lack of significant progress toward rapprochement: "None of Cuba's demands threaten fundamental security interests of the United States, and all are amenable to compromise, [while] the United States would have Cuba relinquish the security that the Soviet Union provides and renounce basic principles that are articulated in its Constitution" (p. 52). Despite this apparent impasse, Brenner believes that detente would serve the interests of both nations, and he suggests a series of incremental initiatives (especially on Washington's part) to energize the process. None of these recommendations are particularly novel, with the possible exception of a proposed nonaggression pact, yet all are reasonable and based on a firm grasp of the crosscurrents that have complicated this relationship throughout the twentieth century. Policymakers on both sides of the Florida Straits, especially those to the north, would do well to read *From Confrontation to Negotiation* carefully.

Ultimately, however, the greatest insight into Havana's foreign policy is supplied by Wayne Smith's memoirs, at least within the context of U.S.–Cuban tensions. Written with wit and style, *The Closest of Enemies: A Personal and Diplomatic Account of U.S.–Cuban Relations since 1957* probes the nuances of the numerous diplomatic dances that the two governments have performed. In the process, Smith paints an excellent picture of the Cuban outlook on world affairs. As the former head of the U.S. State Department's Interests Section in Havana, Smith is not naively sympathetic toward the Fidelistas, as some have suggested.² To the contrary, he criticizes the Cubans when he feels their actions warrant it, especially for insensitivity in dealing with domestic dissidents. Yet Smith is admittedly harsher in his judgments of Washington's policies, blaming the Reagan administration in particular for adopting a short-sighted and unnecessarily intransigent stand vis-à-vis Havana. In any case, the portrait that emerges is that of an individual who did what should be expected of any good diplomat: he developed a sophisticated grasp of the history, culture, politics, style, and personalities of the country to which he was posted. As a result, *The Closest of Enemies* offers one of the most fascinating and enlightening forays available into the complexities of Havana's international relations and the U.S.–Cuban imbroglio.

Damian Fernández's *Cuba's Foreign Policy in the Middle East* is a trendsetting work in two important respects. First, it tackles a subject rather far removed from the mainstream of studies of Cuban foreign policy. Rejecting the conventional view of Havana as little more than a bit player in Arab affairs, Fernández demonstrates that revolutionary Cuba's international profile has featured a vigorous Middle Eastern component. This accomplishment is important in its own right and also helps to flesh out the image of Cuba as having created a unique role on the world stage by being one of the few small states with a truly global overseas agenda.

Second, Fernández has incorporated nearly every possible element into his coverage. Especially useful are his attempts to focus on the mechanisms of making and implementing Cuban foreign policy and on the impact that considerations of domestic costs and benefits can have on the choice of options. If any serious gap remains in the book, it is the failure to discuss more fully the details of Cuba's unsuccessful attempts to convince the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to throw its petropower behind a major campaign to push the concept of a New International Economic Order. In general, however, *Cuba's Foreign Policy in the Middle East* can serve as a model of analytical multidimensionality and issue-area diversity for anyone interested in inquiring into some regional aspect of Cuba's external relations.

Conclusion

Is it still fair to accuse Cubanologists of scholarly immaturity? Based on the evaluations made here, the proper response is a resounding "maybe." The ten works reviewed spread rather evenly across the spectrum—three were found unacceptable, three were borderline, and four passed muster. Such results are not particularly encouraging at first glance, implying that the field of Cuban policy studies is either sorely lacking in sophistication or has allowed itself to be inordinately distracted by ideological bickering. This sample, however, is heavily loaded with publications from the Cuban American National Foundation, whose interests are clearly more political than academic. If this foundation's publications are eliminated, one finds a very different configuration that is devoid of unqualified immaturity, in which fully two-thirds of the studies meet the most stringent standards. Viewed from the latter perspective, the critics' complaints would appear to be applicable only to the works of a small minority of specialists on Cuban foreign policy.

The advances made in qualitative depth have not always been matched with regard to substantive scope, for there is still a tendency to define Cuba's international role too much in terms of its relationships with the superpowers. Scholars need to focus on previously neglected subjects: Havana's evolving ties with Asian states, which have received no serious scrutiny whatsoever; its developmental aid programs, which have become an important component of its growing emphasis on Third World affairs; Cuba's attempts to don the mantle of conflict mediator, thereby belying the image of the Fidelistas as chronic troublemakers and threats to peace; and the bureaucratic aspects of making and conducting Cuban foreign policy, with special attention to the structural facets of the process and the organizational dynamics that affect its outcomes. Once such initiatives are well underway, the question of maturity of analysis should be laid to rest once and for all.

NOTES

1. Edward González, "Complexities of Cuban Foreign Policy," *Problems of Communism* 26 (Nov.-Dec. 1977):1-15.
2. See, for example, Irving Louis Horowitz, "Romancing the Dictator," *Caribbean Review* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1988):25-27. His review of Smith's book could at best be characterized as a polite hatchet job.