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U.S. EMBASSY IN HAVANA: CHALLENGES AND ENDEAVORS AFTER THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

The article is devoted to exploring the role of the U.S. Embassy in Havana following the Cuban Revolution and its significance in shaping U.S.-Cuba relations under Fidel Castro's leadership.

The purpose of the article is to consider the embassy's mission, challenges faced, and its impact on the evolving diplomatic landscape between the two countries during the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The research methodology is based on the principle of historicism and problem-chronological and complex approaches. Analysis of archival documents encompassed an extensive review of diplomatic records, memoranda, reports, correspondence, and various official documents linked to the functioning of the U.S. Embassy in Havana post the Cuban Revolution. Through contextual analysis, the study scrutinized historical, political, social, and economic conditions that significantly shaped the operations and activities of the U.S. Embassy in Havana subsequent to the Cuban Revolution.

The scientific novelty of the study consists in an attempt to identify and analyze the complexity and sequence of diplomatic interactions, as well as uncover patterns in the actions of the United States and Cuba in the initial months following the Cuban Revolution. It particularly focuses on the uncertainty and primary motives underlying the diplomatic decisions of both countries during this period.

Conclusions: The analysis reveals that the tensions between the United States and Cuba during the late 1950s and early 1960s were rooted in historical issues and entrenched diplomatic strategies, hindering the development of a new framework for interaction. Despite the embassy's diligent efforts, these endeavors failed to alleviate the escalating strain, eventually leading to the severance of diplomatic ties.

Keywords: The United States, Cuba, Cuban Revolution, U.S. Embassy, diplomacy.

Problem Statement. In the current geopolitical landscape, the U.S. Embassy in Cuba confronts a multitude of intricate challenges while navigating the reopened US Mission in Havana within a complex diplomatic environment. With the Biden administration's arrival, discernible shifts have emerged in the dynamics of U.S.-Cuba relations, sparking a reevaluation of policies and fostering optimism for enhanced bilateral ties. Nevertheless, enduring historical tensions and the legacy of strained relations present formidable obstacles for the Mission in Havana.

The relevance of researching the activities of the U.S. Embassy in Havana after the Cuban Revolution lies in its capacity to provide a historical backdrop, identify fundamental factors influencing past tensions, and offer pivotal insights crucial for managing and enhancing both current and future relations between the United States and Cuba.

Analysis of the most important studies and publications. In recent years, an extensive body of research has delved into dissecting the intricate political, economic, and social dynamics shaping the relationship between the United States and Cuba following the revolution. Scholars such as E. Dominguez, G. Prevost¹,

¹ Dominguez, E. M., Prevost, G. (2008). *United States-Cuban Relations: A Critical History*. Lexington Books.

L. Perez¹, W. M. LeoGrande and P. Kornbluh² have meticulously explored various dimensions of U.S. foreign policy in Cuba during the initial post-revolutionary period. Additionally, researchers like J. Lievesley³, L. Schultz⁴, P. Gleijeses⁵, have focused on understanding the profound impact of the Cuban Revolution on the bilateral relations between the United States and Cuba. Despite these valuable contributions illuminating the broader context of U.S.-Cuban relations, there exists a conspicuous void in comprehending the specific evolution and subtleties of the U.S. Embassy's mission in Havana post-Cuban revolution.

The research draws upon a comprehensive array of *primary sources*, encompassing diplomatic records, memoranda, reports, official correspondence, and various other pertinent documents directly linked to the functioning and activities of the U.S. Embassy in Havana after the Cuban Revolution. The memoirs penned by Philip Bonsall⁶, the American Ambassador to Havana from 1959 to 1960, hold significant value and relevance to this study.

The purpose of this study was to delve deeply into the dynamics and evolution of the U.S. Embassy mission in Havana subsequent to Cuba's revolutionary period. *Research tasks include the following*: dissecting the intricacies of the evolving diplomatic landscape between the United States and Cuba, delineating the motives and implications behind key diplomatic maneuvers. By examining primary sources, diplomatic correspondences, and historical records, this study endeavors to shed light on the pivotal role played by the U.S. Embassy in Havana, elucidating its significance within the broader context of U.S.-Cuba relations. Moreover, this article will outline the principal findings derived from the analysis and present a narrative to comprehend the evolution of diplomatic engagements between these two nations.

The main texts of the article. The period of revolution in Cuba, extending from 1953 to 1958, significantly transformed the relationship between Washington and Havana. Subsequent to the Cuban Revolution, there were prompt shifts in the United States' perception of the new Cuban regime's actions. Concurrently, the Cuban government's position regarding US policies underwent a transformation. These changes provoked considerable tensions in American-Cuban relations. During this time, the U.S. Embassy in Havana assumed a pivotal role. It functioned as a crucial center for monitoring and understanding the evolving dynamics between the United States and the newly formed government led by Fidel Castro.

Although the United States formally acknowledged the new Cuban government on January 7, 1959, its overall response to the Cuban Revolution remained uncertain. In the initial months, both sides endeavored to find common ground and clarify their positions amid these unprecedented circumstances.

To gain deeper insights into the nascent Cuban government and chart an informed strategic direction concerning new regime, the US undertook efforts to gather intelligence about the revolutionary authorities and their leader, Fidel Castro. Initial analyses suggested that Castro, in terms of his political ideologies, leaned toward nationalism and held some socialist inclinations. Despite criticizing the US for supporting the former Fulgencio Batista regime, he didn't harbor personal animosity toward Washington⁷. According to assessments from the US Embassy in Havana, the new Cuban government was predominantly composed of individuals who had opposed the Batista government during the Cuban Revolution⁸.

In the early aftermath of the revolution, Consul Park Wollam in Santiago de Cuba penned a letter to Deputy Director of the Office of Caribbean and Mexican Affairs Edward Little, encapsulating Cuban sentiment toward the United States. Wollam observed that the revolution's impact on relations between Washington and Havana was "somewhat worse than expected"⁹. There was a prevalent belief in Cuban

¹ Pérez, L. A. (2003). *Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy*. The University of Georgia Press.

² LeoGrande, W. M., Kornbluh, P. (2015). *Back Channel to Cuba: The Hidden History of Negotiations between Washington and Havana*. The University of North Carolina Press.

³ Lievesley, G. (2004). *The Cuban Revolution: Past, Present and Future*. Palgrave Macmillan.

⁴ Schoultz, L. (2009). *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic: The United States and the Cuban Revolution*. University of North Carolina Press.

⁵ Gleijeses, P. (2002). *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976*. The University of North Carolina Press.

⁶ Bonsal, P. (1971). *Cuba, Castro, and the United States*. University of Pittsburgh Press.

⁷ White House Special Staff Note. Washington, January 13, 1959. (1991). In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 356. United States Government Printing Office.

⁸ Despatch From the Embassy in Cuba to the Department of State. Havana, January 19, 1959. (1991). In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 370-372. United States Government Printing Office.

⁹ Letter From the Consul at Santiago de Cuba (Wollam) to the Deputy Director of the Office of Caribbean and Mexican Affairs (Little). Santiago de Cuba, January 19, 1959. (1991). In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 372-374. United States Government Printing Office.

society that the US bore responsibility for the violence and bombings carried out by the Batista regime. This perception could bolster the standing of communists and other anti-American factions. Consul Wollam suggested pivoting the focus away from justifying Washington's policy on the island and instead informing Cuban society about the positive aspects of US engagement in Cuba.

Consequently, American intelligence underscored dissatisfaction from both the Castro's government and Cuban society regarding US policy. Given these new circumstances, it was deemed crucial to pay increased attention to this aspect.

To foster amicable relations with the new Cuban government, the US engaged in a series of meetings with its representatives. These discussions aimed to clarify pivotal issues that could hinder the restoration of cordial ties between Washington and Havana. For instance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba Roberto Agramonte, conversing with U.S. Embassy Counselor Daniel Braddock, highlighted concerns about American military missions and press activities during the 1953-1958 revolutionary events. He also pointed out US Ambassador Earl Smith's friendly connections with former Cuban Dictator Fulgencio Batista, which were viewed unfavorably by the new government¹. Moreover, the American side acknowledged that the extradition of certain political refugees from the Batista regime, who had found refuge in the US, could pose a major issue in relations with the new Cuban government.

Having grasped the potential contradictions between the US and Cuba, Washington opted for a conventional approach to address them. Recognizing the challenge of fostering friendly ties without a new ambassador, the White House appointed Philip Bonsal, a distinguished expert in Latin American affairs, as the US ambassador to Havana.² Understanding that applying pressure at this stage could fortify anti-American influences on the island, the objective for the new ambassador was to exert a soft yet consistent diplomatic influence on Fidel Castro and the Cuban government.

In mid-February 1959, on the brink of Bonsal's arrival in Havana, the Cuban regime's stance and intentions toward the United States were still evolving. However, the new government recognized that fostering positive relations with the USA was crucial for Cuba's political and economic interests.

During the initial weeks, U.S. Ambassador Philip Bonsal dedicated substantial diplomatic efforts to promote effective collaboration between Washington and Havana. Based on Bonsal's memoirs, he actively participated in multiple meetings alongside Fidel Castro and members of his cabinet. He also liaised with influential personalities, including newspaper editors, aiming to express the positive intentions of the American populace and government to the Cuban people. Throughout these dialogues, Philip Bonsal emphasized the US government's willingness to entertain any alterations desired by the fledgling Cuban administration.³

Reflecting on his endeavors, the new ambassador advocated breaking away from the traditional format of U.S.-Cuban diplomatic ties to forge a more constructive relationship with the new Cuban government. Bonsal believed that the paternalistic relationship that had defined relations between two countries since 1898 was outdated. He advocated for transitioning towards an egalitarian partnership with Cuba⁴. However, this perspective wasn't universally accepted in Washington. According to American historian Jules Benjamin, most US officials presumed that circumstances would compel Castro to adhere to the established framework of US-Cuban relations. Essentially, they believed that even a revolutionary leader could be guided to conform to "proper behavior"⁵.

In April 1959, an unprecedented visit occurred when the new Cuban Prime Minister, Fidel Castro, journeyed to the United States. This unofficial visit, invited by the American Society of Newspaper Editors. This provided an opportunity for both sides to understand each other's viewpoints on various issues. As early as February 1959, U.S. Embassy Counselor in Havana Daniel Braddock speculated that Fidel Castro's visit

¹ Telegram From the Embassy in Cuba to the Department of State. Havana, January 20, 1959 – 5 p.m. № 864. (1991). In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 377. United States Government Printing Office.

² Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Between the President and the Secretary of State, Washington, January 9, 1959, 2:56 p.m. (1991). In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 349. United States Government Printing Office.

³ Bonsal P. (1967, January). Cuba, Castro and the United States. *Foreign Affairs*. <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/cuba/1967-01-01/cuba-castro-and-united-states>> (2023, July, 12).

⁴ LeoGrande, W. M., Kornbluh, P. (2015) *Back Channel to Cuba: The Hidden History of Negotiations between Washington and Havana*. The University of North Carolina Press, 11-12.

⁵ Benjamin, J.(1989). Interpreting the U.S. Reaction to the Cuban Revolution, 1959-1960. *Cuban Studies*, 19, 150.

to the United States might dispel suspicions about the Cuban leader¹. Nevertheless, an official invitation for the Cuban Prime Minister to visit Washington wasn't yet on the table. As later recalled by Philip Bonsal, a visit by Fidel Castro to the USA, paired with President Dwight Eisenhower's reciprocal visit to the island, might have fostered amicable relations with the new Cuba. However, the opportune moment for these visits had not yet arrived².

The unofficial visit of the Cuban leader to the United States was received ambiguously in Washington. On one hand, Fidel Castro, as the Prime Minister of Cuba, disregarded diplomatic protocol by not informing U.S. government about his intentions. Therefore, the State Department did not support an official invitation for Castro's visit and, considering his official status, did not schedule a high-level meeting. On the other hand, the White House understood that Fidel Castro, as the leader of a successful Cuban revolutionary movement, would be a key figure in U.S.-Cuban relations for some time³. With this in mind, efforts were made by the Americans to organize meetings with politicians, representatives of the economic elite, and U.S. Vice President Richard Nixon⁴.

The State Department had prior information that the Cuban delegation planned to discuss economic aid to the republic⁵. The Dwight Eisenhower Administration assumed that loans and "good relations" could potentially sway Fidel Castro. These thoughts were based on paternalistic views of the United States towards Latin America. Hence, Castro's visit was perceived in the White House as a traditional form of U.S.-Cuba interaction – a request for economic aid to support the regime. Consequently, American officials were assured about the outcome of the negotiations and aimed to steer Fidel Castro towards what they deemed the "right direction": preventing Cuba from propagating communist ideals and ensuring its alignment with the interests of the United States. This remained the central objective during the meetings involving Vice President Richard Nixon, Acting Secretary of State Christian Herter, and Fidel Castro. For instance, they provided guidance to Castro regarding policies that were deemed beneficial for Cuba while also warning against the increasing influence of communism within his government⁶. Such a paternalistic stance and the proposed methods of interaction were met with disapproval by the Cuban delegation, leading to significant implications for future relations. According to Carlos Franqui, editor of the Cuban newspaper "Revolución", who accompanied Castro, the encounter between Fidel and Nixon was disastrous, establishing lasting animosity between them⁷. This incident signified a missed opportunity to establish a new model of interaction between the United States and Cuba.

The Dwight Eisenhower Administration assessed the Cuban leader's unofficial visit to the United States more positively. The preliminary analysis presented by the State Department on April 23, 1959, indicated that amidst the Cold War and the struggle against the communist threat, Cuba was most likely to remain in the Western bloc⁸. Therefore, the White House decided to adopt a wait-and-see position regarding the new Cuban government.

After the visit to the United States, Fidel Castro continued his journey through Latin American countries, actively participating in political discussions and popularizing the idea of the Cuban Revolution. The result of this trip was a clear understanding of the need to review the principles defining Cuba's national

¹ Telegram From the Embassy in Cuba to the Department of State. Havana, February 5, 1959 – 11 a.m. (1991). In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 395. United States Government Printing Office.

² Bonsal, P. (1971). *Cuba, Castro, and the United States*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 62.

³ Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rubottom) to the Acting Secretary of State. Washington, March 12, 1959. (1991). In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 428-430. United States Government Printing Office.

⁴ Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs' Staff Assistant (Devine) to Certain Officers in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs. Washington, April 8, 1959. (1991). In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 452. United States Government Printing Office.

⁵ Telegram From the Embassy in Cuba to the Department of State. Havana, April 9, 1959 – 6 p.m. (1991). In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 453. United States Government Printing Office.

⁶ Safford, J. J. (1980, Fall). The Nixon-Castro Meeting of 19 April 1959. *Diplomatic History*, 4(4), 426-429. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/24911225>> (2023, July, 10).

⁷ LeoGrande, W. M., Kornbluh, P. (2015). *Back Channel to Cuba: The Hidden History of Negotiations between Washington and Havana*. The University of North Carolina Press, 18.

⁸ Memorandum Prepared in the Department of State. Washington, April 23, 1959. (1991). In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 482. United States Government Printing Office.

interests. Upon returning home in May 1959, Fidel Castro began implementing a series of radical reforms. One of the most prominent worries in the USA emerged from the execution of agrarian reform, considering the interconnectedness of American interests with Cuba's economy.

Washington anticipated that this reform would reshape Cuba's land-use system, dismantling the American sugar monopoly and extensive land holdings. Despite the belief in the State Department's capability to impact the final resolution regarding American property in Cuba, diplomatic endeavors proved fruitless.

Before the official publication of the agrarian law, the US Embassy held meetings with Cuban officials to clarify the reform's contentious issues and understand its potential impact on bilateral relations. However, attempts by Philip Bonsal to propose U.S. assistance in the agrarian reform while considering American interests to Fidel Castro yielded no success. Even personal meetings between Bonsal and Castro did not assure that U.S. interests would remain unaffected during the reform¹.

The inability to resolve issues related to these radical reforms, pressure from American business representatives and anti-American statements from Cuban officials, led the U.S. Embassy in Havana to advocate for maintaining a friendly policy toward Cuba and particularly its leader, Fidel Castro. Ambassador Bonsal emphasized that the United States should focus on using economic leverage rather than backing movements that aimed to overthrow Castro regime, which enjoyed substantial support among Cubans at that time². Consequently, it was in the interest of Washington to continue cooperating with the Cuban government through the provision of technical and advisory assistance. However, discontinuing such cooperation could be interpreted as part of a campaign to undermine the Cuban revolution. Nonetheless, Philip Bonsal, in his proposals to the State Department, also recognized the uncertainty regarding future of U.S.-Cuban relations and emphasized the importance of avoiding long-term commitments³.

Fidel Castro's ambitious foreign policy, particularly supporting revolutionary movements in Latin America, also contributed to strained U.S.-Cuban relations. He aimed to replicate Cuba's revolution in other countries, posing a threat to U.S. interests in the region. The U.S. National Security Council decided to exert control over the situation in the Western Hemisphere through the Organization of American States (OAS), pressuring the OAS to enhance its effectiveness in containing revolutionary movements in Latin America⁴.

By the autumn of 1959, relations between the USA and Cuba were rapidly deteriorating. Ambassador Bonsal reported on the situation in Havana in an urgent three-page telegram to the Department of State on October 23, 1959. He highlighted the proliferation of false narratives in the Cuban press accusing the U.S. of impeding Cuba's supply reception, planning to reduce the Cuban sugar quota, and even involvement in Cuban bombings. Despite rebutting these claims, Bonsal stressed the urgency of rectifying the situation. He proposed that President Eisenhower intervene, or alternatively, Herter engage with Roa, or even suggested his own appearance on Cuban television to set the record straight. Bonsal recognized the genuine threats these false narratives posed; failure to control the narrative would further deteriorate U.S.-Cuban relations⁵.

In response, Secretary of State Christian Herter authorized U.S. Ambassador to meet Cuba's President Dorticos Torrado, emphasizing the Washington's desire for friendship based on mutual respect and historical ties. However, Bonsal expressed concern over deliberate efforts within Cuba fostering distrust and hostility,

¹ Telegram From the Embassy in Cuba to the Department of State. Havana, June 12, 1959 – 6 p.m. (1991).

In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 529-530. United States Government Printing Office; Telegram From the Embassy in Cuba to the Department of State. Havana, September, 04, 1959. (1991).

In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 595-598). United States Government Printing Office.

² Telegram From the Embassy in Cuba to the Department of State. Havana, July 7, 1959. – 5 p.m. (1991).

In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 553-554. United States Government Printing Office.

³ Telegram From the Embassy in Cuba to the Department of State. Havana, July 24, 1959 – 5 p.m. (1991).

In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 574-575. United States Government Printing Office.

⁴ Memorandum of Discussion at the 411th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, June 25, 1959. (1991).

In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 543-544. United States Government Printing Office.

⁵ Telegram From the Embassy in Cuba to the Department of State. Havana, October 23, 1959 – 7 p.m. (1991).

In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 639-641. United States Government Printing Office.

aiming to replace the cordial relationship. He aimed to counter false rumors while highlighting the Cuban government's failure in diplomacy and friendship in public discourse. A week later, Bonsal's update revealed a rise in anti-American sentiment, even among high-ranking officials, and increased harassment of U.S. citizens by Cubans, heightening insecurity. He observed Fidel Castro's alignment with extremism without explicitly declaring himself a communist. Furthermore, Castro's opposition had shifted to the lower classes, lacking the means to challenge him, portraying him as an unchallenged dictator¹. This prompted Secretary Herter to swiftly prepare a memorandum for the President, briefing him on the Cuban situation.

Thus, six months after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution the United States leadership first contemplated overthrowing Fidel Castro's regime. Initially, the State Department refrained from provocations, allowing Castro's government to stabilize traditional U.S.-Cuban relations. However, the radical reforms, deliberate incitement of anti-American sentiments in Cuba, and aspirations to spread similar sentiments in other Latin American countries convinced the United States that continuing its current approach was untenable.

Consultations for developing a new strategy for U.S. policy toward Cuba lasted several months. According to Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Roy Rubottom Jr., by the end of October 1959, the State Department, in collaboration with the CIA, recommended to the President the plan of actions against Castro's regime². The new political proposals were formulated and proposed to President Eisenhower by Secretary of State Herter. Their essence was to support and encourage opposition forces against Fidel Castro's regime in both Cuba and other Latin American countries. To achieve this goal, the United States was to avoid direct pressure or interference with Castro's government, except in cases concerning the protection of U.S. legitimate interests³.

The new program required refinement and, with certain clarifications, was supported by the President's administration. The U.S. Embassy in Havana was more restrained in its reaction to the new program. Ambassador Bonsal expressed confidence that Castro's government wouldn't last long and suggested that the U.S. should continue to demonstrate empathy for the Cubans and maintain the status quo in Cuba⁴.

By January 1960, relations between Washington and Havana had significantly worsened. While the official ties seemed stable and somewhat friendly, tensions were escalating. This was mainly due to Cuba's continuous nationalization of American property on the island, including the seizure of an additional 70,000 acres of sugar plantations by the Cuban government. The situation worsened with increased activities from counter-revolutionary groups operating from US territory. These groups conducted extensive bombings targeting sugar refineries in various Cuban provinces, further heightening tensions⁵. Rumors were also circulating in Cuban society about US-backed assassination attempts targeting Fidel Castro. These actions, later confirmed, were initially planned by the CIA in December 1959⁶.

American officials viewed the Cuban situation as one of the most intricate challenges in their history of dealing with Latin America. President Dwight D. Eisenhower urged the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to take decisive actions against Castro's government, seeking more proactive strategies beyond mere suppression⁷. This led to proposals from the CIA, including plans to sabotage Cuban sugar refineries, as a way to counter Castro's regime.

In response to mounting pressure from the United States, Cuba sought support beyond the American-influenced Western Hemisphere. Consequently, in February 1960, Cuba forged trade and economic relations

¹ Telegram From the Embassy in Cuba to the Department of State. Havana, October 30, 1959 – noon. (1991). In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 648-650. United States Government Printing Office.

² Memorandum of Discussion at the 432d Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, January 14, 1960, 9 a.m. (1991). In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 743. United States Government Printing Office.

³ Memorandum From the Secretary of State to the President. Washington, November 5, 1959. (1991). In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 656. United States Government Printing Office.

⁴ Telegram From the Embassy in Cuba to the Department of State. Havana, November 6, 1959 – 4 p.m. (1991). In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 659. United States Government Printing Office.

⁵ Schoultz, L. (2009). *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic: The United States and the Cuban Revolution*. University of North Carolina Press, 110.

⁶ Colhoun, J. (2013). *Gangsterismo: The United States, Cuba and the Mafia, 1933 to 1966*. OR Books, 85-86.

⁷ Gleijeses, P. (2002). *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976*. The University of North Carolina Press, 15.

with the Soviet Union. Furthermore, diplomatic relations, severed by Joseph Stalin in 1952, were restored on May 8, 1960. Following the USSR's lead, many socialist countries also established diplomatic relations with Cuba that year¹. This signaled Castro's intention to defy the Monroe Doctrine in the Western Hemisphere.

Amid concerns about Cuba's evolving anti-American stance under Castro's leadership, the U.S. concentrated efforts on collective actions against the Cuban government through the Organization of American States. Meanwhile, the U.S. Embassy in Havana played a crucial role in observing and analyzing these events, providing vital insights to shape American policy towards Cuba during this turbulent period.

Recognizing the potential impact of Cuba's acceptance of the "First Havana Declaration" on the wider Latin American region, a pivotal decision in contemporary American foreign policy was made in Washington. On September 13, 1960, at the initiative of the United States, the OAS Council endorsed the "Act of Bogotá"². This legislation aimed at promoting economic and social development in Latin American nations, with recommendations for social upliftment and economic growth under the "Pan America" program. The U.S. funded the program, viewing an opportunity to unite Latin American countries around democratic values against communist ideology given the changing circumstances.

During the UN General Assembly session on September 26, 1960, Cuba's Prime Minister accused the U.S. of colonialism and ongoing exploitation of third-world nations, emphasizing Washington's persistent attempts to control the Cuban people³. In response, on October 14, 1960, the U.S. government provided its viewpoint to the United Nations, attributing deteriorating relations with Cuba to Fidel Castro's policies. Shortly after, on October 18, the Cuban government filed an official complaint with the UN, citing the U.S. for persistent intimidation, coercion, repression, and acts of aggression and interference. U.S. Representative at the United Nations James Wadsworth rejected allegations of aggression against Cuba⁴. Thus, this marked a transition of the U.S.-Cuban disputes from a regional to an international platform – Cuba challenged the perceived "special role" of the U.S. in the Western Hemisphere at the UN General Assembly.

The tension had been escalating between the two countries. In late September 1960, Washington expressed concerns about the safety of American citizens in Cuba and advised them to return home with their families. By October 1960, Cuban government had taken over major U.S.-owned industries, businesses, transportation firms, and commercial properties. In response, President Eisenhower signed an order to prohibit American exports to Cuba. Thus, on October 19, 1960, the first partial trade embargo on Cuba was put in place. All exports, except for food, medicines, and a few specific goods requiring special licenses, were banned. However, imports were still permitted. Nevertheless, American officials criticized the implementation of the trade embargo against Cuba, considering it insufficient and delayed, advocating for increased pressure on Castro's government. The White House did not anticipate that the export control would result in a "favorable suspension" of the Cuban economy. Instead, it believed that the partial embargo would significantly pressurize the Cuban economy, fuel discontent within the country, and subsequently empower opposition forces⁵.

In October 1960, the U.S. recalled its ambassador to Havana, Philip Bonsal, due to failed negotiations with Fidel Castro's government. This diplomatic action was prompted by the inability to reach agreements. A memorandum from the Secretary of State to the U.S. President suggested that if Cuba initiated the termination of diplomatic relations, it wouldn't damage the United States' reputation⁶.

By the end of 1960, Fidel Castro's policies became more radical, purging political opponents and exerting control over various aspects of society. Cuba expanded relations with socialist nations, aligning more closely with the communist bloc. Describing Cuba in December 1960, Daniel Braddock, Counselor of the Embassy in Havana, noted that "...the Cuban Government is no longer representative of the Cuban

¹ Бекаревич. А. Д. (ред). (1980). *Советско-кубинские отношения, 1917-1977*. Наука, 79.

² Avalon (1960). *Act of Bogota* <https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/intam08.asp> (2023, July, 10).

³ Castro, F. (1960). *Castro Denounces Imperialism and Colonialism at the United Nations, Sep. 26*. <<http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1960/19600926.html>> (2023, July, 10).

⁴ Schoultz, L. (2009). *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic: The United States and the Cuban Revolution*. University of North Carolina Press, 137.

⁵ Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Mann) to the Secretary of State. Washington, October 19, 1960 (1991). In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 1091. United States Government Printing Office.

⁶ Memorandum From the Secretary of State to the President. Washington, October 16, 1960 (1991). In R. D. Landa (ed). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, VI*, 1088. United States Government Printing Office.

people or of Cuban national interests, but rather of the Sino-Soviet bloc and the international communist apparatus serving bloc policy, and maintains itself in power by force"¹. The deteriorating relationship between the U.S. and Cuba had reached a point where profitable contact between the U.S. Embassy and Cuban government agencies was almost nonexistent. Diplomatic communications were strained, delivered amidst hostility, suspicion, and distrust.

On January 2, 1961, Cuban Foreign Minister Raul Roa accused the United States of planning an invasion during his address to the UN Security Council. Concurrently, the Cuban government alleged espionage by the U.S. Embassy in Havana and demanded a reduction in its staff to 11 within 48 hours, matching Cuba's embassy size in Washington². In response, on January 3, 1961, U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower announced the termination of diplomatic relations with Cuba³. The U.S. government arranged for the Swiss Embassy in Havana to assume American diplomatic and consular representation in Cuba. Later, the Czechoslovakian Embassy in Washington offered the same service for Cuba.

The potential severance of diplomatic relations had been under consideration by the U.S. State Department since late 1960. In December 1960, the American Embassy in Havana evaluated the advantages of maintaining or cutting diplomatic ties with Cuba. After a thorough analysis, experts at the embassy concluded that the U.S. initiating the break would provide flexibility, scalability, and promptness in dealing with Fidel Castro's regime⁴. These occurrences also led to accusations from the right wing in the United States, blaming Ambassador Bonsal for allegedly aiding in the Communist takeover of Cuba. Concurrently, pro-revolutionary critics accused him of exhibiting aggressive conduct. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the tensions between the United States and Cuba during the late 1950s and early 1960s stemmed from unresolved historical issues and the persistence of old approaches in shaping a new framework for interaction between the two nations.

Conclusions. The research conducted on the role of the U.S. Embassy in Havana during the Cuban Revolution underscores its pivotal significance in navigating the evolving dynamics of U.S.-Cuba relations. This study delved into the embassy's mission in post-revolutionary Havana, analyzing its efforts amidst the changing diplomatic landscape between the United States and Cuba under Fidel Castro's leadership.

Following the Cuban Revolution, the U.S. Embassy encountered multifaceted challenges in maintaining bilateral ties. Initial attempts aimed to foster amicable relations with the new Cuban government. However, ideological disparities and policy differences led to escalating tensions, positioning the embassy at the center of deteriorating relations between Washington and Havana.

Throughout this critical period, the embassy actively engaged in diplomatic endeavors, facilitating dialogues and exchanges between officials to manage the evolving situation. Nevertheless, mounting anti-American sentiments in Cuba and concerns over Cuba's alignment with socialist nations exacerbated the strain on relations. While the U.S. Embassy in Havana served as a vital source of insights and actively participated in shaping U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba under the leadership of Ambassador Philip Bonsall, these efforts ultimately proved inadequate.

In essence, the tensions between the United States and Cuba during the late 1950s and early 1960s stemmed from unresolved historical issues and entrenched traditional approaches in forging a new framework for interaction. Despite diligent efforts by the U.S. Embassy in Havana, these endeavors failed to mitigate the increasingly strained relations, culminating in the eventual severance of diplomatic ties between the two nations.

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² Franklin, J. (2016). *Cuba and the U.S. Empire: A Chronological History*. Monthly Review Press, 34.

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