MANAGING a COOPERATIVE DISAGREEMENT: CANADA, the UNITED STATES REVOLUTIONARY CUBA, 1959-1980

by

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Department of History
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Abstract

Since mid-1960, Canada and the United States took clearly distinct approaches in relating to Fidel Castro’s Cuba. Canada opted to continue trade and diplomatic relations with the revolutionary regime, in contrast to the United States, which imposed an embargo, severed diplomatic relations and ultimately sought the regime’s demise. The two neighbours viewed very differently the root causes and the most effective response to the Cuban revolutionary challenge, and domestic pressures in each country pulled them in opposing directions. Agreeing to disagree, within understood parameters Ottawa and Washington carved space that minimized friction and facilitated cooperation on Cuban issues that largely protected their “special relationship.” The burden of initiative fell on Canada, being the smaller power with fewer established interests in Cuba. It agreed not to sell Havana either strategic or American made goods. It remained cool if not hostile to Cuban foreign policy, and it minimized Cuba’s ability to conduct subversive activities from Canadian soil. To achieve these objectives, Ottawa carefully policed its exports to Cuba, inspected Cuba bound flights refueling at Canadian airports for prohibited cargo or personnel, and shared information with American officials, including Havana embassy reports and law enforcement intelligence on pro-Castro activities and travel by Americans to Cuba from Canada. In turn, the United
States refrained from overtly pressuring Ottawa to change its policies, granted licences for US owned Canadian firms to fill Cuban orders, and curtailed Cuban-American exile violence directed at Canada. These patterns continued more or less consistently between 1960 and 1980, by which time many flashpoints had disappeared. Even during the Cuba-Canada warming from 1968-1976 under Pierre Trudeau, Canadian decisions consistently factored in American sentiments, and at no time did Ottawa intentionally seek to counter Washington, even though it firmly maintained its policy of engagement over isolation.
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I dedicate this dissertation to Catherine, to my parents and to the memory of my grandparents, who always valued higher learning, faith, excellence and perseverance, values that have shaped me at the core.

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Introduction

The 1959 Cuban revolution, which brought about the first communist government in the western hemisphere, was a pivotal development in the Cold War. The island republic, 90 miles from the shore of the United States and more than six decades under its economic and cultural hegemony, and at times its direct political control, suddenly pulled itself out of the American orbit. Not only severing economic and political ties to its powerful neighbour, the revolutionary regime of Fidel Castro actively courted its arch-rival and ideological opposite, the Soviet Union. The sudden and rapid loss of the United States’ influence on Cuba shocked the country, posing an unprecedented challenge in what Americans had considered to be their back yard, and bringing the Cold War right to its physical doorstep.

As the Cuban revolution shook the United States, Canada was inevitably affected as well. The two countries were physically linked by geography, and had a long shared history, as well as what Robert Bothwell described as an important convergence in “attitudes and habits.” At the same time, the very existence of Canada for over two centuries as a separate North American country also attests to variations in attitudes, vision and approach, meaning that differences and incongruencies have existed within this overarching milieu of convergence. Having developed a genuinely “special relationship” during World War II that carried on through the Cold War’s first decade, there was a strong impetus for the two countries to cooperate with one another, even when they did not always see eye-to-eye. Canada would so cooperate, acknowledging its dependence on the United States for its economy and defence, as well as the latter’s global responsibilities in the Cold War. As the smaller power, Canada usually had to take more of the initiative in being helpful to the Americans in order to ensure that its voice was heard. Its only precondition was that its sovereignty and freedom of action be respected. For the most part, the United States understood this, and American leaders attributed Canada’s need to occasionally chart its own course to a sense of “inferiority” or vulnerability to US influence. Henry Kissinger expressed such a sentiment to President Gerald Ford in December 1974 just before the recently sworn-in President had his first face-to-face meeting with Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau: “we are so powerful -- whatever identity they [the

Canadians] have, they get in opposition to us.”

Certainly on an issue like Cuba, Canada took note of American interests. But in rejecting the isolation of Cuba, every Canadian Prime Minister followed an approach later articulated by Jean Chrétien in 1998 of “dialogue over confrontation, engagement over isolation, exchange over estrangement.” But as will be shown in this study, despite some long perpetuated myths, at no time did Canada ever make a decision to overtly oppose the United States on Cuba, even as it disagreed with the specific approach adopted in Washington.

The Cuban revolution, and the first quarter century that followed it, occurred in a climate described by Bothwell as one of distancing between Canada and the United States. Certainly the era was a more complicated time for the two neighbours, and Cuba became unquestionably a complicating factor, one having all the potential to cause serious bilateral tension. The expectations of the United States regarding Canada - the flip side of the “special relationship” - and Canada’s willingness to meet them, did not always align well. Such expectations included embracing US defense doctrine, which relied increasingly on nuclear weapons, and support for the vigorous containment of communism globally, even in peripheral areas such as Vietnam and much closer to home, Cuba. Canada held a different view. Until 1968, its foreign policy priorities centered predominately on the Atlantic community, the British Commonwealth and international organizations such as the United Nations and NATO. Viewing Latin America and the Caribbean as distant and “other” from itself, Canada viewed Cuba as a country of low priority and concern. It had few ties to the region other than commercial ones, and had sought a mostly low key presence south of the Rio Grande, in part to avoid entanglement with the United States. The latter in contrast had a long, closely integrated and often unhappy history with the region’s countries. The Americans viewed the region, and Cuba particularly, as its backyard, vital for its economic and strategic security and thus a high priority. As such, the United States expected Canada as a hemispheric neighbour to appreciate its concerns and follow its lead in the region.

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3 Quoted in Lana Wylie, *Perceptions of Cuba: Canadian and American Policies in Comparative Perspective*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 57.

4 Bothwell, *Canada and the United States*, 76.
Ottawa would do so up to a point, but did not want to be too closely associated with American policies that many of the region’s peoples deeply resented and invoked memories of gunboat diplomacy and repressive oligarchic dictatorships. It had to consider the views of Canadians; at this juncture, many were beginning to question and even express dissent over pro-US policies and even over the very premises of the Cold War. People feared the prospect of nuclear war, and viewed strident anti-communism as regressive, reinforcing paternalism and colonialism and inhibiting the aspirations of minorities and of the Third World for justice and for a better life. Such sentiments found expression not only in Canada, but also in the United States itself and around the world, sparking protests and even revolutions, as well as providing the seeds for a later conservative reaction.\(^5\) During this period, many Canadians believed the United States had too wide-ranging an influence on Canada. Such sentiments led them to adopt nationalist, and to some extent anti-American positions. More radical voices, including peace and labour activists, students and Québécois nationalists, admired Fidel Castro’s revolution, a perspective shared by the dissident left in the United States. Canadian governments had little sympathy overall for such thinking, but such a climate reinforced in Ottawa the importance of having made-in-Canada policies that served Canadian interests. In the Cuban context, the United States government and the mainstream American public viewed the situation as a communist threat and an unacceptable challenge to the US led hemispheric order. An exploration of how Ottawa and Washington managed such differences and disagreements, and avoided a major rift along the 49th parallel, is the core objective of this work.

Beginning in the late 1990s, historians and political scientists began to turn their attention to Canada’s relationship with Fidel Castro’s Cuba, largely in fascination over the longevity of this liaison in the face of the United States’ almost relentless hostility towards it. In this body of literature, which while relatively small has grown substantially since the mid 2000s, the United States naturally casts an omnipresent shadow as “the elephant” that Pierre Trudeau so famously argued in 1969 that Canada could not ignore.\(^6\) In fact, the peculiarity of the scenario


concerning Cuba has provided the key impetus for further exploration of how Latin America factored into the equation of Canadian-American relations. Writing in the mid-1970s, J.C.M Ogelsby commented that “the measure of Canadian intellectual interest in Latin America is to be found in the paucity of scholarly works on any aspect of the subject.” One might reasonably interpret Ogelsby’s lament as evidence of the rather sleepy state of Canadian relations with the region prior to the events of 1959. Recent interest in this topic has been furthered by various factors, including the increased importance of the Western Hemisphere to Canada, the fact that the US-Cuban relationship remains yet to be reconciled (at the time of this writing), and curiosity over “what will be” following the passing of the Castro brothers. As well, a substantial portion of the archival record in both Canada and the United States (but alas, not so yet in Cuba) is now finally available through the late 1970s for scholars to pour over, by means of routine openings or by strategic use of pertinent access to information legislation. Such declassified sources provide the foundation for this study.

No one writing about Canadian foreign policy in the Cold War, including that concerning Cuba, disputes that it was made in reference to the United States, whether in collaboration or contrast (but never indifference towards it). On this topic, the literature tends to emphasize the contrasts. Canada’s refusal to cease commercial and diplomatic relations with post-revolutionary Cuba, despite American pressure, is often showcased as a leading example of it asserting its independence of action. The leading available historical monographs on Canada-Cuba relations by John M. Kirk and Peter McKenna and by Robert Wright portray the decisions of Canadian leaders to engage the Castro government from Diefenbaker through Trudeau as calculated acts of independence from American foreign policy that sparked Washington’s ire. Indeed these works correctly identify that bilateral friction was inevitable given the sensitivity of the Cuban issue in the United States as both a domestic and foreign policy issue. However, in their emphasis on the Canada-Cuba, rather than the Canada-United States relationship, these

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8 This study is principally an archive-based one, and is the product of many access to information requests in Canada, as well as a number of FOIA and Mandatory Declassification review requests in the United States.


10 To his credit, Wright gives substantial coverage to the influence of anti-Castro exiles in Cuba in his work on the Trudeau visit as a major domestic pressure on this issue in the United States.
works do not delve deeply into the specific points of contention and how they were resolved or mitigated. Neither do they use any American archives (although Kirk and McKenna did gain access to a few Cuban documents). The precise nature of these flashpoints, and how the most senior and working levels in the foreign policy bureaucracies of both countries handled them, is what is being explored here. As will be shown, at the highest levels Cuba was not a significant issue after 1966, with the topic not re-emerging in on-the-record Presidential-Prime Ministerial discussions until 1977. After that date, Cuba appeared only tangentially in such conversations until the early post-Cold War era.

Cuban academic Raul Rodriguez invokes the image of a triangle in discussing the interplay of relations between Washington, Havana and Ottawa. As mentioned, the Canada-Cuba side of the triangle has received significant recent attention, and an extensive and ever more comprehensive body of work exists on the United States-Cuba side, much of it helped by important new archival disclosures. Canada has traditionally received sparse mention in these narratives, almost certainly reflecting that Canada’s policy difference with the United States did not weigh nearly as heavily on the latter as the former. Two significant historical narratives of Cuban-US relations do make mention of Canada. The first, Morris Morley’s 1987 survey *Imperial State and Revolution*, offers a Marxist perspective emphasizing the centrality of class and economic structures, and does provides considerable discussion on Washington’s unsuccessful efforts in the 1960s to internationalize its Cuban embargo by enlisting western allies, particularly Canada. Lars Schoultz’s much more recent monograph, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, now the standard historical narrative on US-Cuban relations, also makes periodic reference to Canada, as a counterpoint to American policy. Neither of these monographs use any Canadian archives.

The Canada-United States side of this triangle has received some coverage, although the published works to date cover a narrower time frame or place Canada’s Cuba policy as a specific component of a broader story. Veteran CBC journalist Knowlton Nash’s 1990 account of the Kennedy-Diefenbaker feud, and articles by Don Munton, Jocelyn Ghent-Mallet and Asa

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McKercher on the missile crisis period provide some valuable insight into personalities but also diplomacy. Munton in particular adds important information on bilateral intelligence sharing over Cuba, an exchange that many long suspected had occurred but has only recently been confirmed using authoritative documentation.\textsuperscript{14} Canadian-American tension over Cuba also features prominently in Basil Robinson’s memoir as Diefenbaker’s principal foreign policy advisor. McKercher’s 2013 doctoral dissertation explores comparatively the high level and mid level diplomacy between the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom on Cuba to 1968, arguing that the Cuban example exposed the United States’ limitations in convincing its Atlantic community allies to support its positions beyond the European theatre, thus reducing containment in the Third World to being strictly “an American project.”\textsuperscript{15} McKercher correctly argues that to properly assess the machinations of American diplomacy concerning Cuba with the Canadians and the British, it is vital to look at the mid-level interactions.\textsuperscript{16} Such working level interchange is a crucial component of this study.

The space that is being filled here is a systematic, bilateral, archive-based chronological exploration of Cuba as an object of focus in Canadian American relations, one that seeks to explain why the policy difference was much less toxic than it might have been. This study aims to explore the points of friction and the management of flare ups, at the most senior political but also at the working levels. It argues that Cuban issues were for the most part handled almost entirely by the latter, especially from 1966 forward, and that it is in the interchanges at that level where the main story resides. Bureaucrats and diplomats became so critical as the sensitive matter of Cuba had every potential to exacerbate the already testy climate that characterized Prime Ministerial-Presidental relations between 1961 and 1974, and thus it needed careful handling. In addition, as concerns diminished and cooperation became more routine, escalation to the top levels became unnecessary.


\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, 24.
In many ways this work is a hybrid of that by McKercher, Kirk and McKenna and a much earlier doctoral dissertation on Canada and Cuba by Harold Boyer. Written in 1972 as a work of political science, Boyer provides considerable historical background, and identifies key intersection points where Canada’s relations with Cuba played out, including trade, air transportation, relations with the Canadian left and Quebec nationalists. His details concerning these areas are somewhat minimal, reflecting the fact that he was writing about what were then recent and even current events, and without access to internal documentation. That aside, Boyer’s points of focus were indeed the playing fields for much of the Canada-United States discourse on Cuba.\(^{17}\) What is offered here is their exploration over time. As the archives from both countries readily can attest, matters related to trade and export control enforcement, the monitoring of Canada-Cuba civil air traffic, intelligence sharing and the containment of Cuba connected subversion across the Canada-US border were the major concerns of the United States government. In turn, they were areas in which Ottawa willingly cooperated, provided that Washington respected its firmly and dearly held parameters of sovereignty, autonomy of action, and compliance with broader international obligations such as treaties. By and large, the United States understood and remained within these boundaries.

The discussion in this work is not an intensely theoretical one, but useful frameworks do exist that explain aspects of the dynamics. Political scientist Lana Wylie, in her examination of different perceptions of Cuba in the two countries, offers useful and important insight. Taking a so-called constructivist approach that has as its premise that structures, social relations and individuals reinforce one another, Wylie argues that Canada and the United States simply did not see the Cuban revolution in the same light, and thus did not agree on the correct strategy with which to engage it. In her view, such a divergence was rooted in differences of identity and of foreign policy tradition, and that these explain the continuity of both Canadian and American approaches to Cuba well beyond the Cold War. The specific attributes Wylie compares and contrasts include ideology, national identity and mission, and domestic political communities, arguing that these all reinforced key perceptual differences, even as circumstances changed after 1991.\(^{18}\) ‘The United States’ belief in its exceptionalism, and its mission to externally promote


\(^{18}\) Lana Wylie, Perceptions of Cuba: Canadian and American Policies in Comparative Perspective, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 6-7, 17-22.
democracy, individual liberties and free markets has remained unchanged, although the post-
1991 circumstances at home and abroad have required it to adopt new rationales for continuing its impasse with Cuba. In the eyes of most Americans, their country’s core values have not been allowed to exist in Cuba under the Castro brothers, and thus Havana should continue to be shunned. Attributing a more liberal internationalist slant to Canadian foreign policy, Wylie describes how Canada has prized being a good international citizen, and how its concerns about democracy and human rights extend more to social and economic equality and the rule of law, in contrast to its American neighbour. As one Canadian official in Havana expressed to Wylie, “there are different kinds of democracy.”

Canada thus did not share the United States’ allergic reaction to grass roots revolutions such as in Cuba, which Michael Hunt argued was viewed by its people through the lens of the revolutions in of France and Russia. Replete with mob rule, tyranny and dictatorship, Americans perceived these great tumultuous upheavals as antithetical in character to their own “exceptional” revolution of 1776. In contrast, Canadian policymakers and diplomats showed a greater inclination to see Third World revolutions as desperate responses to the inadequate addressing of legitimate grievances and inequalities. They were more sympathetic to the need for more just political, economic and social structures in countries such as Cuba, and a significant number grew to genuinely admire Fidel Castro’s accomplishments in literacy and health care. While the record confirms such assumptions, these were intermixed with a clear lack of love for Cuban communism, particularly its harsh justice and internal repression, militant propaganda and its commitment to foster revolutions in other countries. While often viewed as more idealistic on Cuba, in reality Canada was less so in this context than the United States. It was the latter that believed that it could modify Castro’s behaviour, by using punitive and coercive measures. Ottawa held few illusions that it was going to change either Castro or the United States, a realism shared by allies such as Great Britain. As External Affairs Minister Howard Green learned in 1961 when proposing US-Cuban mediation in 1960 and 1961, such efforts would receive an unequivocal American scowl. As McGeorge Bundy, national security adviser to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson aptly put it in a 1962 article, for the United States government, its Cuba policy was built on:

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19 Wylie, 67, 119-120.
evidence, principle and interest. We do not require that others who disagree should change their minds or lose our friendship. But they should recognize that it does not advance international understanding to assert with comfortable self-satisfaction that “nobody could think like that”. We do. 21

Canada adopted a realist approach in dealing with the United States on Cuba, and in its relations with Havana it always kept a watchful eye on the reaction Washington. The Trudeau period would be no exception.

A realist strategy, a commitment not to cross key boundaries, and the finding of space to work together are what kept the Canadian-American conversation on Cuba, while at times sharp and pointed, from ever becoming a genuine shouting match. What emerged is what is being called here a cooperative disagreement. Canadian cooperation for the most part aligned well with Washington’s two non-negotiable pillars regarding Castro: Ottawa would do nothing either to strengthen Cuba militarily as a Soviet ally or to support its revolutionary mission. For the remainder of the Cold War, the United States made Havana’s renunciation of both of these attributes essential prerequisites for any restored relationship. For the Cubans, these were both foundational - the Soviet ties by necessity and the revolutionary mission by faith. Canada would make no headway in changing the Cubans in either of those regards.

Until the Trudeau period, Canada’s interaction with revolutionary Cuba was minimalist in character, focussing mostly on trade of a non-strategic nature and routine diplomacy. Recognizing the volatility of Cuba in the United States, the Canadian government stressed to its neighbour that a Canadian presence on the island came with political advantages, including intelligence sharing and, should the Americans want it, diplomatic assistance. Regarding more sensitive matters such as the export of machinery and capital goods, landing rights and flight paths - topics that occupy a considerable portion of the bilateral Cuba file - Canadian officials sought diligently to deny Havana the ability to exploit such points of contact for subversive purposes. Canada voluntarily enforced the embargo on American made goods, and inspected aircraft flying between it and Cuba to ensure that they did not carry contraband goods and either unauthorized Cuban personnel. Once passenger charters commenced in 1972, Ottawa denied unauthorized American citizens boarding rights for such flights.

Where government to government friction occurred, it concerned the in-between spaces, mostly regarding goods or activities that Canada saw as sufficiently benign, but the United States believed were dual-use and better enabled Havana to export its revolution. The examples range from foreign exchange to industrial capital goods to student tourists. While sparks flew in such moments, Canadian cooperation with the United States was for the most part a success. Canada was not only for the most part spared it a punitive American response, but even at times earned it the praise and appreciation of Washington.

Canada too had its boundaries regarding Cuba, and evidence suggests that for the United States, good relations with its northern neighbour were sufficiently important to warrant some moderation of its course. Not mentioning Cuba specifically, Brian Bow argues that Washington refrained from making so-called hard or coercive linkages in addressing points of dispute with Canada, mostly to minimize the stoking of nationalist sentiment in Canada. 22 As a condition for being a “flexible and responsible” ally, Ottawa’s parameters were that the United States not trespass on its freedom of action as a sovereign country. 23 It insisted that Washington not pressure it, especially in public, to terminate either its normal trade or diplomatic relations with Cuba (the US never requested the latter in any case). Canadian governments wanted at all costs not to be publicly embarrassed before their citizens by appearing to be pliant to American pressure and influence. They also repeatedly asked Washington to routinely waive what it considered to be its legal right to enforce its laws on American citizens, even if in Canada. Liberal and Conservative Prime Ministers alike from Diefenbaker through Chrétien denounced the reach of American law onto Canada’s territory as an unacceptable affront to its sovereignty. In Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye’s list of ten significant Canadian-American “dyadic conflicts” in the 1960s, trade with Cuba is not mentioned, but the extraterritoriality issue is cited as a significant problem, and one that was mostly resolved in the United States’ favour. 24 The two neighbours have not yet been able to resolve this dispute in a mutually satisfying way.

An important subtext in the bilateral interchange over the Cuba file was the management of public opinion. Both governments had considerable impetus to not let this disagreement get out of hand. From 1960 right through the late 1970s, the governments of Canada and the United

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23 Bow, 33-34.
States stoked one another’s fears regarding adverse publicity in the opposite country to obtain concessions or adjustments. Canadian politicians and officials were especially concerned about negative editorials or policy misrepresentations in the many and influential newspapers in the United States, as well as from vocal Senators and Congressional Representatives representing conservative and/or Cuban American constituencies. American legislators and reporters alike, especially in the early days of the US embargo against Cuba, painted a highly distorted picture of Canada as a country of bootleggers, with a small minority even suggesting it held pro-Castro sympathies. Ottawa was very anxious to dispel such allegations. In turn, Ottawa tapped in to American fears of Canadian nationalism to obtain licences enabling US owned subsidiaries to sell to Cuba, as well as to shame American law enforcement agencies into reining in Cuban exiles that were targeting Cuban facilities in Canada for acts of violence. At least until the end of the 1970s, such public opinion watches were clearly instrumental in both governments’ efforts to keep a lid on any policy discord, and to opt for quiet diplomacy.

Another important subtheme is that while Canada’s relationship with Cuba inevitably affected Canadian-American relations, the reverse was also true. Canada wanted proper, and even prosperous relations with Cuba, but not at the cost of difficulties with the United States. Because of this, Cuban interests received lesser consideration from Ottawa, which in turn hindered trust between the two countries and generated occasional sparks. Some Canadian officials maintained a strong Cold War outlook and mistrusted Cuban officials, believing that they pushed the boundaries of diplomatic propriety, if not outright subversion, and that they were furthering Soviet objectives. At times the behaviour of Cuban diplomats did little to reassure such Canadian skeptics. In the meantime, Cuba was also regularly subjected to Ottawa’s foot dragging and its technical and legal roadblocks, all having the semblance of propriety but in reality providing a convenient cover for pleasing Washington over Havana. The Cuban government recognized, but at times resented, Canadian behaviour in this regard. Castro acknowledged the economic and political realities of the Canada-United States relationship, as well as the two countries’ long history and similar values. Yet as Boyer noted, Castro also respected the fact that Canada had continued its trade and diplomatic relationship with his
government, well aware that this choice had not come without some cost in terms of its relationship with its powerful neighbour and principal partner. 25

This history of revolutionary Cuba’s impact on Canadian-American relations is divided into chronological based chapters that correspond to changes of government or key points of departure. The first chapter outlines how cooperative disagreement between the two neighbours over Latin American policy had precedents during World War II, when interests converged but did not entirely overlap. During the war there were moments of friction, particularly over export control management and Canada’s participation in the hemispheric community. As a junior partner, and in exchange for helping the United States deny Latin America to the Axis powers, Canada nonetheless sought recognition and respect. The discussion then describes how Ottawa more or less followed American leadership in Latin America during the Cold War’s first decade, although at a distance and with some reservations. This did not keep some Canadian diplomats, particularly those posted to Havana, from concluding that dictators such as Fulgencio Batista were the best among a series of bad alternatives. Canada and the United States did not collide over Latin America between 1945 and 1959, although Washington was disappointed that its seemingly like minded neighbour would not join the Organization of American States (a reversal of its World War II position). Canadian governments of both major political parties concluded that their country’s interests with the United States, Latin American countries and its own public were better served by staying out, a position it held until 1989.

Upon Castro’s victory at the beginning of 1959, Canada genuinely viewed the new regime with less alarm than did the United States, even though it shared American reservations about its harsh revolutionary justice and increasingly radicalized rhetoric and policies. Canada was more willing to give the new government the benefit of the doubt, believing it to be a consequence of the widespread social and economic inequalities prevalent on the island, although it also recognized that the Soviet Union could exploit the revolution for its own agenda. The two neighbours began to move in different directions on dealing with Havana late in 1959, although this divergence was not readily apparent until it moved into the open in the summer of 1960. By that time, the Eisenhower administration had long given up on any relationship with the Castro government, concluding that it was communist, a locus for the

interests of the Soviet Union in the western hemisphere, and eager to replicate itself in other countries. Unacceptable to American interests, Washington unsuccessfully leaned on its allies, particularly Canada, to convince them of the Castro danger and to obtain support for measures to isolate and ultimately reverse the Cuban revolution.

Despite Prime Minister Diefenbaker’s personal closeness to Eisenhower, a sharp misunderstanding over Cuba grew between the two governments, although the issue did not cause any personal strain in their relationship. Eisenhower and his successor John F. Kennedy rebuffed Canadian offers at US-Cuban mediation, arguing that the matter was not a bilateral quarrel with Cuba, but rather a regional security concern. Matters worsened between Canada and the United States in October 1960 when Eisenhower imposed the first stage of an ever tightening trade embargo against Cuba. Opposed to such economic warfare, the Diefenbaker government parted company with its American ally on its means, although not its goals, believing that any efforts to pressure and to topple Castro would backfire and only drive him even closer to Moscow.

Considerable space is given to the 1960 to 1963 period, the years of the most overt friction over Cuba, as the two neighbours staked out their positions on the issue, as well as sought space to work together. As Cuba became the most volatile foreign policy issue in the United States, Canada appeared to be on the wrong side of its most important ally on an issue that mattered greatly to it. American officials, journalists and citizens alike, especially the latter two categories, regularly lambasted Canada over the course of the next two years for refusing to join the embargo and viewed Castro’s more favourable treatment of its commercial interests in Cuba with considerable suspicion. In fact, the final Eisenhower months rivalled and perhaps exceeded in tension the more widely discussed Kennedy period.26 Americans were genuinely shocked that Canada did not share their perspective on the threat posed by the Cuban revolution and its solution. Aware that Canadians would oppose a wholehearted support of Washington’s strategy, but fearing the consequences of doing nothing to placate American anger, Diefenbaker made a crucial public statement in December 1960, rejecting a Canadian embargo but promising not to sell Cuba strategic goods or to permit what Morris Morley coined “pass through” trade in

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26 The main overarching Canadian-United States narrative that identifies the late Eisenhower period as core to the Canadian-US difference over Cuba is Edelgard Mahant, and Graeme S. Mount, *Invisible and Inaudible in Washington: American Policies Towards Canada.* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999), 62.
American made goods.27 This statement set the course for Canadian policy for decades. Beginning with this action, soon to be supplemented by a restriction on Canada-Cuba cargo charter flights, Ottawa began to carve space for itself to cooperate with the United States to the maximum extent possible, within the confines of Canadian sovereignty in foreign policy. The theatres of such efforts aligned with areas of primary American concern, such as the need for intelligence on Cuba, export control monitoring, limiting and controlling civil air links, and the curtailment of so-called subversive activities.

Canadian-American relations as a whole became more difficult during the Kennedy presidency, with Presidential-Prime Ministerial relations hitting a legendary low. Kirk and McKenna, and Jamie Glazov have emphasized that it was Kennedy’s perceived bullying that hardened Diefenbaker’s resolve over Cuba, seeing the issue as an opportunity to “stand up” to the United States.28 With the exception of the winter months of 1962, when the Kennedy administration leaned heavily on Canada, as well as other NATO countries, to restrict if not terminate its Cuba trade, such trade was in of itself less contentious in the Kennedy period than the late Eisenhower presidency. Canada offered sympathetic, although not completely supportive, statements favouring the United States following the Bay of Pigs, earning Diefenbaker some reprieve in the White House, an act he would repeat at Kennedy’s request a year later to help free captured Brigade 2506 members from Castro’s prisons. Nonetheless, in early 1962, Canada was left in a publicly vulnerable and exposed position following revelations that among the “non-strategic” goods it had sold Cuba were questionable dual use goods such as industrial explosives. As a result, the Diefenbaker government tightened some of its export control schedules, but otherwise refused to halt its trade with the island. Reluctantly, the Kennedy administration resigned itself that Canada’s basic position on Cuba would remain unchanged.

Concluding that neither Canada nor its NATO allies would change their minds on Cuba, the United States refrained from direct pressure or making what Brian Bow termed “hard linkages,” although it would not give up trying to gently nudge Ottawa in its direction.29 Canada found favour by keeping its merchant fleet out of the Cuba trade, and during the missile

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27 Morley, Imperial State and Revolution, 306.
crisis, its aircraft inspections and intelligence sharing and reporting gained it additional, and needed respite in Washington after Diefenbaker’s public stumbling during the crisis.

During the Pearson period, Canada’s relations with Cuba were in a steady state mode - proper but distant. As Cuba moved down the top tier of American foreign policy priorities in favour of Vietnam, it occupied less space in senior bilateral interchanges with Ottawa. While Cuba became lower profile, this was the period of the most extensive and wide ranging Canadian-United States cooperation regarding it. As Presidents Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson reduced covert action programs to topple Castro, they escalated economic warfare against his regime and sought greater allied support in this regard. Bilateral sparks flew over Canada’s post-1963 expanding trade volume with Havana, tighter American export control measures and extraterritoriality, cargo charter flights between Canada and Cuba and a proposed Canada-USSR air agreement amendment permitting Aeroflot to fly on from Montreal to Havana – on the latter Ottawa reversed itself under considerable American pressure. The mid and late 1960s also marked the high water point of pro-Castro activism in Canada, a movement under the broader umbrella of New Left dissent and a shared concern in Washington. It was also a period when American-based anti-Castro exiles committed a number of terrorist acts against Cuban targets in Canada, a problem that carried on into the mid-1970s. The United States sought, and received, Canadian assistance in making it difficult for American radicals to travel to Cuba from its soil, and in turn American law enforcement worked to control extremist Cuban expatriates. All of these issues appeared regularly in Canadian-US discussions on Cuba until the mid-1970s, with almost all of them being handled at the working levels.

It is unquestionable that during Pierre Trudeau’s long tenure as Prime Minister, relations with Cuba warmed and expanded significantly. Certainly Cuba fit in well with the Prime Minister’s objectives of diversifying Canada’s trade and discourse with the socialist bloc and the developing world. As will be shown, despite Trudeau’s reputation, often distorted, as a maverick who was ambivalent towards the United States and suspicious of inertia in Ottawa’s bureaucracy and diplomatic corps, in reality Trudeau relied on External Affairs’ advice, even on Cuba, for much of his tenure. In some ways, his government followed a more cautious approach than some officials would have liked. The Canadian government in the early and mid 1970s constantly gauged the reaction across the border before moving forward on credit sales, passenger air charters or development aid to Cuba, proceeding only in the absence of a tangible
protest in Washington. With Richard Nixon in the White House, a man with a long vendetta against Castro and little love for Trudeau, a broadening of Canadian ties with Cuba would be expected to generate a serious backlash in the United States. This was not to be the case, and Cuba probably generated the least amount of bilateral heat during the 1968-1974 period than any other, save perhaps the early Carter administration. Cuba was a fortuitously quiet issue at the time, and Nixon had little time or interest in Canada.

Even when Cuba became a more active issue after 1975, Hal Klepak’s assertion that under Ford and Carter, the United States “was less than amused by this evolution in the Canadian–Cuban relationship” is not confirmed by the available record.30 Even Trudeau’s boldest public gesture towards Cuba – his much-celebrated January 1976 Havana trip - was planned in the belief that the American response would be relatively benign. The reasonable and affable Gerald Ford was in the White House, and rumours abounded that a secret US-Cuba dialogue to repair relations then under way. Even after events in southern Africa overtook the planners in Ottawa, the Ford administration did not ultimately protest the visit. In turn, as a favour to Washington, Trudeau expressed to Castro his displeasure over the Angolan intervention, an action that did much to cushion Trudeau from adverse fallout. There were important lasting legacies from the Canada-Cuba flowering of 1969-1976, such as scheduled passenger air service, the flocking of Canadian winter escapees to the island, and export credits. Trade with Cuba also continued to grow in varying increments through the 1980s. However by 1978, the bloom was off the rose in Canadian Cuban relations, and in parallel to the United States, Ottawa once again adopted a cooler posture towards Havana as domestic pressure mounted over Cuba’s deepening involvement in Africa, soon to be augmented by Havana’s renewed support for leftist movements closer to home. The 1980s would pose new challenges in the hemisphere, but by that time, Canada’s relationship with Cuba was an ongoing fact that ceased to be a significant factor in Canadian-United States relations. The disagreement remained, and although bilateral cooperation over Cuba did not disappear, the urgency of doing so had diminished substantially.

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Chapter 1: Setting Precedents: Canada and the United States in Latin America from World War II to December 1958

Canada’s patterns of cooperation with the United States concerning Cuba and Latin America, as well as its differences in perspective and independence of action, had precedents in the experiences of the Second World War, but are also rooted in the broader historical narratives of the two neighbours. Having an overlapping (but not identical) heritage, and a shared continent, Canada and the United States naturally had more in common with each other than with the countries and peoples in the southern part of the hemisphere. However, their experiences concerning what lay south of the Rio Grande differed significantly in scope, intensity and duration, which subsequently shaped the approaches of their governments and their publics to revolutionary change in the region.

Canada’s role in the western hemisphere has been substantially more limited than the United States. As a collection of British colonies until 1867, and then as a self-governing Dominion within the British Empire, Canada did not have autonomy in either foreign or defence policy until in 1931. In contrast, the United States, after having wrested and then solidified its independence from Great Britain after two wars, quickly filled the imperial vacuum left following the departure of Spain and Portugal from their colonial possessions (a much later occurrence for Cuba). With the former Iberian empires now a series of somewhat weak and unstable republics, the United States made itself, beginning with the 1823 proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine, the principal power in the hemisphere. With the United States victory in the 1898 Spanish American war, the imprint of American economic and military power, along with its technology and culture, was felt across the region, especially in the Caribbean basin.

In the first three decades of the twentieth century, US marines periodically occupied several of the republics, including Cuba, asserting control and suppressing unrest. American investors and entrepreneurs had come to own much of the land and the economies of the various countries. Often simultaneously, Latin Americans admired, envied and resented the colossus to the north. They admired its technology and innovation, and aspects of its culture. Yet at the same time, they saw Americans as paternalistic, self-serving, exploitative and arrogant – all too

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often protecting their interests through coercion and by reinforcing the most corrupt and repressive individuals, institutions or classes in the various countries. Of all the countries in the region, Cuba was probably more completely under the shadow of the United States than any other, with the latter retaining until the 1930s a formally constituted right to intervene forcefully in the country. Fidel Castro’s intense anti-Americanism, the principal fuel behind his revolution, emerged out of this history.²

Canada’s presence south of the Rio Grande was for the most part either invisible or in the background prior to World War II. Even by 1939, by which time it had finally been granted autonomy in foreign policy from Great Britain, Canada had only five external legations, none of which were in Latin America.³ In that part of the world, Ottawa continued to follow Great Britain’s lead and allowed it to represent Canadian interests. In keeping with the traditions of British foreign policy, commercial interests provided the dominant impetus for Canada to broaden its ties to the region. Canada’s economic links to the Caribbean region extended back as early as the 17th century, with sugar from the islands flowing northward in exchange for Canadian fish and other staples.⁴ After the United States terminated a twelve year reciprocity arrangement with British North America in 1866 in retaliation for British policies during the American civil war, officials in Great Britain and its colonies saw the rest of the hemisphere as an alternative market for British North American products.⁵ That year, a delegation of seven representatives from British North America travelled to Brazil, along with numerous islands in the Caribbean (omitting Mexico due to its war with France). Spending a week in Cuba, then still under Spanish colonial rule, Commissioner Thomas A. Ryan reported that trade between the colonies and Cuba was then already substantial, and that his objective was lower tariffs on British North American exports of flour, fish, pork, and lumber, in exchange for lower tariffs on

² The literature on US Cuban and US Latin American relations is voluminous. The basic overview here is from Lester D. Langley, America and the Americas: The United States in the Western Hemisphere, 2nd edition (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010), Ch. 2-3.
⁴ For overview of Canada’s early economic integration into the Caribbean from the colonial periods see Eric Williams, From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean (New York: Random House, 1970), 167-168, 228-233. Also see John M. Kirk and Peter McKenna: Canada-Cuba Relations: The Other Good Neighbour Policy. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1997), 8-12
⁵ J.C.M. Ogelsby, Gringos from the Far North: Essays in the History of Canadian-Latin American Relations 1866-1968 (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976, 13.)
sugar and molasses. Little further came of this mission, although Great Britain itself significantly expanded its trade and investments in Latin America, especially Argentina, during the era of so-called free trade imperialism in the mid and late nineteenth century. British trade with Latin America peaked just before World War I, taking 14% of its exports and supplying 13% of its imports, a figure that would drop substantially in the 1920s and 1930s.  

Armstrong and Nelles argue, in the early decades of the twentieth century, that Canadian business entrepreneurs and investors used the British imperial connection, especially finance, to invest in Latin American utility, transportation and infrastructure projects in countries such as Brazil, Mexico and Cuba. By the early twentieth century, Canadian banks such as the Royal Bank and the Bank of Nova Scotia, and insurance companies such as Sun Life, were a significant presence in Cuba and several other countries in the Caribbean basin. The Royal Bank was especially prominent on the island, and in turn its Cuban investments were highly significant to the bank. In the years immediately after World War I, when the demand for Cuban sugar reached a new high, roughly 16 per cent of Royal Bank loans and deposits were connected to that country, a portion that would shrink afterwards as sugar prices declined sharply in the middle and late 1920s, followed by the onset of the Great Depression. Along with the two banks, Canadian life insurance companies also played a disproportionately large role in Cuba. By the time of the Cuban revolution, approximately 70 to 80 percent of Cuban insurance deals were underwritten by Canadian firms, mainly Confederation Life, Sun Life, Crown Life, Imperial Life and Manufacturer’s Life. John Kirk and Peter McKenna argue that the protection of commercial interests and the expansion of trade remained consistently the foundation of Canada’s relationship with Cuba. This remained the case before and after the Cuban revolution.

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9 Kirk and McKenna,15-22.
10 Duncan McDowell, Quick to the Frontier: Canada’s Royal Bank, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993), 237 and 315.
11 Insurance percentages cited in Kirk and McKenna, 16.
12 Kirk and McKenna, 8.
While individual Canadian entrepreneurs and firms sought business opportunities in Latin America, the government was slower to follow suit in giving the region priority. In 1930, just as the Depression was becoming severe, Prime Minister R.B. Bennett supported the recommendation of Vincent Massey, then Minister in the Canadian embassy in Washington, that Canada send a mission to South America. The Prime Minister sent his Minister without Portfolio, Sir George Perley, on a visit to several countries in South America. Perley was later mockingly described as having enjoyed “a splendid time,” at a moment when Canada’s trade with the region’s countries “dropped by half.” 13 Ottawa would not renew its interest in Latin America until wartime, when the closure of European markets led it to seek alternatives. In 1941 and 1942, Prime Minister Mackenzie King sent Trade and Commerce Minister James MacKinnon on a trade mission to several Latin American countries.14 Dana Wilgress, then Mackinnon’s Deputy Minister, described in his memoirs the enthusiastic reception the Canadian delegation received in the various capitals, recalling: “it seemed that the people in the countries we visited interpreted our mission as a belated recognition of the fact that we lived in the same hemisphere and that the paucity of relations with Canada was an anomaly, which our visit was designed to correct.”15

In contrast to Ottawa’s commercial motives, the various Latin American states received the Canadians primarily for political reasons. Canada had some attraction for them, as it would for post-1959 Cuba in particular. It was perceived as a smaller and less bombastic country than the United States, while nonetheless western, capitalist and sufficiently wealthy to serve as a friendly North American counterpart to the United States.16 It was also untainted with either yanqui imperialism or the British variety - a point that Fidel Castro himself and Cuban diplomats more than once impressed on Canadian officials. 17 Several of the republics encouraged Canada to finally take its empty seat in the Pan American Union, one that had been prepared for it since the first decade of the century in recognition that Canada was in the

13 Ogelsby, 16.
14 See Ogelsby,17-29 for outline of this mission, which included a Cuba stop.
16 Rochlin, 22-24. Also see Ogelsby, Ch 1 and Ch 3.
17 For Castro’s praise of Canada’s “non-colonial” past, see Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no YYGR 2196 December 23, 1975 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 28, LAC. For Cuban Ambassador Carlos Amat’s repetition of the same line see Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Havana no. GSL-1079, June 13, 1980 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 8639, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 31, LAC
hemisphere. At that time, it would be the United States that was reluctant to seat Canada, seeing it as a country with a foreign policy either controlled or strongly influenced by a European power, and therefore a contravention of the Monroe Doctrine.\(^\text{18}\) The politics and legalities of this question aside, many Latin Americans wanted Canada’s southern presence to be formalized politically, a value held highly by the governments of the region, who were keen to see the exchanges of embassies and formalized inter-state relationships.

Canada honoured several of the requests for formal diplomatic recognition immediately after the MacKinnon mission. Giving priority to the larger states, Ottawa appointed representatives to Brazil, Argentina and Chile in 1941, followed by Mexico and Peru in 1944. Diplomatic relations with Cuba, while a much smaller state, were nonetheless established by 1945, rewarding the latter’s initiative in formalizing such ties and also attesting to the recognition and respect that Canadian businesses, especially banks, had on the island republic.\(^\text{19}\) Despite the keenness of several other Latin American republics for formal diplomatic relations with Canada, Ottawa would take its time regarding the remainder. Mostly this was as Canada was still a new diplomatic player in its own right, as well as the greater priority it gave to commercial links. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Canada delayed opening missions in specific countries until it concluded its interests warranted such an expense and commitment. Regarding Colombia, for example, Under Secretary Arnold Heeney reported to his Deputy, Escott Reid, in mid-1949:

> My feeling is that the government will not be enthusiastic about a recommendation to open a Mission in Colombia in the near future nor indeed any new Missions anywhere with[ou]t pretty specific reasons based on pretty evident, tangible and immediate Canadian interest shown.\(^\text{20}\)

Some of the smaller countries in the region interpreted Canada’s lacklustre pace in formalizing ties as aloofness. External Affairs Minister Lester B. Pearson sought to persuade his Colombian counterpart not to interpret the lack of an embassy in Bogotá as either Canadian disinterest or the diminution of his country in comparison to larger regional players. Instead, Pearson outlined, largely correctly, that the expansion of Canada’s ties in Latin America had followed a haphazard

\(^{18}\) See Peter McKenna, *Canada and the OAS; from Dilettante to Full Partner* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1995), 66-70 for background discussion.

\(^{19}\) Ogelsby, 57-61 The details are from Department of Foreign Affairs and International Affairs (DFAIT) Dept. in History website at [http://www.international.gc.ca/departement/history-histoire/heads_of_posts_country-en.asp](http://www.international.gc.ca/departement/history-histoire/heads_of_posts_country-en.asp)

\(^{20}\) Marginal notes from Heeney to Reid on Memorandum from Deputy Under Secretary of State for External Affairs to Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, July 20, 1949 in DCER, Vol. 15, Doc 1065.
and irregular path. Such perspectives were greeted at times skeptically south of the Rio Grande. Canada would not have diplomatic relations across all Latin America until the early 1960s, and for some parts of the Caribbean, such formal exchanges even had to wait until the decade afterwards.

From the moment Canada began to forge ties with the rest of the Americas, the influence of the United States loomed large and at times pulled it in different directions. It was during the Second World War, when the Canadian and American economies were integrated under the 1941 Hyde Park agreement and when the gaze of both countries had turned southward, that the foundation for Canadian-American cooperation in Latin America, including that concerning post revolutionary Cuba, was laid. As with the Cuba narrative, this wartime cooperation grew in a climate of differences in interests and perspective, which sparked moments of friction. The two neighbours had to learn how to harness their parallel but occasionally competing interests to create space for cooperation. Canada naturally recognized that both the size and historical role of the United States in the region overshadowed its own. If Canada was to gain any influence at all, it could not ignore American interests and concerns. On the other hand, the United States, which had come to value its northern neighbour as a wartime ally and trading partner, now had to recognize Canada as a country in its own right, one that shared a parallel but by no means identical outlook on the world to itself. To obtain Canadian cooperation in the hemisphere, the United States would have to resist its Monroe Doctrine reflex of excluding other players from what it saw as its backyard.

At the outset, the United States’ response to Canada’s forays into Latin America was at best cool, if not overtly negative. This was principally for two reasons. The first was economic. The United States naturally saw an expansion of Canadian commercial operations in Latin America as a source of competition for American business interests. While substantially smaller and fewer in number than their American competitors, Canadian banks and insurance companies in Cuba, and elsewhere in the Caribbean basin, were by no means a negligible presence. Secondly, and more important, were political and strategic concerns. From Washington’s perspective, Canada was still too junior a nation, and too closely linked to Great Britain, to play a desirable role. A greater Canadian presence in the region would amount to a

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greater British presence, challenging American hegemony in the region and thus contravening the Monroe doctrine.\textsuperscript{23} The United States had drawn firm lines against Great Britain over the Venezuela-British Guiana boundary in 1895, forcing it to either abandon any remaining formal imperial ambitions in the region or face war. Shortly after the United States entry into World War II, Hume Wrong, then Minister-Counsellor to Canada’s Legation in Washington, wrote Under Secretary Norman Robertson that Washington’s ambivalence about a larger Canadian role in the hemisphere went right to the White House. Sumner Welles, President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s key advisor on Latin American affairs, had indicated that the President was inclined to support the position of some of the region’s governments that that Canada “was not strictly speaking, an American republic.” \textsuperscript{24}

Thinking of this sort greatly irritated Prime Minister Mackenzie King, who would spend much of the war seeking to gain respect for his country among his more powerful allies in London and Washington. When the question emerged over whether Canada should participate in a hemispheric defence conference, Robertson reported to the Prime Minister, who also acted as his own External Affairs Minister, that “it would seem absurd for Canada, the only power in the hemisphere that has been fighting for two years against what is now the common foe to be absent from a meeting specifically called to consider the means of defeating the enemy.” \textsuperscript{25}

Wrong pushed Welles, asking him directly that if no legal obstacles existed, would the United States support Canadian participation in the Pan American Union. Welles, having Roosevelt’s ear, replied “the United States would be glad to have full Canadian cooperation in all aspects of Inter-American affairs” and promised that Washington would put out feelers to Latin American delegates about a possible Canadian role.\textsuperscript{26} Slightly over a year later, Wrong learned that Brazil’s populist dictator Getulio Vargas had confided to Roosevelt that he was interested in greater Canadian participation in the Pan American Union. While delighted to learn of this, Mackenzie King concluded based on his experiences with the Americans that the time was not


\textsuperscript{24} Memorandum from Under Secretary of State for External Affairs to the Prime Minister, December 17, 1941 in DCER Vol. 9, Doc 764, 898-899.

\textsuperscript{25} Memorandum from Under Secretary of State for External Affairs to the Prime Minister, December 11, 1941 in DCER Vol. 9, Doc 762, 896-897.

\textsuperscript{26} Memorandum by Minister-Counsellor, Legation to United States, December 18, 1941 in DCER, Vol. 9 Doc 766, Enclosure 2, 901-902.
yet ripe for Canada to join the hemispheric organization.\textsuperscript{27} He would even tell Roosevelt’s successor in the White House, Harry S. Truman, in April 1947 \textit{not} to ask Canada to join the inter-American organization.\textsuperscript{28} Potential clashes of interests and opinions with Washington, later exemplified by Castro’s Cuba, formed Ottawa’s official reasoning for staying out of the PAU’s post-war successor, the Organization of American States (OAS). In the meantime, hemispheric security concerns sparked by the Cold War had led the United States to change its tune in favour of Canadian involvement.

To a certain extent, the Americans were not off the mark in their assessment that Canada’s role in Latin America might bear with it a British imprint. In a mirror image perspective from that of Roosevelt and Welles, Norman Robertson and Vincent Massey, now Canada’s representative in London, shared the Departmental unease about the scope of American influence in the region, and argued in favour of a Canadian and British counterweight:

In my view, it would not be in the interest of Canada that British political and economic influence in Latin America should be eliminated or even weakened, and that the United States should be without a rival in that part of the world. On the contrary, it appears desirable that the British influence should remain relatively strong in Latin America as a make-weight to what promises to be an overwhelming United States preponderance, so that if at any time United States commercial policy should assume an exclusive character, Canada would be able to count on the support of the United Kingdom in defending her own interests.\textsuperscript{29}

In the same report, Massey also saw a convergence of Canadian and Latin American interests in preserving some \textit{British} influence in the region, and that this might be exactly why the American republics wanted to expand links with Canada – precisely because they saw Canada as still having a tangible connection to Great Britain to offset the ever increasing influence of the United States. This view was of course the very issue that concerned the United States.

Another source of friction between Canada and the United States during the war was over Canada’s entitlement to receive prior consultation from Washington over its hemispheric export control policies, an area that was later a central sticking point relating to post-

\textsuperscript{27} Minister in the United States to Prime Minister, February 18, 1943 (Most Secret) and Prime Minister to Minister in United States March 5, 1943 (Most Secret) in DCER Vol. 9, Doc. 772 and Doc. 773, 910-911.
\textsuperscript{28} Peter McKenna, \textit{Canada and the OAS: from Dilettante to Full Partner}, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1995), 75, quoting MacKenzie King’s diary entry of April 23, 1947. The original is available online at Library and Archives Canada website \url{http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/king/index-e.html}.
\textsuperscript{29} Memorandum from High Commissioner in London (Massey) to Under Secretary Robertson September 9, 1942 (Secret and Personal) in RG 25, Vol. 3182, File 4889-40, LAC
revolutionary Cuba. As with the Castro regime, the two allies both sought to curtail the spread of hostile ideologies and foreign powers in the hemisphere— with the leading example in the wartime 1940s being pro-Axis and pro-fascist sympathies prevailing in several of the South American republics, especially Argentina. As well, with the Hyde Park agreements their economies were now intricately intertwined, to the advantage of both countries. Despite these shared concerns, the United States government, regarding Canada as very much the junior partner, did not believe it deserved equal consideration in decision-making.

In the early months of 1943, Canadian officials were irritated about not receiving either notification or due consideration when the Roosevelt administration restricted exports to certain Latin American countries. In doing so, the United States invoked legal or technical hairsplitting, as exemplified by its exclusion of Canadian wood pulp for Uruguay by arguing that Canada had supplied it before the war.30 The Department of Trade and Commerce’s Assistant Director of Commercial Relations, G.B. Smith, complained that this “arbitrary and unfair decision” negatively impacted on Canada, which proportionally relied more on wood related exports that did the United States.31 Robertson noted that while wartime bilateral relations with the Americans could be characterized as honest and mutually advantageous, and had moved away from what he had earlier categorized as “secret and dishonest diplomacy,”32 he saw Canadian-American relations as entering “an unsatisfactory phase,” especially concerning Latin America.33 Escott Reid, then serving in External Affairs’ American Division (and also accompanying MacKinnon on his Latin American mission), believed Canada had to be bolder with the Americans, commenting “we are treated as children because we have refused to behave as adults.”34 Canada would have to assert itself, which King was prepared to do.

On a higher and more generalized level, the United States’ Board of Economic Warfare issued a so-called Decentralized Plan of Export Control, which sought to rationalize shipping and supply resources to Latin America, as well as restrict the flow of goods from and through

30 Memorandum from Assistant Director for Commercial Relations G.B. Smith to Dr HF Angus, March 15, 1943 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 3182, File 4889-40, LAC.
31 Ibid.
32 Memorandum from Under Secretary of State for External Affairs to the Prime Minister (Secret), April 13, 1942 in DCER, Vol. 9, Doc 770, 909.
34 Reid, 158.
the United States by means of strict licensing requirements.35 This plan was intended to apply to all countries in the Western hemisphere – including Canada, although it did not specifically say as such.36 Mackenzie King advocated cooperation with Washington, but wanted to ensure that Canadian interests were safeguarded. Believing Canada would eventually receive an exception, the Prime Minister worried how the Latin American countries might view such controls, and how this might impact on Canadian trade opportunities.37 Canadian sovereignty remained central to King’s thinking. His country was not to be taken for granted, and any cooperation with the Americans on export control required joint authority. The Prime Minister agreed to follow the American lead on export controls to Latin America, on the understanding that Canada would also be a regular source for goods to the region.38 In April 1943, Dean Acheson, then Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs and acting for Secretary Cordell Hull, agreed to involve Canada in discussions of the Export Control regime and to reinstate the in-transit licenses that Washington had unilaterally cancelled, which as a consequence had blocked the movement of Canadian goods to Latin American countries through the United States.39

Ottawa accepted the American offer, deciding even to allow US missions to handle Canadian interests in countries where Canada had yet to establish its own - a departure from Canada’s traditional reliance on the British as its surrogate.40 Hull later praised Canada’s decision as “another example of the excellent collaboration between the two countries.” In addition, Canada was promised a reciprocal relationship with the United States, including consultation, no unfair advantages, and proportional export ratios that would serve as a guideline for regional commercial relations after the war.41

35 For overview see Memorandum from US Secretary of State (Hull) to Diplomatic Representatives in the American republics except. Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and the Consul in Martinique January 19, 1943 in Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1943, Vol. V, 106-111.
36 Memorandum from Secretary of State for External Affairs to Minister in the United States Despatch 174, February 22, 1943 (Secret) in DCER, Vol. 9, Doc 1127, 1375.
37 Telegram from Secretary of State for External Affairs to Minister in United States no. EX-689, February 26, 1943 in DCER Vol.9, Doc. 1128, 1377.
38 Telegram from Secretary of State for External Affairs to Minister in United States, no. EX-732, March 3, 1943 in DCER Vol.9, Doc. 1131, 1380-1381.
Canada and the United States had thus established patterns of cooperation in World War II in Latin America that reflected generally parallel but occasionally clashing interests. Ottawa recognized its need to work successfully with the United States as it expanded its influence in a region the latter still very much still considered its backyard, even with its so-called “Good Neighbour” policy. The senior Canadian officials involved in overseeing this relationship, including Prime Minister Mackenzie King, Under Secretary Robertson, and Washington Ministry officials Hume Wrong and Lester B. Pearson, all recognized the need for Canada as a sovereign country to stand up for its interests in the region. However, James Rochlin’s assertion that Canada sought an independent policy from the United States in Latin America is only partly correct. While Canada sought this goal, its asymmetry with the United States and the latter’s hegemony in the region meant it would have to march along to the American tune much of the time. Its differences with the Americans were largely on means, rather than the overall end of making the region amenable to trade, investment and North American values. For its part, the Americans grew to appreciate Canada as a successful and prosperous wartime ally. Attuned from the wartime experiences to Canadian sensitivities, the United States gradually made more room for Canada to play a greater role in Latin America, albeit it did so hesitatingly and even somewhat begrudgingly.

As World War II ended and the Cold War began, Canada and the United States continued the wartime pattern they had established in the western hemisphere of having an ongoing consensus without a perfect overlap of goals and interests. Their long intertwined history and shared perspective as capitalist liberal democracies naturally placed Canada and the United States on the same side in the Cold War. Both neighbours saw communism in general, and the Soviet Union in particular, as a threat to the future of their political systems and economic interests. As the unquestioned leader of the west in 1945, the United States quickly concluded that there could be no postwar continuation of its alliance with the Soviet Union, as the latter’s ideology and global interests were antithetical to its own. Within eighteen months of World War II’s conclusion, President Harry Truman and his foreign policy team had adopted the doctrine of containment, publicly committing the United States to resist and counter Soviet movements across the globe. They also concluded that indigenous communists everywhere

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43 For Canadian desire for policy “independence” in Latin America see Rochlin, 22.
ultimately served the interests of the Soviet Union, and were probably financed and directed from Moscow. Such activities would have to be resisted, suppressed and thwarted wherever possible.⁴⁴

In 1947, the Canadian government followed suit in adopting containment. Not only did Ottawa largely accept Washington’s postwar suspicions of the Soviet Union, but its own outlook, predating the war, was hostile to communism.⁴⁵ As the Cold War set in, Canada expanded its cooperation with its now superpower neighbour on numerous fronts ranging from defence to intelligence sharing.⁴⁶ For the next decade, Canadian public opinion largely supported the government’s foreign policy and accepted the anti-communist rationale Ottawa provided.⁴⁷ Still there were limits. Canadian officials and the public alike were leery of, if not outright repulsed by the virulent and hysterical anti-communism enflaming the United States between 1947 and 1954, driven by the House Un-American Activities Committee, Senator Joseph McCarthy and J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI.⁴⁸ As Reg Whittaker and Gary Marcuse point out, despite Ottawa’s desire to avoid a made-in-Canada McCarthyism, elements of the latter did seep north of the border. There were some anti-Communist excesses in Canada as well, with the targets of persecution mirroring those victimized in the United States, although on a much smaller and less intense scale.⁴⁹

While Canada strongly supported the basic tenets of US containment policy, Canada sought a gentler approach to the communist world than its American counterpart, one that

⁴⁶ Whittaker and Marcuse, 142-147, 223-224.
⁴⁷ See Robert Bothwell, Alliance and Illusion: Canada and the World, 1945-1984 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 218 and Whittaker and Marcuse, 261-262. A more recent and somewhat variant view is in Robert Teigrob, Warming Up to the Cold War: Canada and the United States’ Coalition of the Willing from Hiroshima to Korea (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), who argues that Canadians had been initially ambivalent about Cold war anti-communism it was the US media that shaped Canadian views, which in turn influenced Ottawa’s policies. Teigrob ignores the Reid memorandum and the 1947 decisions entirely. For an assessment that Canadian views of the Soviet Union in the early Cold War closely paralleled the United States see David J. Bercuson, “‘A People So Ruthless as the Soviets’: Canadian Images of the Cold War and the Soviet Union, 1946-1950,” in David Davies, ed., Canada and the Soviet Experiment (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 1994), 89-103.
⁴⁹ See numerous examples in Whittaker and Marcuse concerning public servants, cultural institutions etc. Most tragic was the suicide of diplomat Herbert Norman in 1957.
External Affairs’ Escott Reid characterized aptly as “firmness without rudeness.”50 In his seminal policy memorandum of August 1947, Reid noted that Canada had little option but to support the United States on critical issues of defence and security. However, he identified that policy and style differences would emerge between Ottawa and Washington on occasion, rooted in differing foreign policy traditions, interests and public opinion (he rightly pointed out that in neither country was opinion uniform). In such instances, Canada would need to carve out space for itself both to preserve its own position and to have some influence in Washington. He went on to argue that “If Canada can follow a policy which is consistent in purpose, though variegated and resourceful in application, it can exert a very considerable influence upon United States policy.”51 Reid believed that:

> the weight of the influence the Canadian Government can bring to bear on Washington is considerable. If we play our cards well we can exert an influence at Washington out of all proportion to the relative importance of our strength in war compared with that of the United States. The game is difficult; the issues will be delicate; but with skill we can play it successfully.52

The principles Reid outlined in 1947 played out remarkably consistently in Latin America, and especially concerning Cuba, albeit with mixed success, for the rest of the Cold War.53

Regarding Latin America, Canadian officials recognized very early on, even before the Cold War had clearly set in, the potential attraction of communist ideology in the region. Serving at the Chilean legation in 1945 as Chargé d’Affaires, Jules Léger, (later one of Canada’s most prominent diplomats and Governor General) reported that in his view, “semi-feudal countries are an easy prey for Communist infiltration through the awakening of the masses to political life.” 54 For Canadians, it was primarily poverty and exploitation, rather than Soviet agitation and manipulation, that made the region vulnerable to communism. Reid had recognized in his famous 1947 memorandum that the aspirations of colonial peoples for self determination and freedom from discrimination could indeed be hijacked by the Soviet Union, but that these were also legitimate movements for change and justice that should not always

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50 Memorandum by Head, Second Political Division (Reid), August 30, 1947 (Top Secret) in DCER Vol.13, Doc. 226.
51 Memorandum by Head, Second Political Division (Reid), August 30, 1947 (Top Secret) in DCER Vol.13, Doc. 226.
52 Ibid.
53 A summary analysis of the importance of Reid’s memorandum in influencing policy is in Bothwell, *Alliance and Illusion*, 59-62.
labelled in Cold War terms. For the remainder of the Cold War, Canadian officials largely interpreted the appeal of revolution in the region, especially Cuba, as well as the rest of the Third World, through this lens. This fundamental difference in assessment meant that at times, as exemplified concerning Cuba after 1960, Canada and the United States would misunderstand and misinterpret one another.

Ottawa’s view on communism’s potential for success in Latin America remained relatively consistent in the Cold War. In contrast, for the United States government, fear of communism in Latin America evolved from being a minor concern during the first Truman administration to a point of alarm during the Eisenhower presidency. Initially, Washington believed that the communist threat in the region was low and easily containable. A September 1948 intelligence review of security threats to the United States concluded that the likelihood of a direct Soviet attack in Latin America was extremely unlikely, and it doubted that any of its governments were likely to become communist. Still following the Good Neighbour paradigm, State Department policymakers argued that intervention should be reserved only for serious threats to its “peace and welfare;” they also acknowledged that poverty and dictatorships contributed most greatly to making the region fertile for communism.

However, no Marshall Plan would be extended to Latin America, and by the beginning of the 1950s, the heightened atmosphere of global crisis narrowed Washington’s focus to anti-communism; while aspirations for autonomy and better standards of living were still recognized, containment took precedence. In a revealing March 1950 memorandum to Secretary of State Dean Acheson, George Kennan, the principal architect of containment policy, reaffirmed the Monroe Doctrine with an added Cold War twist that Gaddis Smith coined “the Kennan

55 Memorandum by Head, Second Political Division (Reid) August 30, 1947 (Top Secret) in DCER, Vol. 13, Doc. 226.
58 Policy Planning Staff Paper PPS 26, “To Establish US Policy regarding Anti-Communist Measures which could be Planned and Carried out in the Inter-American System” March 22,1948 (Secret) in FRUS, 1948, Vol. IX, p 197. For a view that Roosevelt’s Good Neighbour intended only to overt military intervention, while still allowing for indirect forms, see Brian Loveman, No Higher Law: American Foreign Policy and the Western Hemisphere since 1776 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 244-245.
59 For example see NSC 144/1 “United States Objectives and Courses of Action with Respect to Latin America” March 18, 1953 (Top Secret) in FRUS 1952-1954, Vol. IV, 8
corollary,” - a less than subtle comparison to Theodore Roosevelt’s much resented licence for intervention. While Kennan argued that democracy was preferable in theory, it was local communists, not the Soviet military, that posed the threat to US interests. Thus he argued in response:

where the concepts and traditions of popular government are too weak to absorb the intensity of the communist attack, then we must concede that harsh governmental repression may be the only answer; that these measures may have to proceed from regimes whose origins and methods would not stand the tests of American democratic procedure; and that such regimes and such methods may be preferable alternatives, and indeed the only alternatives, to further communist successes.

Truman, Eisenhower, and all future administrations, except perhaps the early Carter years, accepted this viewpoint. Much of the US military assistance would be used by Latin American governments against their own people fighting a perceived internal communist threat, as opposed to an external Soviet one. Cuba in the 1950s was exemplary of this US policy in action. Coupled with this was the United States increasing turn towards covert action, including paramilitary and propaganda efforts, to replace left leaning governments with those more palatable to United States interests – no matter how repressive might be the successor. The successful toppling of the Guatemalan government of Jacobo Arbenz in 1954 remains the textbook example, with President Eisenhower praising the outcome as a great success, one that had removed “a Soviet beachhead in our hemisphere.” The Eisenhower administration especially feared another Arbenz in countries like Cuba. After a February 1955 visit to Central

61 Memorandum by the Counselor of the State Department (Kennan) to Secretary of State (Acheson), March 29, 1950 (Secret) in *FRUS 1950, Vol. II*, 603.
62 Ibid, 607. The latter part of this quotation is also in Brian Loveman, *No Higher Law*, 272-273.
America and the Caribbean, Vice President Richard Nixon reported to the National Security Council that “what happened in Guatemala would have been much worse if it occurred in Mexico or in Cuba.” Nixon described Latin America as “our own backyard” and that concerning communism in the region, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” On that trip, Nixon met Cuba’s dictator Fulgencio Batista in Havana, and praised him lavishly as the kind of leader the United States should support. As will be shown, Canadian officials tended to be cool to such viewpoints and approaches, seeing them as foreign policy extensions of the more odious tenets of domestic anti-communism, and as seeds for future hemispheric trouble.

As far as Latin Americans were concerned, the Guatemala episode sounded the death knell of Roosevelt’s “Good Neighbour” legacy, and did much to re-ignite the long-smouldering anti-American sentiment prevalent in much of the region. The Cuban revolution would ultimately be the most significant such consequence. Fidel Castro and Che Guevara were very cognisant about this American intervention, with Guevara being present in Guatemala at the very time of Arbenz’s downfall. The Castro government would continually invoke the memory of Guatemala as evidence of the true nature of American foreign policy, with Cuban Foreign Minister Raul Roa greatly offending Washington at the September 1959 United Nations General Assembly by listing it along with Hungary and Tibet as recent examples of “compulsive force,” imposed by foreign powers. Some Americans misread the Latin American perspective entirely; an Air Force General argued to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1958 that the Guatemalan affair was a positive example of a US led intervention that could enhance US prestige in the region. Vice President Nixon experienced first-hand the boiling over of such resentment in Venezuela and Peru in May 1958, when jeering mobs, furious at Washington’s past support for dictatorships, threw rocks at his limousine and threatened his physical safety.

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65 Memorandum of Discussion of the 240th meeting of the National Security Council, March 10, 1955 (Top Secret) in FRUS 1955-1957, Vol. VI, Doc 195, 614-615. Nixon would remain an unrepentant champion of right wing military dictatorships in Latin America during his presidency as well, seeing them as the only alternative to communism.

66 For the regional impact see Hal Brands, Latin America’s Cold War (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 16-17.

67. For the impact of Guevara’s experiences in Guatemala on his later thinking see Jorge G. Castañeda, Companero: The Life and Death of Che Guevara (New York: Vintage, 1997), 69-72.

68 See Memorandum from US Ambassador to Cuba (Bonsal) to Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rubottom) September 1959 (Confidential) in FRUS 1958-1960, Vol. VI, Doc. 364, 612.

69 Memorandum from Brigadier General Robert A. Breitweiser, USAF to Chairman, JCS, “United States Prestige” July 12, 1958 (Top Secret) in DDRS, Doc. CK3100436978
Following this episode, an angry but perturbed Eisenhower subsequently dispatched his
brother Milton, an academic who considered himself a Latin American expert, to Central
America to report on the mood in the hemisphere. The outcome would be a report confirming
the prevalence of anti-American sentiments and the need for improved economic terms for the
region. The reception given Nixon stoked in Eisenhower a genuine bewilderment regarding
anti-American sentiment in the Third World, a sentiment he had been wrestling with since the
early days of his presidency, when he had lamented to the National Security Council that:

it was a matter of great distress to him that we seemed unable to get some of the people in these
downtrodden countries to like us instead of hating us.  

Henry Cabot Lodge, Washington’s representative to the United Nations commented in 1959
after the Castro victory in Cuba: “the US can win wars, but the question is can we win
revolutions.” Now a superpower, the only truly legitimate revolution for the United States was
its own. Eisenhower made some adjustments to his Latin American policy, including the
addition of more development assistance instead of strictly military aid, measures John F.
Kennedy would adopt further with his 1961 Alliance for Progress. Hoping to encourage
moderate reform and reduce anti-Americanism and the appeal of communism in the region, such
efforts would prove too little, too late in Cuba to halt the momentum for radical change. For the
rest of Latin America, the next three decades would be characterized by revolutionary
insurgency, countered by brutal repression from the right. Nixon’s fears about an Arbenz or
worse in Cuba would soon indeed be realized.

The Cold War provided the United States with a convenient motif for interference in
Latin America using a variety of forms. Seeking to minimize the political fallout in the various
countries of its anti-communist policies, Washington sought as best it could the support of the
American republics, but also other allies. A special target of American recruitment was Canada.

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71 Quoted in Odd Arne Westad, The Global Cold War (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 122. Also see Record of Discussion at the 135th meeting of the National Security Council, March 4, 1953 (Top Secret) Declassified Document Reference System (DDRS) Doc. CK3100129323
73 See Rabe, Eisenhower in Latin America, Ch. 6 for an overview of this policy evolution.
In the eyes of Washington’s policymakers, Canada’s unique position of being geographically in the western hemisphere, a NATO ally and an immediate neighbour of the United States naturally made it the ideal candidate to bring along side concerning its Latin American policies. While still seeing it as a peripheral player in the southern part of the hemisphere, the United States saw potential in its northern neighbour in the region. Washington sought to shape the opinion of Ottawa’s leaders in its mould, despite having no illusions that convincing the less ideologically doctrinaire Canadians would be a tough sell. The United States’ view of Canada’s role in the hemisphere was still very much evolving in the 1950s. With the expansion of Canadian commercial and diplomatic relations among the Latin republics, it had become a definite presence, one that was distinct from the United Kingdom and not a serious rival. For the most part, geography aside, the United States saw Canada as a North Atlantic, rather than an American country. Still the United States saw in Canada a country with which it had far more similarities in history, background and values than the remainder of the hemisphere’s countries. It hoped to get it sufficiently onside so as not to stand alone.

In March 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower approved NSC 144/1, the key US policy statement on Latin America for the next several years. One of its identified goals was encouraging Canadian membership in the Organization of American States, for the aforementioned reasons. The NSC would repeat this objective in its leading subsequent review, NSC 5902/1, issued a month after Castro’s forces marched into Havana. Stressing the similarity of Canadian and American economic interests and political philosophy vis a vis the rest of the hemisphere, Washington’s policymakers believed that:

[Canada’s] inclusion in a greater measure in the Inter-American system would tend to strengthen the position of the United States and to weaken the tendency of a concept of the United States versus Latin America.

Thus the intervening Cold War had completely shifted the American perspective on Canada’s hemispheric role from that of a probable competitor to that of a potentially valued ally, despite some differing analyses and viewpoints.

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75 See NSC 144/1 “United States Objectives and Courses of Action with Respect to Latin America,” March 18, 1953 (Top Secret) in FRUS 1952-1954, Vol. IV, Doc. 3, 8
Unlike the United States, Canada had not yet changed its position on the OAS from Mackenzie King in 1947, and the Liberal government of Louis St. Laurent was in no hurry to move forward in this regard. Canadian officials employed similar faux-legal rationales for not joining the organization as the Americans had used in 1943 for keeping Canada out of the PAU. A confidential State Department memorandum intentionally left in Ottawa for External Affairs officials in 1952 revealed that the United States wanted “to ameliorate somewhat the unique position of the United States as the only English-speaking member,” as well as being “a valuable contributor to the liberal principles which are the declared aim of Latin American countries, but which are so often contradicted by them in practice.”

L.D. Wilgress, acting on Pearson’s behalf, instructed the embassy in Washington that Canada would even decline observer status in the OAS at this point. Officially, the argument went along the lines that Canada lacked knowledge of the Inter-American system, that it already having its hands full with UN and NATO obligations, and that it did not see improved relations with Latin America as being contingent on OAS participation.

Analyzing why Washington was wooing of Canada in this regard, Wilgress concluded:

> It is not impossible that the State Department is beginning to feel that the United States is getting into a position of being one against twenty and that the U.S. Government may even attempt to press us to join the OAS in order to counteract the growing anti-United States propaganda throughout Latin America.

Aware that feelings towards the United States in Latin America were ambivalent to hostile, External Affairs officials came to believe that being too closely associated with American hemispheric policies might actually hurt Canadian interests in the region. American embassy staff in Ottawa were silent on whether or not the United States thought Canadian OAS membership would “have good or detrimental affects” on bilateral relations.

The new Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Washington’s representative at the United Nations, Henry Cabot Lodge, prodded Pearson about Canadian observer status in early 1953, with

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77 Memorandum by American Republics Affairs Bureau, Department of State “Possible Invitation To Canada To Accept Observer Status at Tenth Inter-American Conference” September 3, 1952 (Confidential) in DCER Vol. 18, Doc 1040 (enclosure)

78 Secretary of State for External Affairs to Ambassador in the United States Despatch X-1456 September 13, 1952 (Confidential) in DCER Vol. 18, Doc 1040.

79 Secretary of State for External Affairs to Ambassador in the United States Despatch X-1456 September 13, 1952 (Confidential) in DCER Vol. 18, Doc 1040.

80 Secretary of State for External Affairs to Ambassador in the United States Despatch X-1456 September 13, 1952 (Confidential) in DCER Vol. 18, Doc 1040.
Canada opting to postpone participation. The Progressive Conservative government of John Diefenbaker, elected in June 1957, made this same decision as its Liberal predecessor, concluding that the gain in trade benefits from OAS membership would be offset by problems with the United States should differences in opinion arise. Diefenbaker was unprepared to assume this risk, a decision that proved prescient given the bilateral problems that arose over Cuba in the second half of 1960. As Thompson and Randall aptly describe it: “Canadian sensitivity irritated them [US officials] as much as US insensitivity infuriated Canadians.” At least in the period between the late 1940s and 1960, this dynamic was largely muted on hemispheric issues.

Canadian ambivalence over the wisdom of American policies in Latin America had much to do with Ottawa’s struggle to balance its interests there, as well as to stay abreast of Canadian public opinion. Canadian officials were by no means unified on the best course of action, and similar intra-governmental divisions would occur throughout the long discourse over revolutionary Cuba. Harry Scott, the Ambassador in Havana for early and middle 1950s, believed that OAS participation would inevitably signify a larger political, as opposed to merely commercial, role for Canada. Jules Léger, then Assistant Under Secretary, took a different tact in making the case for involvement, suggesting in 1953 that Latin American governments might view Canada’s continued absence from the regional body as disinterest. Looking towards public opinion at home, Wilgress’ offered a different viewpoint, arguing that Canadians were not ready for such a commitment. Getting one Latin American perspective from a leading country, Brazil’s ambassador cautioned that in the OAS, Canada could find itself having to “interpret” the United States to Latin America, an uncomfortable middling position. In 1960,

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81 Memorandum from Secretary of State for External Affairs to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs March 9, 1953 (Confidential) in DCER Vol. 19, Doc 1992.
82 Extract from Cabinet Conclusion, August 20, 1957 (Confidential) in DCER, Vol. 25, Doc. 524.
83 Thompson and Randall, 185.
84 Ambassador in Cuba to Secretary of State for External Affairs Despatch D-367 November 20, 1952 (Confidential) in DCER, Vol. 18, Doc. 1047.
85 Comments by the Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, undated (Secret) in DCER Vol. 19, Doc 1090 enclosure
86 Memorandum from Assistant Under-Secretary of State to Under Secretary, February 26, 1953 (Secret) in DCER, Vol. 19, Doc. 1091.
87 Memorandum by Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, March 12, 1953 (Secret) in DCER Vol. 19, Doc. 1093. For the Brazilian Ambassador view see also Memorandum from Head, American Division September 4, 1953 (Confidential) in DCER Vol. 19, Doc. 1096.
Canadian officials found themselves in just such an awkward position on Cuba, even without OAS membership.

Along with the OAS question, the sale of arms also became a focal point of Canadian-American relations concerning the region during the early Cold War. In 1947, Canada’s War Assets Corporation had surplus Mosquito aircraft that Argentina was intensely interested in purchasing, in exchange for fats and oils needed in Canada. Ottawa’s position was that Canada and the United States had “an understanding “that there would be bilateral consultation before any such transaction took place.88 The Americans were unsupportive of the sale, and thus the Cabinet opted not to proceed.89 Not wanting to go against American wishes, the Canadian government arranged as an alternative transaction of Canadian newsprint for the Argentine edible oils. Ottawa acted similarly that year regarding a request for aircraft by the Dominican Republic, after the Americans informed it that dictator Rafael Trujillo’s regime had been blacklisted for financially assisting revolutionary groups in Cuba and Venezuela.90 A skeptical External Affairs Minister St. Laurent believed that the Americans’ real motives were eliminating economic competition, and he told the Ambassador in Washington “I must confess to a growing scepticism towards distinctions which seem so often to put U.S. equipment in the saleable category while banning Canadian items.”91 The United States government remained double-minded about Canada’s efforts to penetrate the Latin American markets– a consideration not missed by Ottawa.

As the 1950s progressed, commercial competition with the United States was not the only factor in the mind of Canadian officials on arms sales decisions. There were ethical questions how such equipment would be used, and how such assistance might be viewed by other countries with which Canada was cultivating improved ties. In early 1956, a proposal was put before Cabinet to sell several Canadian F-86 aircraft to Colombia. At that time, the country was in the middle of a decade long spasm of internal political violence known as la violencia.

88 Telegram from Secretary of State for External Affairs to Ambassador in United States no. EX-877, April 3, 1947 (Secret) in DCER Vol.13, Doc. 932.
89 Telegram from Secretary of State for External Affairs to Ambassador to Argentina, no. 46, (Secret – Most Immediate) April 19, 1947 (Secret) in DCER Vol.13, Doc. 934.
90 Memorandum from Economic Division to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, June 13, 1947 (No classification cited) in DCER, Vol. 13, Doc. 938.
91 Telegram from Secretary of State for External Affairs to Ambassador in United States, no EX-3039, November 27, 1947 (Confidential) in DCER Vol.13, Doc. 943.
Under Secretary Jules Léger wrote Mitchell Sharp, then his counterpart at the Department of Trade and Commerce, that

Most Latin American governments are military dictatorships, and to bolster these regimes by the provision of expensive military equipment (for which the countries concerned must sacrifice resources which might in their own interest be better employed for constructive social purposes) would tend to alienate in those countries the liberal and progressive forces with which Canadian opinion is disposed to be sympathetic. Such activities would contrast with our Colombo Plan role in South East Asia, and might open us to the attacks of Latin America’s not insignificant Communist propagandists. Finally, it is questionable whether the provision of modern weapons to South American countries would in fact serve to increase in any significant way the effective military strength of the free world.  

In the end, External Affairs Minister Pearson supported the sale, on the premise that it would open up a door in Colombia for more Canadian goods. Not wanting Canadian arms to facilitate revolution or conflict, in 1959 the Canadian government later prohibited arms sales to all countries in the region except Colombia. 

Canadian diplomats in Latin America remained divided on such exports, a division connected to a similar ambivalence and unease regarding the practical implementation of United States foreign policy in the region. Some embassy staff in the American republics gave primacy to Canadian commercial interests and to stability, and believed that the Cold War policies and assumptions of the United States should be fully supported. A prime example in this regard was Hector Allard, Harry Scott’s successor and Canada’s man in Havana for the latter Batista years and the Cuban civil war. Others were more inclined to Jules Léger’s views that there should be limits to cooperating with their American allies. In a colourful memorandum to his superior from early 1961, J.H. Bailey, the Commercial Secretary to Canada’s embassy in Colombia, recounted a conversation with an American military official during a stop-over in Managua, Nicaragua. The American pilot had boasted that Nicaragua’s dictator, Luis Somoza, had used “‘those good old [P-51] Mustangs’ to strafe and bomb any village that does not obey him.” When Bailey challenged the American that such a policy might yield “a second Cuba,” the officer replied “by keeping the dictator in power through an American trained military force, at

92 Memorandum from under Secretary of State for External Affairs to Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce February 28, 1956 (Secret) in DCER, Vol. 23, Doc. 766.
93 Memorandum from under Secretary of State for External Affairs to Cabinet, Cabinet Document no. 75-56, “Proposed Export of F-86 Aircraft to Colombia,” March 20, 1956 (Secret) in DCER, Vol. 23, Doc. 766.
95 Memorandum from Commercial Secretary, Canadian Embassy in Bogota, J.H. Bailey, to Ambassador Jean Morin, March 21, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5427, File 11044-BR-40 pt. 1, LAC
least the country was being kept quiet and ‘on our side.’”

Thoroughly appalled at the hypocrisy and short-sightedness of such attitudes, Bailey cautioned his Ambassador that Canada needed to rethink some of its cooperation with the United States, particularly on counterinsurgency. Such questioning grew considerably in the 1960s and 1970s, when growing public awareness over the violent and repressive nature of many Latin American governments (especially rightist military dictatorships) turned hemispheric human rights into a domestic political issue. Well before that time, the situation in Cuba as it developed in the 1950s exposed and challenged the policies and assumptions of American and Canadian hemispheric policies.

Cuba found its way into the centre of this Canadian-American narrative of hemispheric ambivalence and cooperation, with the differences becoming apparent a year into the Castro regime. The story of postwar Cuba exemplified the tension between the national aspirations of its people and the position of the United States, which since 1898 had been the hegemonic power on the island. Dominating the country’s economy, having considerable sway on its culture and constraining real political independence, the United States had a more acute interest and influence on Cuba than perhaps any other country in the western Hemisphere. In fact, one might argue that Canada provides a parallel but contrasting example. Kirk and McKenna make this case, that Canada was similar to Cuba as it was an ex-European colony that was "vulnerable to the twitches of the United States." The parallels, while somewhat useful for the context of this discussion, are otherwise inappropriate beyond a very few basics. Washington recognized Canada as a country having with it a common ancestry and democratic political tradition, and did not treat it with anywhere nearly the condescension that it did Cuba. The degree of American dominance and control in Cuba differed from Canada by orders of magnitude. However, in the 1950s, a growing segment of the Canadian population had grown significantly concerned about the scope and extent of American economic and cultural influence in Canada, a major factor in the electoral defeat of St. Laurent’s Liberal government in 1957 (over the Trans Canada pipeline).

With a more prosperous and diversified economy and a large middle class, American influence in Canada was for the most part more invisible and positive than it was in its southern

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96 Ibid.
97 Kirk and McKenna, 4.
counterparts, where it was seen as regressive.\textsuperscript{99} The contrasts in power and wealth between Cuba and the United States were enormous, and the American influence was felt there much more acutely. American economic control was much more pervasive and much more obvious, especially given Cuba’s continued dependence on a single crop – sugar. Scholars from Lars Schoultz to Louis Pérez to Brian Loveman all agree that Americans largely saw the Cubans as inferior to themselves racially and culturally.\textsuperscript{100} Cubans paradoxically sought on the one hand to become like the Americans, while at the same time also coveting national respect by resisting and remaining separate from the United States. This dynamic commenced at the time of José Martí, Cuba’s nationalist hero of the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century, and would carry on into the Castro era.

The literature on twentieth century Cuban history and the lead up to the revolution has grown considerably in the last two decades, and only a very cursory summary can be offered here. Despite interpretative variations, key contributing factors to the eventual revolution were Cuba’s economic vulnerability as a largely cash crop economy (sugar), the preponderance of American military, economic and cultural influence, social inequalities and the prevalence of corrupt, ineffective, and repressive governments that largely served elite (and American) interests.\textsuperscript{101} Fidel Castro’s 26\textsuperscript{th} of July movement was in many senses an effort to finish a process that had been interrupted and left incomplete after Cuba’s initial independence from Spain and later on, after the so-called “unfinished revolution” of 1933, in which the initially populist but eventually corrupt and repressive Gerardo Machado was overthrown in an uprising that was eventually commandeered by another populist later turned dictator - Fulgencio Batista.\textsuperscript{102} Significant reforms occurred after 1933 that became enshrined in the 1940 Constitution, much of it spearheaded by Batista. However, Cuban governments from that time through 1952, whether or not they were elected, all became increasingly corrupt and ineffective.\textsuperscript{103}


\textsuperscript{100} See examples in Schoultz, \textit{Beneath the United States}, 328-331; See also Brian Loveman, \textit{No Higher Law} and Louis Pérez, \textit{Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos}, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), both of which discuss extensively American racism and paternalism in Cuba.


\textsuperscript{103} Pérez, \textit{Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution} 284-286, 295-297.
While Cuba’s per capital income was higher than many Latin American countries, its economy after World War II was as before over-reliant on sugar, subjecting it to boom-bust cycles, a pattern Stephen Farber coined “uneven imperial development.”

Inequalities were stark. In the 1950s, while only 7.5 percent of Havana’s population was illiterate, in rural Cuba the figure was 43 percent, with similar disparities existing for health care services – factors that greatly influenced some of Castro’s revolutionary priorities. Especially following the Batista coup in March 1952 which commenced his second tenure as Cuba’s President, the wealthy who prospered invested and spent much of their money abroad, mostly in the United States. A classic dictatorship legendary for its patronage, Batista turned Havana into a Las Vegas style playground for American tourists, an effort accomplished in collaboration with organized crime and backed by repressive rule. All these factors fuelled Fidel Castro’s revolution.

Much has been written on Fidel Castro and the 1956-1958 insurgency that thrust him into power. Debate exists about the exact nature of his original vision for Cuba and the motivation behind his revolution, although the essentiality of his leadership to the cause’s success is almost universally accepted. Biographers such as Robert Quirk and Tad Szulc present Castro as a rebel from his youth, as well as an embodiment of the frustrations and anxiety of the many Cubans left out of their country’s prosperity. While Castro later insisted he had been a Marxist-Leninist from his student days, and he clearly did study Marxism as a young adult, neither orthodox Cuban Communists nor the Soviet Union nor US intelligence considered Fidel Castro as such in the early 1950s, although his brother Raul was a secret Party member, and Che Guevara was unquestionably a true believer from the outset. Ambassador Earl T. Smith

104 See Samuel Farber, The Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), Ch 1
insisted that he knew Fidel had been secretly a communist sympathizer even as a student.\textsuperscript{109} In reality, considerable mistrust and aloofness existed between Cuban Communist Party and the 26\textsuperscript{th} of July movement, a gap that would continue for some months after Castro’s victory.\textsuperscript{110}

What was clear from Castro’s perspective that genuine Cuban nationalism could flourish only if he took the island out of the United States’ political and economic orbit, even though that would subsequently mean seeking support from its Cold War communist arch-rival.\textsuperscript{111}

American policy towards Cuba in the 1950s was described as “accepting Batista and doing what we could to get along with him,” as Washington sought to expand and promote its substantial economic interests on the island.\textsuperscript{112} American influence during the 1950s was so prevalent that Ambassador Smith once glibly boasted that the American Ambassador was the most influential man in Havana, next to the Cuban President.\textsuperscript{113} To ensure a stable government, the United States was involved in almost every aspect of equipping the military and security apparatus in Cuba, whether it through arms sales, military training or the secret CIA supported anti-Communist Repression Bureau (known by the acronym BRAC).\textsuperscript{114} In the middle of Batista’s term, Cuba was the second largest Latin American recipient of American military aid, amounting to $16 million worth of weaponry and 500 Cuban officers receiving training in US military academies.\textsuperscript{115} Ignoring the repressive and increasingly unpopular nature of the Batista government, American ambassadors facilitated this considerable flow of military assistance, backed by the enthusiastic support of the Pentagon brass, such as Admiral Arleigh Burke, who ensured that American sailors made frequent calls on Cuban ports.\textsuperscript{116}

Cuba was seen in Washington as so familiar and so naturally belonging in the United States’ sphere of influence that for most of his administration, President Eisenhower believed it warranted little of his attention, and he relied instead on the political instincts and shared


\textsuperscript{110} Thomas, 1078-1083.

\textsuperscript{111} For emphasis Cuban “gravitation” towards the United States and Castro’s commitment to pulling Cuba away, even if it meant entering the orbit of the USSR see Benjamin, 4-5, 182-183, 217.


\textsuperscript{114} Lars Schoultz, \textit{That Infernal Little Cuban Republic}: 60-61. See also Thomas G. Paterson, \textit{Contesting Castro}: 63 for more on BRAC.

\textsuperscript{115} Morley, 58-59.

\textsuperscript{116} Morley, 60-61.
viewpoints of his appointed Ambassadors to achieve American goals. Historian Hugh Thomas, in his epic account of Cuban history, describes how Castro and Eisenhower could not have been more different.\(^\text{117}\) In contrast to the radical Cuban revolutionary and his closest cadres, Eisenhower and his administration represented the epitome of conservative, blue-chip capitalism, and as such it appointed like-minded Republican businessmen to represent the United States in Havana. Apart from Batista and his closest cronies, Washington’s representatives typified for many Cubans a paternalistic lack of respect for their country’s people. Certainly Earl T. Smith fit this mould. He could not even speak Spanish, all the while claiming he “knew Cuba.”\(^\text{118}\) Even worse than Smith was his predecessor, Arthur Gardner (1953-1957), who had grown so personally close to Batista as to be portrayed by Lars Schoultz as a Cuban double agent - as much a representative of Batista in Washington as he was of American interests in Cuba.\(^\text{119}\) Embarrassed, Eisenhower replaced him with Smith in 1957, an action that did little to ingratiate the United States to opponents of the regime.\(^\text{120}\) After the revolution, both men remained staunch defenders of Batista, with Gardner telling a 1960 Senate Internal Security Subcommittee hearing on Communism in the Caribbean that “Batista had always leaned toward the United States. I don’t think we ever had a better friend.”\(^\text{121}\) Smith, in a bitter memoir, laid the primary blame for “losing Cuba,” on the so-called Fourth Floor of the State Department (the location of the Inter-American Affairs Division), along with liberal minded American journalists like Herbert L. Matthews of the New York Times, and even certain liberally oriented CIA field officers.\(^\text{122}\)

\(^{117}\) Thomas, 1058.
\(^{118}\) See Benjamin, 145-146.
\(^{119}\) Lars Schoultz, That Infernal Little Cuban Republic, 62.
For the most part, prior to 1959 Canadians paid little attention to Cuba’s politics, although evidence suggests that despite finding Cuba a lucrative market, they found the country’s dictatorial and corrupt leaders inimical to Canadian tastes. As early as 1933, Cuban politics made waves in Canada when the ousted President Gerardo Machado sought and received permission to enter Canada on a sixty to ninety day temporary permit. Machado chose Canada as his destination to avoid extradition, but also so he could do business with the Royal Bank in Montreal, where he held deposits. Learning of the ex-dictator’s presence in Canada, Canadians and Cubans alike protested. The Department of External Affairs received letters and petitions from business executives, labour unions and ordinary citizens urging that Machado be denied asylum in Canada, with Cubans threatening to terminate their policies with Canadian life insurance companies if he was permitted to stay. Insurance and other business executives were naturally concerned at the calls for boycotts, but some also genuinely opposed on principle the Conservative government’s decision to allow him into Canada. Imperial Life’s Cuban Manager W.A. Campbell described the Cuban ex-President as “the most repulsive loathsome and criminal human being that ever trod the soil of this continent.” Under Secretary O.D. Skelton rationalized the R.B. Bennett government’s action as being in keeping with “the usual British practice in such matters.” Given that Machado had no criminal conviction, Ottawa had no legal reason to exclude him. The Cuban stayed in Montreal until mid-November, when he left for the United States. He later got a second sixty day permit to enter Canada, again to do

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123 For a summary of the incident see Memorandum, “Ex President Machado of Cuba Admission into Canada,” December 17, 1935 in RG 25, Vol. 1645, File 1933-53-BE, LAC. There is a brief overview of Machado’s time in Canada, including the protests, in Ogelsby, 109.

124 Letter from Manager for Cuba of Imperial Life Assurance Company of Canada (W.A, Campbell) to Under Secretary for External Affairs (OD Skelton) to Manager for Cuba, Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada (H.A. Chisholm), September 16, 1933 (Personal). [Reply to Chisholm’s letter from Havana of September 8, 1933]. Both documents are in RG 25, Vol. 1645, File 1933-53-BE, LAC

125 Letter from Under Secretary for External Affairs (O.D. Skelton) to Superintendent of Insurance (G.D. Finlayson), September 16, 1933 in RG 25, Vol. 1645, File 1933-53-BE, LAC

126 Details taken from Memorandum, “Ex President Machado of Cuba Application for Extension of Visit to Canada, September 1, 1936: and from Letter from President of Canadian Car and Foundry Company (W.W Butler) to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, November 25, 1935 in RG 25, Vol. 1645, File 1933-53-BE, LAC and from
banking, on the understanding that Bermuda, through which he transited to reach Canada, would re-admit him afterwards.\textsuperscript{128}

Cuban politics again found a stage on Canadian soil in May and June of 1953, complicating Ottawa’s relations with the Batista government. Another ousted Cuban President, Carlos Prio Soccaras, and fourteen members of Cuba’s opposition Authentico and Orthodoxo parties chose Canada as a place to put together an anti-Batista strategy. Meeting for three days at Montreal’s Ritz Carlton Hotel, the Cubans emerged with a manifesto declaring the Batista regime illegal and ineligible and calling for the restoration of the 1940 constitution and new elections, as well as renouncing violence and terrorism.\textsuperscript{129} Ambassador Scott was highly embarrassed that such meetings were occurring in Canada, which he learned about from the Cuban media.\textsuperscript{130} External Affairs officials in Ottawa were equally taken by surprise, learning only at the last minute that a former Cuban President was in the country. On May 28, the third day of the gathering, the Cuban Ministry of State called Scott, asking that Ottawa intervene to stop the meetings, a gesture the Batista government indicated would be interpreted as “a friendly act.”\textsuperscript{131} Ottawa instructed Scott to tell Havana it could do no such thing. The opposition members had entered as tourists, and they had freedom of speech and assembly rights.\textsuperscript{132} Kenneth C. Brown, then Second Secretary at the Havana embassy (and a future ambassador) briefed the United States embassy on the incident, concerned that the Cuban opposition was seeking to smuggle arms to Cuba via the United States. He told the Americans that as long as the Cuban visitors confined their conversations to the Montreal hotel room, Ottawa would not intervene.\textsuperscript{133}

\textsuperscript{128} Letter from Under Secretary of State (O.D. Skelton) to Deputy Minister of Immigration and Colonization (T. Magladery) and also Memorandum from Under Secretary (OD Skelton) to the Prime Minister, June 27, 1936. Both in RG 25, Vol. 1645, File 1933-53-BE, LAC
\textsuperscript{129} Translation of Statement Released on June 3, 1953 by Cuban Opposition Party Leaders after their meeting in Montreal “To the Nation,” June 2, 1953 in RG 25, Vol.4406, File 11981-40, LAC.
\textsuperscript{130} Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 32, May 28, 1953 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4406, File 11981-40, LAC.
\textsuperscript{131} See Memorandum from American Division (William G. Stark) to Acting Under Secretary (C.S.A. Ritchie), ”Meeting of Cuban Opposition leaders in Montreal,” June 8, 1953 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol.4406, File 11981-40, LAC
\textsuperscript{132} Telegram from Acting Under Secretary of State for External Affairs (C.S.A. Ritchie) to Canadian Ambassador in Havana (Scott) no 39, May 30, 1953 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.4406, File 11981-40, LAC and also US Embassy Havana Despatch no. 1880, June 1, 1953 (Confidential), in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1950-1954, File 737.00/6-153, NARA. On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal Affairs 1950-1954, Reel 3.
\textsuperscript{133} US Embassy Havana Despatch no. 1901, June 3, 1953 (Unclassified with Confidential Section), in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1950-1954, File 737.00/6-353, NARA. On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal
This event did cause Canada some embarrassment with Havana. The Cuban press built up the resulting so-called “Montreal Charter,” suggesting it was a smokescreen to cover more sinister intentions – namely revolution.\textsuperscript{134} Batista sent Alberto Campa, son of Cuba’s Minister of State to Ottawa expressing concern that the opposition was secretly planning an armed revolt and was after contraband weapons.\textsuperscript{135} On June 8, Acting Under Secretary Charles Ritchie met with the Cuban envoy, accompanied by Cuban Ambassador Delfin H. Pupo and Embassy Counsellor Dr. Américo Cruz, the Cuban ambassador for most of the 1960s. Ritchie told the Campa that Canada was committed to “the friendliest of relations with the Cuban government,” and deplored the Cuban opposition meetings on Canadian soil. Reiterating that Ottawa had no advance knowledge of the meetings, Ritchie promised to investigate thoroughly any evidence Havana could provide on arms procurement, making it clear that the Canadian government would not tolerate on its soil prohibitions of its law, including the plotting of an insurrection against a friendly government or assassinations.\textsuperscript{136} In a follow up letter to External Affairs Minister Pearson, Cruz, temporarily acting as Chargé d’Affaires, argued that Cuba was not asking Canada to violate its civil liberty laws but to stop “the organization of armed rebellion in my country and the assassination of the President of the Republic” which he stated were being undertaken by the opposition members as they sought money and weapons, including aircraft.\textsuperscript{137} The irony is that not many years afterwards, Cruz would later be among the staunchest defenders of Fidel Castro’s revolution, including his efforts to support similar efforts abroad, as would be exemplified a decade later by Cuba’s use of Canadian made motors it procured to power boats that transported arms from Cuba to Venezuelan insurgents.\textsuperscript{138}


\textsuperscript{135} Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 33, June 3, 1953 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol.4406, File 11981-40, LAC

\textsuperscript{136} See Memorandum of Conversation of Mr. Alberto Campa (son of the Cuban Minister of State) with Acting Under Secretary, June 12, 1953 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 4406, File 11981-40, LAC. See Also Telegram from Acting Under Secretary of State for External Affairs (C.S.A. Ritchie) to Canadian Ambassador in Havana (Scott) no. 43, June 11, 1953 (Secret) in the same file.

\textsuperscript{137} Letter from Cuban Charge d’Affaires (Cruz) to Secretary of State for External Affairs (Pearson), June 15, 1953 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4406, File 11981-40, LAC

\textsuperscript{138} See Chapter 8 for discussion of this incident.
Before the summer of 1953 was out, rumours abounded of “made in Montreal” arms, as well as those of American and Mexican provenance, being found in the hands of captured insurgents following the failed July 26 assault on the La Moncada barracks in Santiago de Cuba—led by one Fidel Castro. The Batista government made no formal representations to Ottawa on this allegation; neither did it provide any clear evidence that the Montreal delegates had procured weapons while in Canada. Later on, Cuban officials told the Canadians that it believed the La Moncada arsenal probably came from Mexico. Smarting still from Canada’s unintentional hosting of the Cuban opposition, Scott advised his Department not to comment on the reports, nor to approach the Cuban Ministry of State, lest Canada “arouse the erroneous impression that we had a guilty conscience.” Fortuitously for Canada, more restrictive immigration legislation had come into force within days after the Montreal meetings, requiring Latin American visitors to have visas, enabling Ottawa to properly deny the Montreal group further entry into Canada. Future Canadian governments would be equally committed to preventing its territory from serving as a staging ground for violent subversive and revolutionary activities.

Canada was keen not to foster insurgency. Rather, it wanted to maintain proper relations with the Batista government. While less laudatory than their American counterparts on the dictator’s merits, Canadian diplomats on the island regarded Batista as the best among an array of bad choices. In the 1950s, Canadian reports from Havana by and large supported the status quo, all the while acknowledging that Batista’s government fell considerably short of Canadian governance standards. Some Canadians however were favourable to the regime. The President of the Canadian Inter-American Association, who had accompanied Trade and Commerce

139 Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Havana no. 47, July 28, 1953 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol.4406, File 11981-40, LAC. An ATIP request to the Library and Archives Canada for RCMP files on weapons connected to Cuban insurgency in the 1950s yielded no records.

140 US Embassy Ottawa Despatch no. 153, August 13, 1953 (Confidential), in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1950-1954, File 737.00/8-1353, NARA. These records are now also scanned and online at the Latin American Studies website http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/us-cuba/Confidential_Files-Aug-1953-Oct-1954.pdf

141 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 39, August 2, 1953 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol.4406, File 11981-40, LAC

142 Memorandum from Consular Division to American Division, “Rejection and Deportation of Non-Immigrants,” June 23, 1953 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol.4406, File 11981-40, LAC and also Memorandum from Legal Division (J.P. Ericsson-Brown) to American Division, “Meeting of Cuban Opposition Leaders in Montreal,” July 7, 1953 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4406, File 11981-40, LAC

143 An overview of this whole incident, using some Canadian different files from this study, (and no US ones) appears in Kailey Miller, “Following the American Lead: Canada’s Diplomacy towards Cuba in the Pre-Revolutionary Period 1939-1959” unpublished MA Thesis, Trent University, 2011, 89-93.
Minister C.D. Howe on a winter 1953 tour of Latin America, spoke glowingly of Batista’s hospitality and his discussions in English. Records from the British embassy in Havana reveal that Ambassador Sir Adrian Holman was even more positive, as revealed by a 1954 despatch:

On the whole, therefore at this stage I feel General Batista is the best bet and the best candidate. I know him well and like him and I am sure he would be a happier man and a better leader if he were a constitutional President. If I were a Cuban, I would vote for him without hesitation.

According to Kirk and McKenna, Ambassador Scott saw Batista as “a comic opera leader,” who was an essentially ineffective dictator. Hector Allard, his successor, was more pro-US in his outlook and saw the Cuban President as the country’s “the best hope” for securing foreign investment and diversifying its economy. While admitting Batista ran a “strong-man government which is repulsive to minds raised in the atmosphere of Canadian democracy,” he feared a Castro government would be worse. Allard later reported his belief that Batista initially had “the best intention of ruling in a constitutional manner and as democratically as permitted by the Cuban constitution and by Cuban politics” even though he seized power through a coup. The ambassador blamed Castro’s guerrillas for turning Batista “from democratic intention to dictatorial reality.”

Despite their ambivalence about Batista, Canadian-Cuban commercial relations continued to grow in the fifties. The banks and insurance companies maintained their influential presence. So influential was the Royal Bank that Allan Anderson, a one-time Royal Bank manager in Cuba and the future Ambassador, recommended that bank representatives offer briefings for all Heads of Mission in Latin America. Trade also continued to grow during those years, despite fluctuations, with the balance tilting slightly in Canada’s favour. Canadian

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146 Kirk and McKenna, 27.


148 Canadian Embassy Havana Despatch D-320, August 27 1957 (Confidential), RG 20, Vol. 2294, File 7-754, pt. 4 LAC

149 Ibid.

150 Memorandum from American Division (Anderson) to Commonwealth Division (De Glazenburg) “Interests of Canadian Banks Abroad,” February 28, 1958 (Unclassified) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 4.1, LAC
exports to Cuba rose from $4.5 million in 1945 to $18 million in 1950, peaking at $24 million in 1952 before settling to $14 to $18 million in the 1955-1958 period. Imports from Cuba fluctuated more widely, reflecting the boom and bust of sugar prices. In 1950, Canadian imports were $4.1 million, only 45% of the 1945 figure, while two years later they amounted to $18.6 million before falling back into the $10 to $14 million range between 1953 and 1957. They would peak again at $18 million in Batista’s last year, and by then Cuba ranked 18th for Canadian exports and 20th for imports.\(^{151}\) Canada’s principal exports to Cuba in the 1950s were newsprint, wheat, flour, codfish, malt and then machinery parts, all valued at more than $1 million per year. Further down the list but also significant were seed potatoes, electric motors, and chemicals. Canada in turn imported sugar, molasses, and produce.\(^{152}\) On the eve of the revolution, Canadian entrepreneurs were seeking to expand ties into new sectors, such as the increasingly popular tourist trade – an effort that would soon be stunted for well over a decade.\(^{153}\)

Following the December 1956 voyage of the *Granma* and the launch of Fidel Castro’s insurgency in Oriente province, the Canadian Havana embassy reports reflected a deep skepticism that Castro could favourably change the political culture of Cuba. While less virulent in their fears of communism than the American despatches, Ottawa was still suspicious about its influence in the Cuban insurgency, even though the Cuban Communist party itself was actually at best a lukewarm supporter of the 26th of July movement. Ambassador Allard reported (mostly erroneously) that “the fine hand of communism can be seen in most of the terrorist acts that took place during the year in Havana and outside the fringe of revolutionary activity. Its extent though is impossible to define.”\(^{154}\) Commenting in early 1957, Ambassador Allard dismissed Cuba as “a country where personalismo is not a theory but a reality. Moderation will have no success unless it provides a leader (who will not be corrupted by power).”\(^{155}\) In his view, the outcome of guerrilla efforts against the dictatorship would only reinforce its repressive

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\(^{151}\) All these figures are from Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Canada Year Book 1960*, 1004-1007. Other trade statistics are included in Rochlin, 238-241 and Kirk and McKenna, 18-22.

\(^{152}\) Kirk and McKenna, 22.

\(^{153}\) Memorandum from American Division to File, “Canadian Interests in Cuba as of June 30, 1960,” July 11, 1960 (Restricted) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 6, LAC


\(^{155}\) Canadian Embassy Havana Despatch D-87, March 26, 1957 (Confidential), RG 20, Vol. 2294, File 7-754, pt. 3, LAC
characteristics, returning Cuba back to the days of Gerardo Machado. Conversely, the Canadian quickly came to see Fidel Castro as a dangerous megalomaniac who would be a good deal worse than Batista if he ascended to power, a view closely matching that of US Ambassador Earl E.T. Smith. It would be Allard’s successor Allan Anderson who would later begrudgingly concede that after a year in power Castro, despite harsh revolutionary justice, had at least provided the Cubans with “honest government.”

Ambassador Smith developed a close relationship with his Canadian counterpart. Smith confided to Allard that Havana was a post in which “US Ambassadors could not win.” The Canadian was largely sympathetic to the difficult position in which Smith found himself, seeing him as being asked to “cause Americans to be more trusted and better loved in Cuba,” in comparison to his predecessor Arthur Gardner. Allard recognized that for the United States, the Havana post was a “ticklish” one even for seasoned diplomats, and yet it was also a very important post strategically: Allard hinted that the error the Eisenhower administration made in managing the situation with Cuba was in appointing political cronies to the US embassy there, men who were often not properly prepared for all it entailed. Allard’s sympathy for his increasingly hapless American counterpart outlived both their tenures in Havana. He was still arguing in late April 1961 that “if only the State Department had followed Earl E.T. Smith’s repeated suggestions during the summer of 1958 to force Battista [sic] out, all we have seen in Cuba since might have been avoided.” Allard added that he hoped Smith would write a memoir of his time in Cuba – which he did a year later!

While the Canadian had accurately assessed American shortcomings in its Cuba policy, by and large Canadian embassy reports from Cuba differed little in substance although they were more circumspect in tone, from those of its American ally.

156 Ibid.
157 Munton and Vogt in Wright and Wylie, Our Place in the Sun, 48.
159 Canadian Embassy Havana Despatch D-64, February 6, 1959 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 2911, File 2444-40, pt. 1 LAC
161 Canadian Embassy Havana Despatch D-64 February 6, 1959 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 2911, File 2444-40, pt. 1 (LAC)
As the Cuban civil war intensified in the fall of 1958, support for Batista dwindled as the level of official violence against the Cuban people intensified, with the desperate dictator resorting to sheer terror to quell the momentum unleashed by the 26th of July insurgency. Both American and Canadian diplomats recognized how intensely unpopular Batista and his style of government had become to the majority of Cubans. Ambassador Allard could not ignore the fact that members of Batista’s secret police had resorted to “torture, maiming and murder” in their efforts to save the dictatorship. The United States terminated arms sales to Cuba in March, with Canada following suit – a move that earned Canada some favour with the new revolutionary government once it was in power. When Castro’s rebels kidnapped a number of Americans and Canadians in July, the Eisenhower administration considered reversing its arms embargo before deciding to retain it. While many in the State Department’s Inter-American Affairs division, including the Assistant Secretary Roy Rubottom, supported the ban, Ambassador Smith and members of the US military believed Washington had to resume supporting Batista against the 26th of July insurgents, whom Smith and his supporters believed ultimately served communist interests. After Smith urged the release of T-28 training aircraft to the Cuban air force, the State Department suggested that Cuba approach Canada as an alternative source. The State Department gave mixed signals in this regard, later rebuffing Canadian queries regarding this suggestion, and advised against the aircraft sale, much to the disdain of the clearly frustrated US Ambassador. Smith was instructed from Washington to mention to the Cuban government that the United States did not have to clear British or Canadian sales. How long Batista’s government might have survived had Smith’s wishes

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164 For US rationale to continue halting arms sales see Memorandum from Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rubottom) to Secretary of State, August 11, 1958 (Secret) in FRUS 1958-1960 Vol VI, Doc 122, 192-194. For a clear articulation of Smith’s views see Telegram from Embassy in Cuba to Department of State no. 316 September 24, 1958 (Confidential) in FRUS 1958-1960 Vol VI, Doc 133, 214-215. This position is restated in his memoir The Fourth Floor.

165 For an example of Smith’s pressure on the aircraft see Telegram from Embassy in Cuba to Department of State no. 276, September 11, 1958 (Confidential) in FRUS 1958-1960 Vol VI., Doc 129, 206-207. For suggestion of Canada see Memorandum from Director of the Office of Middle American Affairs (Wieland) to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Snow) August 29, 1958 (Confidential) in FRUS 1958-1960 Vol VI, Doc 127, 201-203.

166 Telegram from Embassy in Cuba to Department of State no. 316 September 24, 1958 (Confidential) in FRUS 1958-1960 Vol VI., Doc. 133, 214.

167 Telegram from Embassy in Cuba to Department of State no. 63 July 13, 1958 (Confidential) in FRUS 1958-1960 Vol VI, Doc. 102, 151-152.
been granted is debatable. What is clear is that without American support, the Cuban government lacked legitimacy, having long lost it with most of the Cuban people. Its political and military position crumbled and disintegrated until it suddenly presented the Eisenhower administration with an eleventh hour crisis in the late autumn of 1958.

The question of how to respond to the Cuban government’s request for arms was the first instance of what became Ottawa’s pattern of consulting with Washington on how to respond to the developing revolution. In synchronizing its policy with the United States on resupplying Batista, in October Canada declined an export permit to sell military aircraft to Cuba. Havana instead turned to the British and purchased Sea Furies, an action that earned the latter the wrath of Castro and his insurgents. To officials in the American Division at External Affairs, the US arms embargo had the appearance of “taking sides in the Cuban civil war” and all but ensured that Batista’s days in power were numbered. When the Cubans persisted in asking for Canadian help, Marcel Cadieux wrote Under Secretary Norman Robertson that he would instruct Ambassador Allard in Havana once he had confirmation on whether or not the Americans had changed their policy and lifted the ban. This would soon become a moot point. While Canadian officials wavered in tandem with their American counterparts, developments in Cuba had accelerated beyond either of their control.

The arms embargo certainly contributed to the disintegration of Batista’s army, and the strength and support for the insurgency, (both popular and material) grew, especially in Oriente province. Yet for many Cubans, the United States government’s withdrawal of materiel support for Batista was a gesture that was too little, too late. They recalled well how the Eisenhower administration looked the other way while the dictator used American made weapons rather indiscriminately against political opponents for several years. By early December 1958, it was clear to all that Batista’s government was finished. Eisenhower was clearly annoyed at the December 23 National Security Council meeting to learn that communists would probably participate in a Castro government, and that he was now getting advice to prevent the Cuban revolutionary from taking power, even though acting Secretary of State

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169 Memorandum C Hardy American Division to Defence (2) Liaison, September 11, 1958 (Secret) RG 25, Vol. 7584, File 11044-AK-40, pt. 2.1, LAC
170 Memorandum from Marcel Cadieux to Under Secretary Norman Robertson, November 5, 1958 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 7584, File 11044-AK-40, pt. 2.1, LAC
171 Bonsal, 18.
Christian Herter (filling in for the terminally ill John Foster Dulles), sought to reassure his boss that the insurgency was not communist controlled.\textsuperscript{172} Several CIA operatives, military officials and Ambassador Smith scrambled last minute to facilitate a third party coup and to resume aid to the Cuban army. These efforts came to nothing, as no individual or group in Cuba was up to the task and the Cuban army had all but disappeared.\textsuperscript{173} Without forthcoming American support, Batista, his family and most senior supporters fled Cuba on January 1, 1959, taking with them large sums of money. Within days, Fidel Castro would march triumphantly into Havana, and a new chapter in the history of the hemisphere would begin.

\textsuperscript{172} Memorandum of discussion of the 392\textsuperscript{nd} meeting of the National Security Council, December 23, 1958 (Top Secret/ Eyes Only) in FRUS 1958-1960 Vol. VI, Doc 188, 302-303. For Herter’s advice see Memorandum from the Acting Secretary of State to the President, December 23, 1958 (Top Secret) in FRUS 1958-1960 Vol., VI, Doc. 189, 30.

\textsuperscript{173} An overview of these efforts is in Patterson, Contesting Castro, Ch. 19. For the last minute rearmament efforts see Memorandum from Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff (Twining) to Secretary of Defense, December 30, 1958 (Secret) in DDRS Doc. CK3100436981
Chapter 2: From Parallel Paths to Parting Ways: The United States, Canada and the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution, January 1959 to June 1960

Achieving victory after an ugly, two-year long civil war, Fidel Castro, the nationally celebrated revolutionary firebrand finally paraded into Havana within days of Batista’s flight. Almost immediately, he commenced a regime that served as a watershed not only in Cuba, but for all Latin America – and soon became a new focal point in the Cold War. After taking the capital, the revolutionary leader quickly secured control over the rest of the island. It was clear from the outset that with the exception of a small wealthy minority, Castro’s revolution had broad support among the Cuban populace. While there were unmistakably signs of radical influence and aggressive leadership among Castro and his fellow *barbudos*, their successful ascension to power was in no small way due to the cooperation of large sectors of the urban middle class, the vast majority of whom sought riddance of the corrupt and repressive Batista regime.¹ This point was not lost on either Canadian or American diplomats in Havana as they watched the upheaval with a conflicting mixture of emotions, ranging from hope to trepidation to suspicion.

American and Canadian assessments of the Cuban revolution proceeded for the most part in parallel through much of 1959, and within the foreign policy traditions of the two North American countries. The Eisenhower administration, now sensitive over its image problem in Latin America as an overarching and even imperialistic power, sought to assert and preserve its regional position through more subtle forms of soft and hard power and saw Canada as a potentially helpful junior partner. Ottawa largely shared American concerns about the region, including Cuba, albeit in a less alarmist fashion concerning communism. As Castro’s guerrilla effort against Batista got under way, Canadian diplomats regularly conferred with their American colleagues, and followed essentially parallel policies. This pattern continued for the first year and a half of the new revolutionary Cuba, up to the moment that Eisenhower decided that he could not live with Havana’s new masters. After that point, Canadian and American paths on relations with Cuba truly began to diverge.

After a week of near chaos on the island following the flight of Batista and his inner circle, the United States, initially holding out for a non-Castro led government, accepted the reality that a coalition with Castro at the helm now controlled Cuba. It would have to try and get

¹ A well researched book using Cuban archives and stressing the centrality of the urban middle class in the revolution’s success is Julia E. Sweig, *Inside the Cuban Revolution* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).
along with the island’s new rulers. To send a positive signal, on January 7, 1959 Secretary of State John Foster Dulles advised President Eisenhower that the United States recognize the new Cuban government, even though the political dust was still settling.\(^2\) Cuba was now nominally headed by the moderate Dr. Manuel Urrutia, a Cuban jurist, as the new President, and another moderate, José Miro Cardona as Prime Minister (Cardona later led an anti-Castro coalition).\(^3\) Both in Cuba and the United States, Fidel Castro was obviously seen as the real power broker behind the new government, but he lacked an official position until a month later, when he became Prime Minister. As Morris Morley described it, at the outset Castro assigned to the new Cuban Cabinet representatives of “the procapitalist democratic forces,” while not giving it “the substance of political power.”\(^4\) For the Americans especially, this was a positive development.

Considerable debate exists as to whether or not this initial moderation was a smokescreen to mask a communist agenda. Castro’s biographer Tad Szulc argues that Castro had made a necessary compromise back in July 1958 to ensure the revolution’s success. He did this by issuing his Caracas Manifesto, which united all the Cuban opposition behind him and brought on-side more moderate opponents, students, urban middle class and labour groups into his 26\(^{th}\) of July movement.\(^5\) In return, Castro promised a broad, inclusive coalition, and free elections within a year. In the new government’s early months, these liberal influences appeared to prevail. Satisfied that the new Cuban Cabinet had sufficient plurality, the United States government and the American business community were hopeful they could develop a workable relationship with Havana’s new rulers.\(^6\) It was on this basis, that Secretary of State Dulles recommended that Eisenhower recognize the new Cuban government, arguing: “the Provisional Government has complete control and that Cuba would continue to honor its international

\(^{2}\) A very recently released CIA cable in the Dulles Papers at the Eisenhower Library suggests the Secretary may have been influenced to recognize the new government early on by his brother, based on early optimistic reports. See Cable from CIA Station Havana to Director (Allen Dulles), January 8, 1959 (Secret and Personal) in John Foster Dulles Papers, Box 8, File “Conversations with Allen Dulles,” Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. Available online under Declassified Documents FY 2014 releases at [http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/online_documents/declassified/fy_2014/014_002.pdf](http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/online_documents/declassified/fy_2014/014_002.pdf)

\(^{3}\) Urrutia was later identified as being key to legitimizing the revolution by ruling favourably in 1957 that capt.ured 26\(^{th}\) of July insurgents in Oriente in were in their constitutional rights to rebel against Batista given his behaviour. See Sweig, 13. Cardona would also later join the anti-Castro opposition forces and become one of its key leaders around the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion and afterwards.


\(^{6}\) Morley, 99.
agreements and commitments.” Conservative critics such as Earl T. Smith later argued that United States government rushed to recognition, acting in haste to curry favour with the victors when the requisite stability was still in doubt. For the time being, the Eisenhower administration overrode its disdain for the obviously anti-American flavour of the new regime, believing that historically and strategically Cuba was too important to United States’ interests.

Washington put its best foot forward to preserve friendly and favourable relations, hoping that this approach would keep the revolution from being usurped by the communists. For the first few months of 1959, it opted to constructively engage the new Cuban regime. As an early symbolic gesture, Eisenhower and Dulles replaced the US ambassador in Havana. Earl Smith had wanted to stay on, and President Urrutia had not requested his departure, but the President and his Secretary of State doubted that he could develop a proper rapport with the victorious Cuban rebels, given his strong support for re-arming Batista and his role in trying to assemble a non-Castro alternative government. Resisting his past tendency to appoint another conservative Republican, Eisenhower’s new man in Havana was career diplomat Philip Bonsal, a man with previous Cuban experience (in the late 1920s) and having a successful track record in helping to moderate another revolution, that of Bolivia in 1952. In weighing whether to approach this unpalatable new government following its Bolivian or Guatemalan precedent, the White House at first selected the former, hoping to steer the revolution in a friendly direction. This strategy lasted approximately eight months, until Eisenhower lost his patience for diplomacy and for a modus vivendi with Castro. At that point, he would turn his ear back towards those who had successfully helped orchestrate the fall of Arbenz in 1954, hoping to replicate the same outcome in Cuba.

Canada was also quick to recognize the new Cuban government, doing so on January 8, 1959, one day after the United States, other leading western allies and several key Latin American states. In a fashion similar to his American counterpart, External Affairs Minister

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7 Memorandum from the Secretary of State to the President, January 7, 1959 (Confidential) in FRUS 1958-1960, Vol. VI, Doc 217, 347.
9 See Telegram from Department of State to the Embassy in Cuba no. 474, January 9, 1959 (Secret) in FRUS 1958-1960 Vol. VI, Doc 221, 351.
10 For Bonsal’s role in Bolivia, see Farber, 99-111. For more on Bolivia as another example in Latin America see Rabe, Eisenhower and Latin America, 77-82. In Morris Morley’s view, the Bonsal appointment revealed US distrust of Castro and was designed to favour anti-Castro forces. See Morley, 73.
Sidney Smith recommended recognition to Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, arguing that Canada’s traditional requirements had been met—control of the country, and respect for Cuba’s international obligations. The broad popularity of the coalition was also acknowledged. At the same time, the Minister did not neglect the economic rationale in his recommendation, scrawling at the bottom of his memo to Diefenbaker that “as there are Canadian investments in Cuba, it is highly desirable that Canada should not lag in its recognition of the new government.” In his memoirs, Diefenbaker spelled out that Canada’s recognition of the Castro government was within the country’s diplomatic tradition, was consistent its response to with other non-democratic regime changes, and did not signify philosophical agreement. Following its neighbour’s pattern, Canada also changed its representative in Havana that spring, replacing the strongly pro-American Hector Allard with Royal Bank and External Affairs veteran Allan Anderson. However, unlike the United States, Canada did not make its continued diplomatic or commercial relationship with Cuba conditional on whether or not it liked that government’s ideology or behaviour. At no time would Ottawa shift towards actively supporting Castro’s overthrow, even though it shared its neighbour’s unease and even distaste for his increasingly radical and anti-Western posture, as well as some of the excesses of so-called revolutionary justice.

The statements and behaviour of the Cuban revolutionary government did much to contribute to the uncertain response of Canadian and American officialdom towards it. Ottawa and Washington alike watched with revulsion as Castro and his cadres moved quickly into holding show trials and public executions of mid-level Batista henchmen who had been unable to flee with the ousted dictator. The annual review for 1959 from Canada’s Havana embassy tallied some 600 executions, most taking place in the regime’s first four months. Despite hurting Castro’s image externally, Ambassador Anderson reported that many Cubans saw them as “an ugly but necessary surgical operation” in response to the brutal violence and torture that prevailed beforehand. Some leading American officials were not initially all that alarmed. CIA Director Allen Dulles noted that in such upheavals “you kill your enemies” - a point he recognized in Guatemala, when the Agency created a list of Arbenz regime officials “to be

11 Memorandum to the Prime Minister from the Secretary of State for External Affairs “Recognition of the New Cuban Government,” January 8, 1959, (Confidential) in John Diefenbaker papers, Series VII File 840/C962, Reel M-8911, LAC
12 Ibid.
targeted for disposal.” In a conversation with A.E. Ritchie, then a staffer at the Canadian embassy in Washington, the State Department’s Cuba Desk Officer Richard Owen offered his opinion that the preferable course for Castro would be “to get clean-up work done with despatch,” less the island disintegrate into vigilante chaos. Still, many Americans were deeply disturbed by Cuba’s firing squads, sparking a significant volume of letters to Congressional representatives and Senators. A few on Capitol Hill acknowledged the old regime’s brutality, with one Senator citing a figure of 20000 Cubans killed under Batista’s seven year rule. Still, Americans largely despised and felt threatened by a judicial process they saw as openly vengeful, excessive and all too reminiscent of the Soviet Union. They feared such a model would be copied elsewhere in Latin America should other revolutions succeed. Eisenhower, who did not share the sang froid of his Director of Central Intelligence, was outraged by Castro’s behaviour in those early weeks, making him determined to shun the Cuban leader when the latter toured the United States in April.

In Canada, concerns were also voiced about the nature of Castro’s revolutionary justice. The Social Gospel-rooted United Church of Canada, then representing the mainstream of Protestant English Canada (but later grew increasingly sympathetic to the left), sent Prime Minister Diefenbaker a telegram on January 13 expressing concern over the bloodshed in Cuba’s “time of adjustment.” A note prepared for Diefenbaker on the executions recommended that he respond evasively to questions in the Commons on the issue, advising him that “in considering the situation the Government will have in mind the same deep concern for

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the respect of civil liberties and democratic rights that it had in the past.”

In other words, Canada would have the same concern regarding the domestic behaviour of Castro as it did of his predecessor. However, regardless of whether or not Ottawa found the revolutionaries’ actions palatable, Canada’s diplomacy and trade with the new Cuban government would be business as usual.

Fidel Castro deeply resented criticism of his regime, believing the United States had no grounds to do so given its own track record of tolerating brutal repression in the hemisphere. While he had no official position in the new government until becoming Prime Minister in February, Castro was unquestionably the leader of the country, with President Urrutia merely a figurehead. In mid January, in a tirade before half a million Cubans, (an event Hector Allard described as a spectacle), Castro favourably contrasted his surgical removal of enemies and punishing those guilty of atrocities with the US atomic bombings of Japan, and declared if the United States were to send the marines to Cuba, “200000 gringos will die.”

Washington was naturally alarmed by such extreme statements. It also feared the revolutionary leader’s charismatic popularity among many Latin Americans. The latter was readily apparent by the hero’s welcome Castro received late in January in Caracas, as Venezuelans recalled the end of the Pérez Jimenez dictatorship in their country just a year earlier. Early reports also suggested that Castro and his followers believed that their revolution should serve as a template to be replicated in other Latin American countries, as an all-out war against dictatorships. Castro was seen by some in the United States government as birthing a dynamic and dangerous new force in the hemisphere, one that was definitely nationalistic and vulnerable to exploitation by the Soviet Union; US intelligence was just learning that at the Soviet Communist Party’s 21st Congress, held that month, Moscow’s declared strategy for Latin America was to align itself with Castro-like movements. Jack Esterline, a CIA official who later became a major figure in

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20 Memorandum to the Prime Minister “Cuba: Possible Question in the House” January 16, 1959, (Confidential) John Diefenbaker papers, Series VII, File 845.2/C962, Reel M-8911, LAC
22 Sweig, 169. Venezuela’s Romulo Betancourt’s honeymoon with Castro would be brief, and once the Cuban revolution turned towards the Soviet Union, the Venezuelan President became a leading opponent of Castro, and thus a target of the Cuban leader’s efforts to topple him in a failed leftist insurgency.
23 Anderson, 393-397; Castañeda, 146-148.
the Bay of Pigs invasion recalled: “after Caracas, we knew we were dealing with a different kind of leader, who needed to be taken very seriously.”

Castroism thus posed a serious challenge to the American hegemonic order in the region. Still, in Washington the jury was not yet out on whether or not Castro was a communist. Intelligence assessments from late 1958 and early 1959 concluded that Fidel Castro was not a communist, although he was believed to be susceptible to such influence. As late as January 1959, he was assessed as being “nationalistic and somewhat socialistic,” but not under communist control. Intelligence analysts were much more concerned about the extent to which Fidel’s younger brother Raul and Argentine expatriate Ernesto Che Guevara, both known communists, held sway on the Cuban leader. Recent biographical accounts of the latter provide evidence that unknown to American intelligence, Guevara spent the early months of 1959 on respite for asthma, during which time he held secret meetings with both Castro brothers and Cuban Communist leaders on forging an alliance. Guevara biographer Jon Anderson suggests that in early 1959, Fidel Castro had sought “breathing space” to ward off an early US intervention while he consolidated the revolution. As a consequence, he publicly distanced himself from overtly pro-communist influences, including his brother and Guevara, until the mid summer, when he was truly ready to divorce Cuba from the United States.

Believing that Arbenz had failed to foster a loyal Guatemalan military, Guevara moved quickly to create a new Cuban revolutionary army, one that would be well disciplined and thoroughly indoctrinated with revolutionary Marxist ideology. American officials observed the radicalization of the Cuba’s new military and its labour unions with considerable worry, as the first signals of the new regime’s intended direction.

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30 Castañeda, 71; Anderson, 421.

31 Anderson, 412.
Ironically, the Soviet Union and the Cuban Communist Party viewed the new Cuban leadership in much the same vein as US intelligence officials. Although the available record is still very sketchy, it appears as though neither Moscow nor its true Cuban arm considered Fidel Castro to be a communist in early 1959, although both sought to steer him in that direction. As the Americans had concluded, the Soviets also believed the path to turning him their way was through his brother and Guevara. The only major work based on (briefly) accessible Russian archives to date, that of Timothy Naftali and Aleksandr Fursenko, suggests that Raul Castro secretly sent Cuban military officials to the Soviet Union for training in April 1959, at the very moment Fidel was touring North America with an entourage of moderates and openly denying that he was a communist. During the summer, Castro sent Guevara out of the country for three months, a journey in which he made clandestine contact with Soviet officials in Cairo, leading shortly afterwards to the first communist bloc arms shipments to Cuba via Czechoslovakia. Havana’s tilt towards the Soviet Union was largely done in secret until February 1960, when Soviet Politburo member Anastas Mikoyan made a well publicized visit to Cuba. Rejoicing in the revolutionary zeal he had not seen since his youth during the days of Lenin, Mikoyan signed a Soviet-Cuban sugar agreement, soon to be followed by other secret arrangements for Cuba to procure Soviet bloc weaponry.

As it moved towards the Soviet Union and its satellites, the Cuban regime also put out feelers for western assistance. Seeking to move away from the United States, one alternative the Cuban leader identified early on was Canada. As early as February 1959, the Cubans wanted the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to train members of its newly formed revolutionary rural police force. The RCMP ultimately deflected the Cuban request, providing as excuses the need to limit training class sizes and the necessity of English language skills. The Mounties did leave the door open for the future, and intended to tell Castro this directly during the Cuban leader’s proposed visit to Ottawa that April – a visit that never happened. The real reason for the

33 See Anderson, 412-415 for early Soviet efforts to contact Guevara and their view on Cuba as a promising development for the socialist bloc.
35 Anderson, 429; Fursenko and Naftali, 24.
37 See translated excerpts from Cuban newspaper Revolucion from January and February 1959 in RG 20, Vol. 2294, File 7-C6-2, pt. 4, LAC.
38 Canadian Embassy Havana Numbered Letter L-184, April 16 1959 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2294, File 7-C6-2, pt. 5, LAC.
RCMP’s rejection of Cuba’s request, and with it an opportunity to positively influence that country’s new security infrastructure, is difficult to ascertain from the documents, although reasonable inferences can be made. Ambassador Allard offered a clue in a March 9 telegram, in which he advised postponement of the RCMP training decision pending the outcome of a double jeopardy trial that an enraged Fidel Castro had forced on acquitted ex-officers of Batista’s air force. The Canadian ambassador wrote angrily that: “revolutionary justice is obviously based on the whims and fancies of Fedel [sic] Castro and nothing more.” Allard also described as a sinister development the addition of the prefix “Revolutionary” to the titles of each armed service, at the direction of Raul Castro. Such reports did little to enhance the reputation of the new Cuban government in Ottawa. Whether American influence may have played a factor in Canada’s non-participation in training Cuban police is unknown, although given the general pattern of bilateral consultation on Latin American issues, Canadian and American officials, especially in the respective Havana embassies, likely exchanged opinions on a somewhat regular basis.

The main event in the spring of 1959 was Castro’s visit to North America. At the beginning of March, it was announced that the Cuban revolutionary leader would visit the United States the following month at the invitation of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. This American tour was to be followed immediately by a short Canadian visit, as Castro was also invited by the Junior Chamber of Commerce in Montreal to speak as part of a fundraising campaign to provide toys for Cuban children. In neither the American or Canadian cases were the respective governments officially consulted or asked to grant permission.

Washington policymakers were divided over how to respond to this non-official visit. In a National Security Council meeting March 26, President Eisenhower, his patience with Castro by then very thin, mused about denying the Cuban an American visa. CIA Director Allen Dulles repeated the intelligence community’s view that while Castro’s regime had moved towards dictatorship and had permitted communists to gain significant inroads across Cuban society, the revolution was still very popular. In his opinion, Cubans would view such a denial

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39 An Access to Information request to the Library and Archives Canada for RCMP files on this training request resulted in no records being located.
40 Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to External Affairs, no. 42, March 9, 1959 (Confidential in RG 20, Vol. 2294, File 7-C6-2, pt. 4, LAC
41 Ibid.
42 See Memorandum from Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to the Prime Minister March 20, 1959 (Confidential) in DCER Vol. 26, Doc. 461.
as interference, furthering anti-Americanism in the country. As a sidebar, Dulles added that an opposition to the regime was beginning to form, one that could eventually prove helpful for the United States.\textsuperscript{44} The President reluctantly approved the visa, but hoped the budding opposition would not return to Castro’s fold. The visit would be allowed to proceed, with the State Department agreeing to invite Castro to Blair House. However, the same department also recommended against President Eisenhower’s participation, on account of the Cuban leader’s behaviour.\textsuperscript{45} Already disinclined to see Castro, the President conveniently opted to avoid the Cuban leader altogether by planning a golf vacation in Augusta, Georgia. Indeed this action was an intentional snub of Castro, as Eisenhower would later admit.\textsuperscript{46} Recognizing the political necessity of being away from Washington when Castro was on US soil, the President expressed to Acting Secretary of State Christian Herter, who was pleased at his decision, that “disagreeable though it would be, if here [in Washington] he would receive him at his office.”\textsuperscript{47} This became a moot point, although it raises as a historical counterfactual whether or not Eisenhower’s charm would have soothed Castro and steered him on a more amenable course.

As a consolation prize, the Cuban revolutionary was to be received by the considerably less charming Vice President Richard Nixon. In a covering memo to Herter accompanying briefing material for Castro’s visit, Undersecretary of State Rubottom expressed “grave doubts about the character and motivations of Castro,” but believed that:

\begin{quote}
Our opportunity to talk with Castro during your luncheon and his visit with Vice President Nixon may be our last opportunities to influence favorably his current thinking and deter him from leading Cuba into a position of a nationalistic neutralism, which the communists will exploit to the fullest.\textsuperscript{48}
\end{quote}

In a briefing by CIA Director Dulles days before the now famous April meeting, Nixon was advised that Castro “has shown considerable unfriendliness towards the US Government. By half-truths, exaggerations and outright lies he has endeavoured to whip-up anti-Americanism in

\textsuperscript{44} Memorandum of Discussion at 400\textsuperscript{th} meeting of the National Security Council, March 26, 1959 (Top Secret) in FRUS 1958-1960 Vol. VI, Doc. 266, 440-442.
\textsuperscript{45} See Memorandum of Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rubottom) to Acting Secretary of State, March 12, 1959, (Confidential) in FRUS 1958-1960 Vol. VI, Doc 261, 428-430 and Memorandum of Director of Executive Secretariat (Calhoun) to Acting Secretary of State, “Presidential Participation in Castro Visit,” March 13, 1959 (Confidential) in Ibid, Doc 262, 430-431.
\textsuperscript{47} Quotation taken from Editorial note in FRUS 1958-1960, Vol. VI, Doc 269, 446.
\textsuperscript{48} Memorandum of Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rubottom) to Acting Secretary of State, April 15, 1959, (Confidential) in FRUS 1958-1960 Vol. VI, Doc 280, 468-469.
Dulles conceded (as had Canadian diplomats) that Castro had brought honesty to the Cuban government and still had popular support, but assessed his regime as unpredictable regarding the Cold War and had failed to criticize either Soviet or Cuban communists, the latter of which were gaining important ground on the island. The Castro-Nixon meeting was the highest level discussion that would be held between revolutionary Cuba and Washington.

Castro arrived in the United States April 15, along with an entourage of one hundred advisors, including the senior Cuban economic ministers. Most of the latter were liberal and well respected by the Americans, and accompanied the Prime Minister to reassure Washington that Cuba still wanted good trade and investment relations with the United States. Nixon met with him April 19. In what became a much longer than expected conversation, he gave Castro the standard US lecture against communism, about which the Vice President concluded afterwards that the Cuban was either naive or under its influence. Failing to convince Castro of Washington’s good intentions, the Vice President stressed that the United States wanted Cuba and other Latin American states to develop and become successful, industrialized trading partners, and he held out Canada as a model. Castro responded that the long history of American economic hegemony had hindered Cuban development. The two leaders talked past one another. While Nixon reported that United States had to try and steer Castro in its direction (the Bolivian solution), it was only a matter of weeks before the Vice President became a champion of the Guatemalan approach of seeking to remove him from power.

In his report to the President on the visit, Secretary of State Christian Herter, who had just officially replaced the dying John Foster Dulles, skeptically recorded Castro’s utterances about not being a communist and about Cuba remaining pro-Western. Describing Castro as “a strong personality and born leader,” Herter correctly predicted that the Cuban government

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49 CIA Director Dulles to Vice President Nixon, April 13, 1959 (Security Classification sanitized) CIA RDP80B01676R0027000600, CIA CREST Database, NARA
50 Ibid.
51 Secretary of State Christian Herter met with Cuban Foreign Minister Raul Roa at the OAS meeting in Santiago, Chile in August 1959 and again at the UN General Assembly in September. After these there were no further top level Cuban-US meetings. For details of the Santiago meeting see Memorandum of Conversation at Ambassador Howe’s residence, Santiago, August 15, 1959 (Confidential) in FRUS 1958-1960 Vol. VI, Doc. 354, 588-589.
52 Schoultz, That Infernal Little Cuban Republic, 92-93. Also see Bonsal, 63-65.
54 Ibid.
55 See Welch, Chapter 3, entitled “The Victory of Richard Nixon,” for discussion of how the Vice President’s views ultimately shaped Eisenhower’s Cuba policy.
would soon implicate radical reforms inimical to American interests, and that Washington would have to judge his actions first before determining what its approach should be. Eisenhower accepted his Secretary of State’s assessment, scrawling on his report “we will check in a year!” 56 Others in the State Department were less diplomatic, as exemplified by the hard line Ambassador in Costa Rica Whiting Willauer, who described the Castro visit as “very probably one of the most blatant soft-soap jobs in recent Communist history.” 57

As Canada awaited its own impending Castro visit, the Canadian embassy in Washington kept its ear close to the ground during his United States tour, seeking to gauge the reactions of the White House, the State Department and members of Congress to the Cuban leader’s behaviour and statements. The Canadian diplomats were hopeful at what they observed, and were seemingly relieved that as their views were still more or less congruent with the Americans. An April 22 telegram to Ottawa reported that “Castro [had] broken down, perhaps only temporarily, at least some but not all misgivings in official circles about his future direction.” 58 Still, the embassy picked up on the ongoing reservations of many US officials about the Cuban revolution. Cuban Desk officer Richard Owen told the Canadians that “Castro said and did nothing to set their teeth on edge, but he is now thought of as a clever lawyer who knows how to tread warily and create a good impression.” 59 The Canadians reported that Washington kept in mind Castro’s harsh anti-American proclamations, the executions, and the close communist sympathies of Fidel’s two closest confidantes. They also reported that anti-Communist demonstrators, mainly Cuban exiles, protested the visit and claimed that Castro was masking his true colours. 60 These would all be signs of developments to come.

The Canadian government turned its attention to having Fidel Castro on its soil. Like its counterpart south of the border, it was reticent about how close it wished to become with the Castro regime, especially given the troubling reports from the ambassador in Havana about its violent and authoritarian behaviour. Prime Minister Diefenbaker and his advisors were

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56 Memorandum from Secretary of State Herter to President Eisenhower, “Evaluation of the Unofficial visit to Washington by Prime Minister Fidel Castro of Cuba,” April 23, 1959 (Confidential) in President’s Office Files, International Series, Folder Cuba (1), Box 8, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. On UPA Microfilm President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Office Files, International Series pt. 2, Reel 5 Also available as DDRS CK3100357237
58 Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington to Department of External Affairs no. 982, April 22, 1959 (Confidential) RG 20, Vol. 2294, File 7-C6-2, pt. 4, LAC
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
determined to remain in step with the Eisenhower administration, deciding only to grant Castro an official welcome in Canada if the United States did so. Ambassador Allard advised against officially receiving Castro. Cynically reporting the details of his various tactical moves to consolidate power and to prove who was “lord and master” on the island, Allard feared that the Canadian government risked embarrassment in the United States if it embraced Castro publicly and too warmly. Clearly sympathizing with the United States, he did not wish to see the relations with the new Cuban government develop into a US-Canada relational irritant.

Diefenbaker’s public position on receiving Castro fit into his larger approach to Canadian-American relations. While a sensitive Canadian nationalist, John Diefenbaker sought to mimic his American counterpart as closely as possible. Diefenbaker gave special pre-eminence to his personal relationship with the United States President. Sir Saville Garner, Great Britain’s High Commissioner in Ottawa, astutely observed that the Prime Minister “was inclined to view affairs in personal terms and was susceptible to personal influences.” Nowhere was this pattern more apparent in Diefenbaker’s very contrasting relationships with his two opposites in the White House: Dwight Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy. The Prime Minister’s principal foreign policy advisor, Basil Robinson, recorded years later that Diefenbaker greatly revered Eisenhower, both as war hero and as President. The personal rapport between the two leaders grew sufficiently close that two leaders addressed each other in letters on a first name “Ike and John” basis, although as Knowlton Nash suggested, this cozy relationship was more in appearance than fact, and that the admiration was not quite reciprocal. Eisenhower’s congeniality towards Diefenbaker was based on his accurate sizing up of the Prime Minister, coupled with his vastly superior skill in managing people.

It is simplistic to attribute Canadian-US relations in the first three and a half years of Diefenbaker’s tenure exclusively to the personal relationship between him and the US President. Yet the evidence strongly suggests that the Prime Minister’s respect for Eisenhower contributed

63 Quoted in Denis Smith, *Rogue Tory*, 299.
64 Basil Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World*, 5.
greatly to his desire to keep Canadian-American relations on an even keel. Nonetheless, the sailing between Ottawa and Washington in the late 1950s was not always smooth, even with two “small c” conservatives at the helm who were from the same generation and not dissimilar backgrounds. Diefenbaker was viewed in Washington as mildly nationalistic and a staunch Anglophile. After first meeting Diefenbaker in July 1957, Secretary of State Dulles was cautiously positive, describing him as “the kind of person we can get along with,” but he also foresaw “difficult moments” – which emerged soon enough over defence, trade with China, and later, Cuba. Basil Robinson recalled that Diefenbaker did not warm to Dulles, and had found him to be condescending and not respectful of Canada. The saving grace was President Eisenhower’s considerable skill at smoothing over the rough places. The Americans also did not forget that Diefenbaker was also firmly opposed to communism and suspicious of the Soviet Union’s intentions towards the Third World – an issue he raised with Asian leaders on his 1958 tour. Diefenbaker hardly welcomed the prospect of a communist government in Latin America any more than did the American President.

Regarding Latin America in particular, the Prime Minister sought to remain on the American page. Upon taking office, Diefenbaker had never been to Latin America, and he had paid little attention to the region. Still, as with his Liberal predecessors, Diefenbaker wanted to continue expanding Canada’s ties to the region’s republics. In the spring of 1960 he travelled to Mexico in what was the first official visit to a Latin American country by a sitting Prime Minister. In late 1958, his first External Affairs Minister Sidney Smith (who died in office in March 1959) made a brief trip to Brazil and Mexico, the first such visit at this level. Smith’s successor, Howard Green, toured several countries in the region in the wake of his boss’ Mexico trip. By that time, the Cuban revolution was moving ahead at full steam, and Ottawa was sitting up to take even greater notice of hemispheric developments.

Reviewing the available archival record, at no point during 1959 did Fidel Castro or Cuba make the agenda of senior level conversations between the governments of Canada and

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68 Robinson, 17.
69 Robinson, 4 and also See for example Smith, Rogue Tory, 303-306 for Diefenbaker’s 1958 meetings with Asian leaders
70 See Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs Circular Document No. R. 27/58 “Minister's Trip to Latin America” October 23, 1958, DCER, Vol. 25, Doc. 525
the United States; the issue was not yet an important bilateral issue or a point of contention. A consensus and shared view of the Cuban revolution still more or less existed. Diefenbaker was more preoccupied with arms control, continental defence, and the American economic presence in Canada, all of greater concern to Canadians and to his government rather than a revolution on a still distant island.

At the same time, for Diefenbaker, the question of receiving Castro officially was of significant importance as to occupy time at Cabinet meetings, a rare occurrence for foreign visits. After learning that the United States government would “take official cognizance of [Castro’s] visit as an important foreign dignitary,” the Canadian government agreed that Castro could visit the nation’s capital. Plans were made for the Cuban Prime Minister to tour RCMP headquarters (at his request) and to meet with Diefenbaker, Trade and Commerce Minister Gordon Churchill, Transport Minister George Hees and Postmaster General William Hamilton – the latter of whom was selected as luncheon host as he spoke Spanish. Castro was then to fly on to Toronto and then home.

The Ottawa and Toronto visits never came to pass. Cuban officials informed the External Affairs Department on April 22 that Castro would have to return to Havana earlier than planned; while not specifying why, Allard believed the reason was mounting domestic turmoil. To placate Diefenbaker, Castro offered to fly to Ottawa from his Montreal stop for a brief private Sunday morning meeting. As recalled by Robinson, the Prime Minister “thought the better of it,” and declined to see the Cuban leader, offering as an official excuse that the proposed time was inconvenient. In reality, Robinson argued Diefenbaker had developed cold feet over the prospect of receiving Castro, both out of personal reservations and concerns that such an action might offend President Eisenhower. Diefenbaker made a vague commitment to meet the Cuban Prime Minister at a mutually convenient time in the future, an offer that never materialized.

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72 Telegram from Canadian Embassy in Washington DC to Ottawa no. 903 April 15, 1959 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 7665, File 11562-46-40 pt. 1, LAC.
73 Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Norman Robertson) to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, “Visit of the Prime Minister of Cuba,” April 20, 1959 (No classification marking) in RG 25, Vol. 7665, File 11562-46-40 pt. 1, LAC. See also Tentative Schedule; Canadian Visit, Fidel Castro, [ca. April 14, 1959] in the same file.
74 Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Havana, no. X-75, April 22, 1959 (Restricted) and also Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 75, April 24, 1959 (Confidential), both in RG 25, Vol. 7665, File 11562-46-40 pt. 1, LAC.
75 Robinson, 92.
In the end, Castro’s Canadian tour consisted of a single day in Montreal on April 26, before he returned to Cuba after a brief rendez-vous with his brother Raul in Houston. With the Ottawa portion cancelled, Castro was not greeted in Montreal by any federal officials. Arriving at Dorval airport from Boston, Castro was officially welcomed by the Junior Chamber of Commerce and by Montreal Mayor Sarto Fournier. Praising the warm welcome of the Montreal crowds, Castro found them comparable to those of Havana and favourably compared the city’s “Latin atmosphere” to those he had just visited in the United States. Castro again denied that his government was communist, professing it instead to be “humanist.” His activities included a tour of the St. Justine Hospital and a number of impromptu meetings at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel. At that location, Castro also conducted an item of unfinished business from the previous Batista government – a meeting with Seafarers International Union President Hal C. Banks to obtain possession of six vessels that Cuba purchased from the Canadian National Steamships by Cuba in 1957. As that sale had occurred during a strike by the union, Cuba had been unable to take delivery of the ships; the Seafarers had considered the company’s action to be strikebreaking and its members refused to release the ships. No deal was reached in Montreal, despite Banks’ admiration for the Cuban leader. Resolution of this issue would still take several years- a matter then further complicated by Washington’s financial blocking controls against Cuba. Castro also met with Andrew McNaughton (son of the famous namesake Canadian World War II General and Cabinet Minister), who had assisted him with weapons during the civil war. Having kept up his contacts with the new Cuban regime, the younger McNaughton criticized his country’s government to Ambassador Allard for not formally inviting the revolutionary leader to Canada. McNaughton subsequently served as an informal planning liaison for the Castro visit, providing External Affairs with details about what the Cuban leader wanted to see when in Canada.

77 Montreal Gazette, April 27, 1959
78 Montreal Gazette, April 27, 1959. Also see Wright, 31.
79 Globe and Mail, April 27, 1959
81 See Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 59, April 9, 1959 (Confidential) and also Memorandum from Chief of Protocol (H.F. Feaver) to RCMP Commissioner D. Rivett-Carnac, April 14, 1959 (Confidential) both in RG 25, Vol. 7665, File 11562-46-40 pt. 1, LAC. For more on McNaughton see Wright, 31.
Like the Americans, in the wake of the Castro visit, Ottawa’s verdict was hesitant and cautious. In the opinion of some officials, this episode was not the Diefenbaker government’s finest hour. In a conversation with a senior Sun Life Insurance company official, Assistant Under Secretary John W. Holmes described the Castro visit as an embarrassment for Canada. A report on the visit from Christian Hardy of External Affairs’ American Division, apparently very uncomplimentary towards Castro, still remains almost completely sanitized more than a half century later. On April 29, Ambassador Allard debriefed with the US Deputy Chief of Mission in Havana and informed him that the Canadian government “was not pleased and [was] offended at Castro’s cavalier conduct and abruptly cancelling scheduled visits and engagement[s] in Ottawa and Toronto.”

Scarcely concealing his dislike and distrust of the Cuban revolution, Allard wrote another long despatch describing the state of affairs in Cuba as replete with revolutionary trials and executions, an increasing servile press, the growth of communist influence, postponements of promised elections and Cuban interference in Panama. Castro’s personality was described as that of “an unpredictable, wandering plotter.” For the most part, this reflected the American perspective, with Allard perhaps even harder line than Philip Bonsal, who at that time was still calling for patience, recommending that:

We should give the Cubans themselves as much opportunity to straighten themselves out and Castro out before unlimbering our artillery against Castro.

Castro subsequently tried to put a positive spin on his brief time on Canadian soil. Later that year, he told Allard’s successor Allan Anderson how fondly he remembered his day in Montreal, adding he hoped to return to Canada someday. While his sentiments were possibly sincere, the Ambassador observed that the Cuban had initially described the Canadian visit as the same as the United States, before catching himself. Thus in an unguarded moment, the Cuban leader betrayed that deep down, he saw little difference between the two neighbours.

82 Memorandum from JW Holmes to Marcel Cadieux, April 10 1959 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 6748, File 288-40, pt. 4.1, LAC.
83 Memorandum from American Division (C. Hardy) to J.H. Cleveland, April 28, 1959 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 7665, File 11652-116-40, LAC. This document was almost completely sanitized under a 2013 ATIP request, as still potentially damaging to Canadian-Cuban relations, according to conversations with pertinent staff.
84 Telegram from US Embassy in Havana to Department of State, no. UNN, April 30, 1959 (Confidential) in RG 84, Records of the US Embassy in Ottawa, Entry UDS 2195C, Folder 320 “Cuba 1959-1961,” Box 62, NARA.
86 Telegram from the Embassy in Cuba to Department of State no 1197, April 14, 1959 (Secret/ Priority) in FRUS 1958-1960, Vol. VI, Doc. 277, 456-457.
87 Canadian Embassy Havana Despatch D-512, October 15, 1959 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-754, pt. 5, LAC.
Both were western capitalist countries, and Canada was an ally and junior partner of the United States. While revealing, Castro’s recollections by that time were also likely coloured by the considerable souring of United States-Cuban relations that had taken place since the April tour.

As its response to the Castro visit revealed, Ottawa did little to encourage a more formal and public relationship with Cuba, especially at the senior levels. By early 1960, with a Cuban-US rift rapidly widening, the Department of External Affairs recommended against inviting senior Cuban revolutionary government officials to Canada, despite the symbolic importance of such visits to Latin American leaders, and was prepared to be seen as aloof if not unfriendly. As Cuba moved to the opposite side of Canada in the Cold War, a decade and a half would pass before there was any substantial change in approach. The two noted exceptions would be the December 1960 visit of Cuba’s Economic and Transport Ministers, an event that earned Canada bad press in the United States, and the Expo 67 visit of the Trade Minister. Save for several brief aircraft refuelling stops at Gander (notably in December 1972, when he frolicked in the snow during a layover), Castro himself would not visit Canada again until the funeral of Pierre Trudeau in Montreal in October 2000. Neither Fidel nor Raul Castro have ever received an official invitation to visit Canada.

While Ottawa kept senior level official contacts to an absolute minimum, External Affairs Minister Howard Green still wanted to try establishing a decent rapport with Castro for day to day engagement. Appointing former Royal Bank official Allan Anderson, who had lived in Cuba in the 1920s and knew the country, was a hoped for positive start. Anderson knew at least solid and established reputation that Canadian businesses had on the island, and would devote significant attention to Canada-Cuba commercial interactions. Don Munton and David Vogt’s recent study of diplomatic reports and telegrams from the Canadian embassy in Havana in the 1959-1961 period argues that during Anderson’s tenure, Canada had a largely accurate read on Cuban developments, especially as the revolution turned more sharply leftward. Despite having reservations, Green charged Anderson in commencing his new duties that:

There is a chance that it may be a deeply popular revolution of the type that began in Mexico almost fifty years ago and was only brought to a successful conclusion after years of bloodshed

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89 See Wright, *Three Nights in Havana*, 1-4.
and suffering. As the representatives in Cuba of a friendly country, you and the members of your mission will display a great deal of patience and understanding as are compatible with your functions and seek ways to reconcile Canadian political and economic interests with a revolution that cannot be stabilized until the deep grievances that produced it have been redressed [sic].

In that same despatch, Green cautioned the diplomat that “because of the predominance of the United States in the affairs of this hemisphere, US-Cuban relations should be the object of much of your attention.” This insightful memorandum reveals that Canadian officials were by then well aware of the developing tension between the United States and the virulently anti-American and increasingly radicalized Cuban revolutionary government. Anderson would face a challenging next two years, and like both his predecessor and his American counterpart in Havana, he would grow increasingly perturbed and frustrated at Castro’s radical direction.

The spring and summer months of 1959 generated a cycle of escalating actions-reactions between Washington and Havana that reinforced suspicion and mistrust on both sides, pulling them first towards divorce and then setting them on a collision course. Castro and his closest compatriots suspected that the hand of US imperialism was ever present, and believed its giant neighbour would not accept their revolutionary program. In turn, Washington became increasingly convinced Cuba was a new Guatemala and Moscow’s next target in the hemisphere.

This downward spiral began in earnest in mid-May, when Havana rolled out an aggressive new land reform program that expropriated large tracts of land from American owners, including sugar plantations and cattle ranches. Instead of paying cash, the government offered compensation in promissory long term bonds assessed using the 1958 property tax rate. This sparked the anger of American property owners and investors, many of whom had for years under-reported the values of their estates to avoid paying Cuban tax. While it could not legally contest these actions, the Eisenhower administration faced considerable pressure from American citizens and their Congressional representatives to intervene on the property holders’ behalf. Unresolved compensation issues have remained a long term barrier to better relations.

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92 Secretary of State for External Affairs (SSEA) Green to Ambassador to Cuba, September 25, 1959 (Secret/Canadian Eyes Only) in DCER, Vol. 26, Doc 466, 962.
93 Ibid, 963.
94 Louis A. Pérez Jr., Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy 3rd ed. (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 2003), 239. See also Morris H. Morley, Imperial State and Revolution, 81-82. This compensation based on underreported taxes was a similar grievance that the United Fruit Company held against the Arbenz regime in Guatemala in the early 1950s.
Along with these economic issues, political developments contributed to the fracturing of US-Cuban relations. A number of moderate supporters of the 26th of July coalition against Batista had grown disillusioned by the revolution’s leftward turn, and fled to the United States, joining the Batista regime exiles in Miami. These individuals, notably Air Force Chief Pedro Diaz Lanz, generated publicity in the United States by portraying the revolution as dictatorial and pro-communist. Castro deeply resented what he saw as American harping about communism, especially the continuous barrage of questions he received while on his American tour about whether or not he was one. That July, Castro staged a major political charade by resigning as Prime Minister, complaining about President Urrutia’s constraining the revolution and his refusal to denounce virulent anti-communism. Urrutia subsequently resigned, to be replaced by the more radical Oswaldo Dorticos; large mobs, likely staged, urged Castro to reassume his position. Ambassador Bonsal described the event as “a political maneuver to rid himself of an uncooperative associate [although technically a superior] Castro’s tactic was a complete success.” Over the coming months, remaining moderates would be systematically forced out of the government in favour of true believers.

Coupled with these internal political moves were foreign policy developments. Making good on Castro’s openly declared war on Latin American dictatorships, Havana provided materiel and moral support to anti-government activities in Honduras, Panama, Nicaragua and Dominican Republic. In turn, several of these countries became active supporters of Cuban counter-revolutionaries, including use of their territory. That summer, Cuba and the Dominican Republic were on the verge of war, and Washington sought to constrain both. The entire Caribbean basin had emerged as a major international hotspot, if not an outright tinderbox. The commitment of Castro and his cadres to destabilizing Cuba’s neighbours and spreading the revolution became Washington’s single greatest reason for opposing the regime.

96 See Benjamin, 178-179.
97 See Telegram US Embassy Havana to Secretary of State no 163 July 18, 1959 (Confidential) RG 59, State Decimal file 737.00/7-1859 NARA. On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba 1955-1959, Reel 6. See also Telegram US Embassy Havana to Secretary of State no. 162, July 18, 1959 (Confidential) in FRUS 1958-1960, Vol. VI, Doc. 338, 564
For Eisenhower, the last straw occurred in October, when Castro fiercely denounced the
United States after an unidentified airplane overflew Havana and dropped anti-regime leaflets
and allegedly, bombs. The pilot turned out to be ex-Air Force chief Diaz Lanz. There were
explosions, killing two and wounding some forty, although as Anderson reported back to
Ottawa, reports indicated the blasts were caused by misdirected Cuban anti-aircraft fire, rather
than ordnance dropped from the plane.99 Whether or not this was an early CIA operation against
Cuba is inconclusive; certainly the White House denied any involvement, and Eisenhower
mused to his staff “why don’t the Cubans just shoot the planes down.”100 Sufficient resources
and motive already existed among the Florida exile community to carry out such actions.101 A
bewildered President, insensitive and perhaps oblivious to the anger that had built up in Cuba
over decades of US hegemony, pondered aloud at a news conference October 28:

here is a country that you would believe, on the basis of our history, would be one of our real
friends. The whole history-first of our intervention in 1898, our making and helping set up
Cuban independence, the second time we had to go in and did the same thing to make sure that
they were on a sound basis, the trade concessions we have made and the very close relationships
that have existed most of the time with them—would seem to make it a puzzling matter to figure
out just exactly why the Cubans and the Cuban Government would be so unhappy when, after
all, their principal market is right here, their best market. You would think they would want good
relationships. I do not know what the difficulty is. 102

By this time, Eisenhower had already decided that his government’s problems with Cuba
could not be solved diplomatically. Now siding with the hard line opinions expressed by many
of his close friends, the President concluded that Castro’s government was serving communist
interests in the hemisphere and thus would have to go. The only issue now was how this could
be accomplished. The President approved a State Department policy paper in early November
calling for a replacement government in Havana that would meet the minimum requirements of
the US hemispheric plan, while not “giving the impression of direct pressure or intervention

99 Telegram from Embassy in Cuba to Department of State, no, 887, October 22, 1959 (Confidential) in FRUS 1958-1960, Vol. VI, Doc 374, 632 and also Memorandum from Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rubottom) to Secretary of State, October 23, 1959 (Confidential) FRUS 1958-1960, Vol. VI, Doc 375, 633-635. For Canadian reports see Canadian Embassy Havana Despatch D-531, October 29, 1959 (Confidential) RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 5, LAC
100 Memorandum of Conference with the President, October 27, 1959 (Secret) DDRS Document No CK3100459307
101 Morley, 91-95.
against the Castro government."\(^{103}\) From late November 1959 and carrying on through mid-March 1960, Eisenhower’s national security team set into motion a covert plan to topple Castro on the Guatemala model, one that ultimately metamorphosed into the Bay of Pigs fiasco under John F. Kennedy. The details of the program, ranging from radio propaganda to paramilitary support for anti-Castro guerrillas to CIA assassination plots have been amply discussed elsewhere.\(^{104}\) Eisenhower approved the multifaceted program on March 17, 1960.\(^{105}\)

Watching the slide in US-Cuban relations, the Canadian government followed these developments largely with sympathy for the Americans. Anderson thought well of Philip Bonsal, telling Under Secretary Norman Robertson “the United States could not have picked a better man to represent them [in Cuba] at this time.”\(^{106}\) The two diplomats regularly exchanged views on the deterioration between Havana and Washington. Anderson reported to Ottawa late in October that the American ambassador was bewildered by the Cuban Prime Minister’s “erratic and inconsistent” behaviour,” and that “Bonsal is trying desperately to reach some glimmering of comprehension of what Castro is trying to do or what Castro really thinks he is doing. So far there is no clue.”\(^{107}\) A few weeks later, the State Department’s Cuban Desk officer Richard Owen told Canadian embassy official Saul Rae that he believed Castro was “at times mentally unbalanced” and also mentioned Bonsal’s discouragement for failing to convince Castro about American good will towards his country.\(^{108}\) The Canadian Ambassador betrayed his own growing like-mindedness when he admitted “like myself, he [Bonsal] is unable to understand the motivations behind Castro’s bitter denunciations of the United States unless they

\(^{103}\) for an overview see "Current Basic United States Policy Towards Cuba" October 1959 (Secret) in FRUS 1958-1960 Vol. VI, Doc 376, 635-639.


\(^{107}\) Havana Embassy Despatch D-531, October 29, 1959 (Confidential) RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 5, LAC.

\(^{108}\) Canadian Embassy Washington DC Numbered Letter 1725, November 19, 1959 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 5, LAC.
are Moscow inspired. He keeps on seeking for a reasonable explanation, and cannot find one.”

Precisely at the moment the United States committed itself to regime change in Havana, the Cuban revolution entered its second phase, one that Hugh Thomas aptly described as “the eclipse” of liberal Cuba, with Castro now moving towards a “complete realignment of its national and international posture.” Over the next year, Cuba would now begin its transformation to a genuinely socialist economy, as Morris Morley described it, shifting from wealth redistribution towards full state control over the economy. The most telling indicator was Castro’s replacement of the moderate and respected businessman Felipe Pazos as head of Cuba’s National Bank with Che Guevara, the professional revolutionary who had already helped re-shape the armed forces and was also leader of the National Agrarian Reform Institute (INRA), the agency that oversaw the land reforms. His biographer Jorge Castañeda wrote that “Che Guevara was not born to be a banker,” and yet despite his unnatural fitness for the job, Guevara remained the principal figure in Cuba’s economic development until shortly before his departure from the island in 1965. For the Americans, the rapid rise in stature and influence of the man they had for some time seen as the most dangerous in Cuba confirmed that they were now beyond the point of no return.

Sharing the Americans’ concerns over Cuba’s radical turn, the Canadian government was naturally concerned about the impact on Canadian business interests. Nervous about the future of their investments and about the supply chain, business leaders increasingly consulted with Ottawa, providing in turn their perspective and in some cases, intelligence regarding the Cuban situation. Late in the summer, a company executive from the Canada and Dominion Sugar company requested that Ambassador Anderson keep the company informed on developments affecting the Cuban sugar industry, as it was “the hub of the world sugar market” and the company’s principal source of raw sugar. The mining industry was especially concerned after the Canadian owned Caribbean Gold Mines on the Cuban Isle de Pinas was

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109 Ibid
113 Castañeda, 196.
114 Letter from M.W. Davidson, Public Relations Vice President for Canada and Dominion Sugar to Ambassador Anderson, September 1, 1959 in RG 25, Vol. 6749, File 288-40, pt. 4.2, LAC
nationalized; the mine had been inactive and had thus been targeted by INRA under a program seeking to reactivate under-employed lands and resources. Ottawa sought American advice. The State Department responded that the Cuban action was legal, but in recalling Americans’ experiences with the land reforms, advised the Canadians to insist on prompt cash compensation over INRA bonds. The Canadian government did not publicly protest, especially after learning the mine’s owners had failed to keep their end of a promise to reactivate the mine once Cuba had improved the nearby infrastructure. Canadian commercial advisors reported “the new law as it stands will put all private mines in Cuba out of business.” With commercial interests traditionally being the main raison d’etre for Canada’s relations with Cuba, the embassy in Havana would spend considerable time the next few years monitoring the fate of Canadian businesses - as would the US embassy.

Following the announcement of the Guevara appointment, Anderson met with the Royal Bank’s Havana supervisor H.M. Grindell, who praised the outgoing Felipe Pazos for his “stubborn refusal to prostitute the [Cuban Central] Bank to the schemes of Castro and Guevara.” The Royal Bank supervisor described Cuba’s new top banker as “a professional adventurer, a known communist, a man of no banking experience whatsoever, and presumably devoid of integrity;” in turn, he predicted that “Cuba’s international credit rating will go down near zero.” Reflecting on his experiences as a banker and diplomat, Anderson wrote in a December despatch: “with Guevara, the professional wrecker in charge, it seemed that the only prospect was chaos.” Another Canadian report from late December surveyed the extent to which the Castro regime had moved towards complete state ownership control of the Cuban

115 Letter from Law firm Aylen, Scott and Aylen to Under Secretary for External Affairs (Robertson), October 1, 1959 in RG 25, Vol. 6749, File 288-40, pt. 4.2, LAC
118 Memorandum from Commercial Secretary in Havana to Chief of the Latin American Division of the International Trade Branch,, “Cuba – Mining Laws”, November 18 1959 (Commercial Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 6749, File 288-40, pt. 4.2, LAC
119 Canadian Embassy Havana Despatch D-582, November 29, 1959 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 5, LAC
120 Canadian Embassy Havana Despatch D-582, November 29, 1959 (Confidential) RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 5, LAC
121 Canadian Embassy Havana Despatch D-620, December 10, 1959 (Confidential) RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 5, LAC
economy’s core sectors. Thus neither Canadian business owners nor Ottawa’s official representative in Havana, as an ex-banker, were optimistic about their future in Cuba.

Canada also kept its eye on the flow of munitions to Cuba and the region, with one eye on the American reaction. Back in June, citing concerns over growing tensions in the Caribbean, the Diefenbaker Cabinet had banned exports of military equipment to the entire region, with the exception of Colombia. Canada’s export control policy on arms sales to the region as a whole became stricter than that of the United States. That summer and fall, Washington was still selling arms to all countries in the region except Cuba and the Dominican Republic. Recalling how Batista had refitted Canadian-made De Havilland Beaver aircraft for military action against the Castro rebels a year earlier, External Affairs Minister Howard Green blocked a Cuba export licence for similar aircraft. In an ironic twist, given the later history of US export controls against Cuba, Green allowed the United States a special exception to enable an American firm to re-export a Beaver aircraft to Cuba, noting:

The fact that the United States Government is prepared to allow the export of an aircraft of this type to Cuba even though the Cuban Government has been indulging in a violent anti-American propaganda campaign, makes it difficult for us to refuse the application.

Soon afterwards, Canada received a request from INRA officials acting on behalf of Fidel Castro himself, who wanted to purchase a Beaver aircraft for travel around the island. When the Cabinet declined the request, Castro had an outburst and apparently threatened to call Prime Minister Diefenbaker directly to protest the decision. The Cubans had their allies in De Havilland, and the aircraft manufacturer lobbied Green in favour of the sale, pointing out that the Americans were still selling aircraft to Cuba and that Canada’s aircraft industry was sluggish – possibly an indirect dig at Diefenbaker’s cancellation in February of the Avro Arrow.

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126 Letter from Capt.ain Antonio Nunez Jiminez (Director of INRA) to Ambassador Anderson, December 18, 1959 in RG 25, Vol. 7584 File 11044-AK-40, pt. 3.2. LAC
128 Letter from De Havilland Aircraft Sales Director CH Dickins to Secretary of State for External Affairs (Green), November 13, 1959 in RG 25, Vol. 7584, File 11044-AK-40, pt. 3.1, LAC.
Havana, Anderson also questioned the rigidity of Ottawa’s policy, reporting how both the Americans and British were still selling Cuba civilian, but not military aircraft.  

Canadian diplomats were still inclined to follow Washington’s lead, or where uncertain, to adopt a position that the Americans would likely view favourably. Canadian embassy officials in Washington suspected that the Americans had been hasty in relaxing such sales to Cuba, and quite rightly predicted that they would soon tighten up their policy. By mid-January 1960, the Washington embassy reported that American officials were delaying further export permits to Havana, even though the United States had not officially changed its policy. The Canadians accurately perceived that American policy towards Cuba was under review. This would become much more noticeable by March.

Diefenbaker in the meantime reversed himself and permitted the sale of a single aircraft to Cuba, again making an exception to his government’s overall policy. Ottawa remained committed to avoid contributing in any way to armed conflict in the Caribbean basin. In one sense, its position on the Caribbean arms question exemplified Canada’s commitment as a peacemaker. On the other hand, Ottawa’s arms sales policy in 1959 and early 1960 also reflected its growing confusion in trying to follow United States’ lead at a time when the latter was shifting its approach and setting out in a direction that would soon be at variance with Canadian diplomatic traditions and preferences. The policy also established a precedent Canada could draw on in not supporting the US embargo – the fact it was already refusing to sell the Castro regime strategic goods.

In his annual review of Cuba for the year 1959, Anderson gave Castro’s government a mixed review, generally more negative than positive. With this assessment, Anderson’s report differed little from those of his predecessor, Hector Allard. Likening Castro to a young Batista, who he described as having evolved from “[a] leading juvenile to heavy villain,” he described

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129 Havana Embassy Numbered Letter L-11 January 6 1960 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 7584 File 11044-AK-40, pt. 3.2, LAC. Records also now reveal the Americans, especially CIA Director Allen Dulles, leaned on the British in November 1959 not to sell Cuba Hawker Hunter fighter aircraft, in part to encourage the Cubans to turn to the Soviet Union, thus providing the US a pretext from efforts to topple Castro. See Telegram from UK Embassy Washington to Foreign Office, November 24, 1959 (Top Secret) in Digital National Security Archive Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited Collection, Document CU00020.  
130 Memorandum from N.A. Robertson to the Minister, January 12, 1960 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 7584, File 11044-AK-40, pt. 3.2, LAC  
Castro as the new “leading juvenile,” who was “a shade more flamboyant that his predecessor, but the scenery and oratory were the same.”\textsuperscript{133} Anderson recognized Castro’s still significant domestic popularity, and pointed out his government was more honest than that of Batista. On the other hand, the Canadian diplomat lamented the deterioration in the economic and investment climate as the Cuba government radicalized, became virulently anti-American and as the communist presence grew within its ranks (Guevara and Raul Castro especially).\textsuperscript{134}

As Canadian officials were detecting, United States policy towards Cuba was hardening. In the early months of 1960, the Eisenhower administration was debating the nature and specific goals of a broad anti-Castro program involving State, Defense, and the CIA, and which included a public diplomacy campaign to shame and pressure the Cuban government to change its behaviour, in addition to covert action.\textsuperscript{135} On January 26, Eisenhower issued a public statement reaffirming its commitment in principle to non-intervention; at the same time, he called on the Cuban government to tone down its anti-American rhetoric, to negotiate with American landowners and investors, and finally, “to recognize and defeat the intrigues of international communism.”\textsuperscript{136} Behind closed doors, the President used much harsher language. He mused about blockading the island and hoping that starving Cubans would rise and topple Castro, and later he exhorted his advisors to consider “things that might be drastic.”\textsuperscript{137} The visit of senior Soviet apparatchik Anastas Mikoyan to Cuba in February provided the Americans with an additional impetus to accelerate its program, including talks of a sugar embargo.

Nothing in the available record suggests Canada was aware at this time of Washington’s overall goals or its program, although the difference in tone was apparent enough. The January 26 White House statement was seen by embassy officials as “bending over backwards in order not to give the impression of the giant of the hemisphere wielding a big stick at the misbehaving juvenile who makes nasty remarks about the neighbouring giant.”\textsuperscript{138} The seriousness of Washington’s concerns about communism grew readily apparent in private meetings with State


\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.


Department officials. Cuban Desk officer Richard Owen told Canadians that “we [the US] can’t allow the communists to run a regime ninety miles from our shore.”\textsuperscript{139} After Owen provided a list of communists then in the Cuban government, Canadian embassy staff recorded afterwards that the Inter-American Affairs Bureau was “in need of a sedative,” and hoped that Ambassador Anderson’s 1959 year-end report could serve as such.\textsuperscript{140} The Canadian diplomat concluded “I dare not try to predict whether the communists will succeed in taking over the revolution” or whether Cuba’s Catholic heritage and “instinctive dislike of communism” would prevail.\textsuperscript{141}

Such discussions and responses reveal that differences in perception over the nature and solution to the Cuban revolution were emerging between Ottawa and Washington, even though there was not yet any obvious parting of the ways. Canadian officials such as Ambassador Anderson and especially External Affairs Minister Green, were wary of the excessively alarmist tendencies in United States foreign policy regarding communism, a phenomenon they feared would lead to a distorted view and create another Cold War crisis. When William Wieland, the Director of Mexican and Caribbean Affairs, and several US embassy officials in Havana revealed to Canadian embassy staff that they were developing contingency evacuation plans should Cuban anti-Americanism escalate to violence, they asked for Canadian cooperation.\textsuperscript{142} All signals were pointing to a soon to come open rift between Cuba and the United States.

As Ottawa believed the United States was becoming too alarmist, American officials were concerned that its neighbour and ally was taking the Castro regime too casually, and did not appreciate the nature of the emerging threat. After a discussion with Assistant Under Secretary A.E. Ritchie, Willis Armstrong, the Deputy Chief of Mission in Ottawa, reported that Canada lacked adequate information about the growing communist presence in Cuba. Acknowledging that Canada and the United States regularly shared intelligence, Embassy Counselor Rufus Smith persuaded State Department Canadian Desk officer Delmar Carlson to forward a copy of the CIA’s latest intelligence estimate on communism in Cuba, although the process took two months.\textsuperscript{143} In fact, Canada’s Havana embassy already had a pretty accurate

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\textsuperscript{139} Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington DC no 133 January 22, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25 Vol. 7258, File 10224-40, pt. 7.1, LAC
\textsuperscript{142} Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington no 383, February 17, 1960 (Secret/ Canadian Eyes Only) RG 25 Vol. 7258, File 10224-40, pt. 7.2, LAC
\textsuperscript{143} Letter from Counselor, US Embassy Ottawa (Rufus Z. Smith) to Officer in Charge of Canadian Affairs, Department of State (Delmar R. Carlson) March 30, 1960 (Secret/ Official Informal) in RG 84, Records of the US
\end{footnotesize}
read on Cuba’s external relations, including its efforts following the Mikoyan visit to obtain Soviet arms and to broaden commercial links to East Germany and Czechoslovakia, along with Chinese communist efforts to bolster ties.\(^{144}\) Canada was simply less alarmed about Cuba.

By March, the US policy change on exports to Cuba that Canadian officials first detected in January was now readily apparent. The State Department had asked the Department of Commerce to revoke licences to sell Cuba aircraft, and to review the sale of spare parts. On March 29, Wieland’s Deputy at Caribbean and Mexican Affairs, Edwin Vallon, informed Canadian embassy officials of the policy change on helicopter and aircraft sales, citing three factors: the Cuban misuse of such equipment by converting it for military use; the government’s ongoing hostile rhetoric and its drift towards communism.\(^{145}\) When the Canadians suggested that refusing such sales might drive Cuba even further towards the communist bloc, Vallon commented revealingly “the State Department had reached the point where it would almost welcome Communist sales of strategic goods to Cuba since such a development would clearly reveal Cuban links with Soviet countries.”\(^{146}\) The United States wanted as much evidence as possible to begin building its case that the Castro regime was now a genuine security threat, and there were no longer any ambiguities about where it stood concerning Havana.

As US-Cuban relations deteriorated that spring, Canadian officials observed that Cuba appeared to be more interested in Canada, likely as an alternative supply of goods from the United States. Briefly in April, Castro spoke with Peter Baronas, the Latin American area sales manager for Canadian Pacific Airlines that “there were no differences or problems, even small ones, between Canada and Cuba,” and wondered why there were not more Canadians travelling to Cuba as tourists, where they would be welcomed.\(^{147}\) Baronas opined to Embassy staff that Castro was “a complete idealist with his head in the clouds,” who was being deceived and controlled by the communists, a view that Anderson reported was “not very far away from our

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\(^{145}\) Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington to External Affairs, no. 834, March 29, 1960 (Secret) RG 25, Vol. 7584, File 11044-AK-40, pt. 3.2, LAC.

\(^{146}\) Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington to External Affairs, no. 834, March 29, 1960 (Secret) RG 25, Vol. 7584, File 11044-AK-40, pt. 3.2, LAC.

\(^{147}\) Canadian Embassy Havana Despatch D-265, April 25, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2 pt. 6, LAC. Anderson noted that Heads of diplomatic missions were having difficulty getting an audience with Castro.
own opinions.” Unlike his American counterpart, Anderson was invited as a “guest” of Castro and Foreign Minister Roa at a dinner for Latin American ambassadors early in May. Castro indicated he wanted to stay in the American family, but from his perspective, any compromise of the revolution would be nothing less than death. At the event, the Canadian opted to listen rather than offer any substantive opinions, but immediately afterwards he called on Bonsal to debrief him. The US Ambassador was pleased that Castro had invited the Canadians, but added that from his standpoint, a successful US-Cuban relationship could not be salvaged with the present regime. No doubt he was aware that his government was determined to change the government in Havana.

As the Castro regime radicalized and split from the United States, Cuba’s diplomats in Canada began experiencing difficulty with the regime they were required to represent. Carlos Carrillo, the last Batista-era Cuban ambassador in Ottawa, was arrested in Cuba in April 1959 for attempting during the civil war to secure Canadian arms for Batista through Andrew McNaughton. Assistant Under Secretary and Legal Advisor Marcel Cadieux instructed then Ambassador Allard to appeal on Carrillo’s behalf, worried how such charges would reflect on the Canadian government. The appeal evidently worked, as by mid May, Carrillo was released and allowed to leave for Mexico. Then in mid-June 1960, Ambassador Luis Baralt, only six months into his posting, suddenly resigned, and later sought to defect to Canada. Officially, Baralt quit for refusing to promote his government’s views that Cuba was under an imminent US military threat, a scenario he disbelieved. In reality, he no longer supported the overall direction of his government. US Ambassador Richard Wigglesworth, briefed on the situation by an External Affairs official who had once been Baralt’s tennis partner, reported to Washington that the Cuban diplomat intended to remain in Canada, where he was allowed to

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148 Ibid
149 Canadian Embassy Havana Despatch D-329, May 10, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 6 LAC
150 Memorandum from Economic Division (I) (Rodney Grey) to Under Secretary for External Affairs (N.A. Robertson), “Mr Carlos Carrillo,” April 7, 1959 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 7584, File 11044-AK-40, pt. 3.1, LAC
151 Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa no.788, April 14, 1959 (Secret) in RG 84, Records of the US Embassy in Ottawa, Entry UDS 2195C, Folder 320 “Cuba 1959-1961”, Box 62, NARA. For Canadian documents see Memorandum from Assistant Under Secretary to American Division, April 13, 1959 (Confidential) in DCER, Vol. 26, Docs 463 and 465.
152 Canadian Embassy Havana Numbered Letter L-257, May 28, 1959 (Restricted) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 5.1, LAC
immigrate.\textsuperscript{153} Baralt’s replacement, arriving in the autumn, was Dr. Américo Cruz, who had previously represented the Batista government in Ottawa as Counsellor and Chargé d’Affaires.\textsuperscript{154} Cuban scholar Raul Rodriguez described Havana’s decision to appoint him to Ottawa as signifying the importance that the Castro government attached to good relations with Canada, adding that Cruz was “highly regarded by the Cuban government and considered a man of revolutionary prestige.”\textsuperscript{155} An informant from the Cuban embassy in Ottawa described the incoming Ambassador to American diplomats as a “known communist,” who was close to Castro; Bonsal was uncertain about whether or not Cruz was a genuine communist, although he heard that Cruz had spread subversive propaganda in Argentina while serving in the Cuban embassy.\textsuperscript{156} Three years later, in a first call on Howard Green’s successor, Paul Martin, the thirty year veteran diplomat insisted that he was not a communist, but he had carried on with the Castro government as “there were many things wrong with the old Cuba, and he wanted to see how things would work out with a new approach.”\textsuperscript{157} Cruz remained in the Ottawa post for over seven years, the longest serving Cuban ambassador. Whatever his actual political affiliation had been in 1960, or even 1963, he proved himself a tireless and zealous defender of Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution.

In early June, Canada found itself indirectly entangled in the most significant economic confrontation between Cuba and the United States that year, over oil. At Guevara’s urging, the Cuban government delayed paying American and European based petroleum companies that had been shipping crude oil from Venezuela to their refineries in Cuba, an action intended to halt the loss of foreign exchange that ensued when oil companies insisted on cashing in Cuban pesos for US dollars.\textsuperscript{158} Castro and Guevara finally agreed finally to pay the oil companies, but on the condition that they also agreed to refine Soviet crude oil, which they had commenced importing following the Mikoyan visit. The petroleum companies refused to refine Soviet oil, in

\textsuperscript{153} See Airgrams from US Embassy, Ottawa no, G-194, June 24, 1960 (Confidential) and also no. G-1, July 5, 1960 (Confidential). Both in RG 84, Records of the US Embassy in Ottawa, Entry UDS 2195C, Box 62, Folder 320 “Cuba 1959-1961”, NARA

\textsuperscript{154} See previous Chapter for discussion on Cruz’s role during the time of the Cuban opposition’s Montreal meetings in May 1953.


\textsuperscript{156} See Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 226, October 14, 1960 (Confidential) and Telegram from US Havana to US Embassy Ottawa, no.8, October 19, 1960 (Confidential), Both are in RG 84, Records of the US Embassy in Ottawa, Entry UDS 2195C, Box 62, Folder 320 “Cuba 1959-1961”, NARA

\textsuperscript{157} Memorandum from Latin American Division (A.J. Pick) to Under Secretary for External Affairs (Robertson), “Call of the Cuban Ambassador on the Minister,” June 14, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5077, File 4568-40, pt. 12, LAC

\textsuperscript{158} Castañeda, \textit{Companero}, 175-176 and also Lars Schoultz, \textit{That Infernal Little Republic}, 119.
keeping with advice their executives had received at the White House. Angered at this refusal, Castro retaliated on June 29 by nationalizing the Cuban refineries.

Canada’s connection was that Shell Cuba was technically owned by Shell Oil Canada. However, in reality this Canadian registered company was merely a holding company that was 40% British and 60% Dutch owned. Stanley Fordham, Great Britain’s Ambassador in Havana, tipped off Anderson that Ottawa would likely be dragged into the matter, as Shell of Canada held both the shares of its Cuban and Venezuelan namesakes. Canadian Shell officials told those in External Affairs that refining Soviet crude oil meant purchasing less oil from Shell of Venezuela, which was also owned by the Canadian Shell holding company.

The Diefenbaker government did not formally protest the Cuban expropriations, even though External Affairs Minister Green faced a grilling in the House of Commons concerning the treatment of a Canadian company. The Energy Counsellor at the Canadian embassy in Washington told a British embassy official that Canadian Shell was merely “a company of convenience,” and Cuba’s action had not thus far threatened Canada’s real economic interests on the island, which were banks and insurance companies, both thus far untouched by Havana’s policies. This tepid response frustrated the British, who wanted Ottawa to stand up to Havana more vigorously over the interests of a technically Canadian company, even though it was really British and Dutch interests that were affected. Richard M.K. Slater of the Foreign Office’s American Department described to the Canadian High Commissioner that while Great Britain’s Cuba policy had thus far hoped its “other cheek” approach would moderate the regime, the petroleum crisis and Cuban interference in the British West Indies had led Whitehall to conclude that “Castro would never become a moderate and desirable leader for Cuba.” The British were moving somewhat closer to the US position.

159 Castañeda, 176. See also Memorandum from Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rubottom) to Secretary of State, June 2, 1960 (Secret) in FRUS 1958-1960, Vol. VI, Doc. 525, 934-935.
162 Telegram from External Affairs to the Canadian Embassy in Havana, ET-855, June 27, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 6749, File 288-40, pt. 4.2, LAC
With the petroleum crisis, the Cuban question became an Atlantic alliance issue. At this point, the Diefenbaker government actively decided for a middle of the road approach, believing such a course of action was best for Canadian interests in Cuba as well as for allowing Ottawa to exercise its traditional “helpful fixer” role. As Robertson advised Green:

I would recommend we instruct our Ambassador to make representations of a very moderate nature, but avoid taking a position that would in any sense compromise our future activities both as regards protection of other Canadian interests in Cuba or our ability to play a role should a crisis of serous proportions arise. Our approach to Cuban authorities is very unlikely in itself to influence them to reverse their decision. However our position in Cuba is very likely to be more effective if we refrain from adopting the vigorous ad stiff tones of the United States and United Kingdom protests.166

For Canada, emerging crises over Cuba and the Congo were unwelcome additions after a spring characterized by a sharp chilling of the Cold War, triggered especially by the shoot down over Soviet airspace of an American U-2 spy aircraft. Such was the background for Diefenbaker’s invitation to meet Eisenhower in Washington at the beginning of June. As well, there were bilateral differences. The President initiated the meeting in April after hearing reports of growing Canadian-US friction based on increased nationalist sentiments in Canada, a development of which Eisenhower claimed to be unaware.167 When the two leaders met, Cuba was not an agenda item, although mid way through the meeting, the President was alerted that Khrushchev had accepted an invitation to visit Cuba (a visit that never took place) and responded that “Mr. Khrushchev might be doing the United States a great favour as other Latin American countries will now see where the sympathies of Cuba lie.”168 The only other Latin American reference was the now regular effort to entice Canada to join the OAS, with Diefenbaker offering a sympathetic but non-committal reply.169

Three weeks after Diefenbaker’s visit, with the oil standoff in full swing, the National Security Council held a pivotal meeting on Cuba chaired by Vice President Nixon, who

166 Memorandum from Under Secretary Norman Robertson to External Affairs Minister Green, July 6, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 6749, File 288-40, pt. 5, LAC
169 Ibid for both versions.
advocated a hard line approach, lest the United States be labelled as “Uncle Sucker.” A State Department report created with input from the American business community advocated economic and political measures against the regime, including sugar quota reductions, and invoking the *Trading with the Enemy Act* to eliminate Cuba’s dollar supply. Moderates such as the State Department’s Wieland and Inter-American Affairs Assistant Secretary Roy Rubottom, were worried that the proposed harsh economic sanctions would unite Cuban behind Castro. The differences at this point were on subtleties and specifics, rather than the overall direction. By this point, the moderates had lost the argument. The clandestine and diplomatic pressures already in motion would now be augmented by open economic pressures. In addition, the Eisenhower administration would seek to get NATO allies onside, particularly Canada.

As the executive branch moved towards sanctions, it received Congressional assistance in the form of a bill assigning a figure of zero for Cuba’s portion of United States sugar purchases for the rest of the year and afterwards. Eisenhower signed the bill on July 6, marking the first step in a long regime of increasing economic sanctions against Cuba. In many ways, for Cuba this was the United States’ most devastating action against it, with CIA Director Dulles estimating that the United States purchased about half the Cuban sugar crop and contributed to two thirds of the country’s income. In a memorandum for his files, Rubottom wrote that with this action, “for all practical purposes we are now in open conflict with the Castro government.”

At this point, one might ask if opportunities were missed to save the US-Cuban relationship in some form, and whether or not Canada might have helped. The evidence suggests that for both questions, the answer is a resounding no. Neither Havana nor Washington could see with sufficient clarity how their actions might be perceived by the other side, given their

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172 See Memorandum from Director of the Office of Mexican and Caribbean Affairs (Wieland) to Assistant Secretary of State for Inter American Affairs (Rubottom), December 8, 1959 (Confidential) in FRUS 1958-1960, Vol. VI, Doc. 406, 693 and also Memorandum of Conference, Department of State “Questions Concerning the Program of Economic Pressures on Castro,” June 27, 1960 (Secret) in Ibid, Doc. 536, 961-963.
175 Memorandum for the files by Assistant Secretary of State for Inter American Affairs (Rubottom), July 8, 1960 (Secret) in FRUS 1958-1960, Vol. VI, Doc. 543, 977.
long shared history, which for the Cubans was a mostly unhappy one. Despite its established commercial links with Cuba, Canada had neither sufficient political engagement in Latin America nor the clout to check the regional hegemon. As the US-Cuban gulf became all but impassible by June 1960, Canada’s moderate course risked being overwhelmed by an agitated United States, which had concluded that Fidel Castro’s regime was definitely communist and as such was an intolerable threat to hemispheric security. Canada would have to withstand significant pressure from the Americans in what for the next several years became their top foreign policy preoccupation. As will be shown, Ottawa would at times sway in the direction of the Americans, but it would not be completely pulled along in this Cold War storm.
Chapter 3: The Era of Friction Begins: Canada, the United States and the Communization of the Cuban Revolution, July 1960 to January 1961

The first bilateral butting of heads over Cuba between Washington and Ottawa occurred in July 1960, the month that according to CIA estimates chief Sherman Kent, the Cuba issue “boiled over” for the United States and for the international community. Steadily building to a crescendo, the quarrel between the United States and Cuban governments now shifted into overdrive, spurned by a series of actions and reactions. After President Eisenhower retaliated for Castro’s nationalization of US oil companies by eliminating US sugar purchases from Cuba, the Cuban leader retaliated in turn by invoking Law 851, permitting the Cuban state to expropriate all remaining American owned property, with a compensation package tied to profits from US sugar purchases from Cuba – now equalled to zero. Believing that there was a campaign of United States aggression against his country, Castro launched a complaint to the United Nations Security Council, citing exile raids and especially the destruction back in March of the French ship Coubre in Havana harbour as examples.

More determined than ever to pull Cuba out from under American control, Castro more openly turned to the Soviet Union to help him achieve this goal. Chairman Khrushchev seemed all too willing to oblige, as evident in a blustering July 9 speech that praised the Cuban revolution and even hinted that Moscow might offer its rocket arsenal to protect it. Such a suggestion was too much even for the relatively moderate US Ambassador Philip Bonsal, who cabled from Havana that in his mind, all doubt was now removed that Cuba’s revolutionary government was “completely within Soviet orbit.” That summer and fall, the last of his

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1 Memorandum from Chairman of the Intelligence Estimates (Sherman Kent) to the Director of Central Intelligence (Dulles) “The Cuban Pot Boils Over” July 15, 1960 (Secret) Online at CIA FOIA website, http://www.foia.cia.gov/
3 For the UN complaint see Telegram from Department of State to Mission at the United Nations July 8, 1960 (Confidential) in FRUS 1958-1960. Vol. VI, Doc 547, 993-994. No American connection to the Coubre disaster has never been proven, although certainly the CIA’s covert action program against Cuba was indeed up and running since the early spring of 1960. Cuba’s UN complaint would reach the Security Council agenda in April 1961, the very week of the Bay of Pigs invasion, to the great embarrassment of US Ambassador Adlai Stevenson.
presidency, Cuba moved near the top of Eisenhower’s foreign policy agenda. He concluded that the Castro government’s apparently decisive shift towards communism made it not only inimical to United States’ interests, but a security threat to the entire hemisphere. His administration was determined to isolate it politically and economically, and it would lean on OAS and NATO members for cooperation and support. As will be shown, Canada in particular still saw its neighbour as too alarmist and rejected the isolation of Cuba.

At the July 6 NATO Political Advisers Committee, US Ambassador William Nolting expounded his government’s viewpoint that Cuba was in essence a Soviet satellite, and that Washington’s sugar embargo was only the first step to counter this development. Tipping them off regarding the US position to be unveiled at the North Atlantic Council the following week, Nolting hinted that his government expected its allies to vote against Cuba’s UN complaint, to deny it access to western oil tankers, and to refuse to sell it arms.\(^5\) Roping in its allies proved to be an uphill process. State Department and senior military officials were discouraged by the tepid response of its most prominent ally, Great Britain. On the one hand, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan described Castro in a letter to the President as “your Nasser” (a less than subtle barb at Eisenhower’s non-support of British intervention during the 1956 Suez crisis), while warning him on the other that a heavy US hand would prove disastrous for its position in Latin America and would further the communist cause.\(^6\) Even more so than Great Britain, the United States singled out Canada, given its geographic and economic position with both the United States and Cuba, to support its position. The British advised the Americans that gaining Canadian compliance would not be so easy, given its foreign policy traditions (which were rooted in their own) as well as its commercial and financial interests in Cuba.\(^7\)

At the NATO Political Advisers meeting, the Canadian delegation remained silent, as per Ottawa’s instructions, pending the outcome of the Joint Canada–United States defence

\(^{5}\) Telegram from Canadian NATO Delegation to Department of External Affairs, no. 1801, July 6, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5048, File 2444-40, pt. 3 LAC and also Telegram from Canadian NATO delegation to Department of External Affairs, no. 1880, July 13, 1960 (Secret) RG 25, Vol. 5048, File 2444-40, pt. 3 LAC. For Nolting’s statement, see “Summary of US Statement of July 13 to North Atlantic Council of the Cuban Situation,” July 13, 1960 (NATO–Secret) in the same file


meetings scheduled for July 12-13 in Montebello, Quebec. External Affairs had laid down what would become its standard line, differentiating normal commercial relations from strategic oriented transactions and adding that Canada would not halt its purchases of Cuban sugar. Trying to remain optimistic, the Canadian officials added that they did not believe the Cuban government was yet “beyond redemption,” and they still hoped that “well disposed members of the [UN] Security Council may be able to bring about a satisfactory rapprochement between the USA and Cuba if both parties will be flexible.” Given the hardening positions of the American and Cuban governments, such viewpoints reflected a combination of optimism and naivety, although as will be shown, these were certainly not unique to Canada.

At the July 7 National Security Council meeting, National Security Advisor Gordon Gray recommended adding Cuba to the Montebello meeting agenda and also suggested that Eisenhower send Diefenbaker a personal note on the dangers posed by the Castro regime, believing such a direct personal appeal would convey to Canada the urgency that the United States government attached to the issue. As per Gray’s advice, the President wrote Diefenbaker a personal letter two days after the July 7 meeting. Addressed on the first name basis from Ike to John, Eisenhower’s letter to Diefenbaker is one of the only three known pieces of direct Presidential-Prime Ministerial correspondence concerning Cuba policy, apart from the 1962 missile crisis (the others were a 1966 letter from Lyndon Johnson to Lester Pearson, and a 1979 letter from Jimmy Carter to Joe Clark). Eisenhower assumed that his Canadian counterpart perceived the Castro threat much as he did, and wrote that: “we [Canada and the US] are facing a serious situation in the Caribbean which is obviously inviting Soviet penetration of the Western Hemisphere in Cuba.”

To his chagrin, the President learned very soon afterwards that neither Diefenbaker nor the Canadian government shared his perspective. They were simply not sold by the American argument that “Castro was a pawn caught up in the international Communist conspiracy.”

10 These will be discussed in Chapter 8 and Chapter 10 respectively.
11 Robinson, 145. See also Letter from President Eisenhower to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, July 9, 1960 (Secret) in DCER, Vol. 27, Doc. 582, 1146.
Canadian government certainly disliked Castro’s pro-Soviet orientation, and held a sufficiently Cold War mindset to believe that the Soviet Union was exploiting the widening gulf between the United States and Cuba for its own ends. Yet at the same time, officials in Ottawa continued to attribute the root causes of the Castro regime’s policies to historical grievances, differences in outlook and quarrels over money and property, as opposed to a plan originating in Moscow to penetrate the hemisphere. They thought an excessively rigid Cold War outlook was distorting the United States’ perception of the situation, and like the British, they feared an American overreaction would further communist objectives. External Affairs’ American Division officials concluded that while certain segments in Cuba were disenchanted, Castro’s reforms remained popular with much of the population. The document’s authors were also wary regarding United States intervention, arguing “the Latin Americans are quite able among themselves to assess Castro at his true value, but they will not tolerate gross U.S. intervention against him.” Any successor regime would be touted as illegitimate.

On July 12-13 at Montebello, the US-Canada Ministerial Committee on Joint Defence met. While the main agenda concerned defence issues, the Americans raised the matter of Castro’s Cuba both at the plenary meeting and in a second, more focussed conversation. In the main meeting held the first day, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Livingston Merchant (in between his two postings as US Ambassador in Ottawa) repeated almost verbatim what Eisenhower had written Harold Macmillan days earlier – that the United States had been patient with Castro but the latter’s links with the Soviet Union could not be tolerated. Also briefing the Canadians on the anticipated OAS response, Merchant added that the Latin American member states would never publicly endorse US intervention, but many would “privately welcome the United States taking the initiative in this respect.” He hoped the United

13 In the early 1980s, Canada and the United States would share a parallel difference an assessment over Central America. See the Conclusion and Epilogue.
14 Memorandum by the American Division, July 7, 1960 (Secret) in DCER Vol. 27, Doc.580, 1143-1144.,Volume 27 is also available online at Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) website http://www.international.gc.ca/department/history-histoire/dcer/1960/menu-en.asp
States could count on Canadian "understanding and active support" in keeping Cuba’s complaint against it off the UN Security Council’s agenda.\(^\text{16}\)

In this conversation, Canada’s preoccupation was the adverse impact of sanctions, rather than containment. Serving as Merchant’s opposite number, Under Secretary Norman Robertson argued that the sugar quota elimination would backfire, pointing out:

Such action by the United States gave Castro a ready-made opportunity to blame the United States for Cuba's troubles and to identify Cuban nationalism with communism to our detriment.\(^\text{17}\)

In response, Merchant responded that the American dollars Castro gained from selling the Americans sugar enabled him to procure Soviet oil and weapons, and that Congress and American public opinion had demanded action. Along with differences in perception and priority, Canadian and American policies towards Cuba would be extensively driven by public opinion considerations, factors that pulled Ottawa and Washington in opposing directions.

The following day’s discussion on Cuba was more focussed, and brought to the surface additional differences. It was held at the Americans’ request and spearheaded by Treasury Secretary Robert Anderson and Defense Secretary Thomas Gates (Secretary of State Herter was attending to the concurrent Congo crisis but had appealed to Green to support the US position on Cuba).\(^\text{18}\) Anderson revealed that the United States was considering more comprehensive economic sanctions to “bring home to the Cuban people the disastrous damage which Castro’s policies were inflicting on them.”\(^\text{19}\) Under consideration was the blocking of all Cuban funds in the United States and the imposition of licence controls for all exports to Cuba – the latter designed to deny Cuba vital spare parts. The Treasury Secretary stressed that for the financial measures to be effective, the United States needed the cooperation of American allies, especially Canada. He expressed hope that Canada would block Cuban funds in Canadian banks, which were significant in volume, as well as adopt export control measures to halt the flow from

\(^{16}\) Record of Meeting between Canada-United States Committee on Joint Defence, Montebello, July 12, 1960 (Top Secret) in DCER, Vol. 27, Doc. 302, 577.

\(^{17}\) Ibid.

\(^{18}\) See Letter from Secretary of State (Herter) to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Green), July 12, 1960 (Secret – Official) in RG 84, Records of the US Embassy in Ottawa, Entry UDS 2195C, Box 62, Folder 320 “Cuba 1959-1961,” NARA

Turning to the broader strategic issues, Defense Secretary Gates also pushed hard for support, stressing that Canada was morally obligated to do so as a NATO member, adding:

the response of their [the Americans] friends would be a real test of the meaning and solidarity of the Alliance. For years the United States had been contributing on a massive scale to the collective security without asking anything for themselves. The American people would expect some reciprocity now. They recognized that Cuba was not in the NATO area and they would not expect co-operation on a formal NATO basis but they thought they could rely on the confidence and solidarity of their friends in the Alliance.21

The Canadians disagreed. They did not see Cuba as a NATO issue, and Howard Green was especially taken aback and highly perturbed by the Americans’ rigidity and forcefulness. Calling their comments “a grave and disturbing communication with very serious implications for Canada and for all the friends of the United States,” Green remained doubtful that economic sanctions would yield a good result, and was especially concerned that the United States had evidently already decided on such a course of action.22 Canada’s response to the American requests would have to be decided at the Cabinet level, and two such meetings that July dealt with Cuba – unmistakeable evidence of the issue’s sudden urgency in Canada-United States relations.23 Wanting desperately to avoid an unwanted dispute with Washington, the Diefenbaker Cabinet identified three principal objectives: protecting Canadian economic interests in Cuba, avoiding a major international crisis over the island, and mitigating any strain on Canadian-American relations resulting from their differing assessments of the threat. In the July 9 pre-Montebello Cabinet meeting, economic concerns were first and foremost. Green was supported for refusing to formally protest Havana’s expropriation of the Anglo-Dutch owned Shell Canada, but added that he would have been required to act if Cuba had intervened against Canadian banks and insurance companies. He also touched briefly on the “worrying” Khrushchev’s missile threat, and lamented Washington’s earlier lack of patience with the Cuban

22 Ibid. For more on Green and Norman Robertson’s response to the Americans regarding Cuba at the Joint Defence meeting see also J.L. Granatstein, A Man of Influence: Norman A. Robertson and Canadian Statecraft, 1929-1968 (Toronto: Deneau, 1981), 343-344.
23 Normally only urgent crises or key strategic foreign policy issues were addressed at the full Cabinet level. According to Cabinet meeting minutes at the Library and Archives Canada, Cuba received more Cabinet level attention in the second half of 1960 than at any other time in the Cold War except that of the 1962 missile crisis.
government. Such comments indicated that the External Affairs Minister laid part of the blame with the United States.\textsuperscript{24}

Meeting again with the Cabinet in between the Montebello meetings, Green again reaffirmed his sympathy for the original goals of the Cuban revolution, commenting:

The present situation was extremely serious for the Western Hemisphere and something had to be done. It was not true to say that this was a Communist coup in Cuba. It was a revolt of the poor and downtrodden which the Communists were skilfully exploiting.\textsuperscript{25}

Concerned that Canada might be dragged into an unwanted conflict in the Caribbean, particularly should Castro seize the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Green acknowledged that Cuba had become a sensitive issue south of the border, and that if Canada was to play mitigating role, it would require discretion.\textsuperscript{26} He would soon learn the United States would not entertain any such mediation. As Basil Robinson later recalled, regarding Cuba, Montebello marked “the formal start of a new and thorny issue which would rank with nuclear policy as a cause of friction between the two countries during the Diefenbaker years.” \textsuperscript{27}

The Americans returned to Washington equally dismayed by Canada, especially its hesitancy to accept and understand that Cuba was a springboard for the spread of communism across the hemisphere. Probably the only time Canadian-American differences over Cuba were discussed in the National Security Council (apart from a brief mention in early January 1961 that Ottawa was not breaking relations) was at its July 15, 1960 meeting. The minutes reveal a frustrated Anderson venting how at Montebello the Canadians had failed to appreciate US strategic concerns and instead seemed all too willing to take advantage of the situation. He told the Council:

The Canadians were unwilling to accept any view of Cuban developments except the view that it was simply an internal revolution. They felt the U.S. was preoccupied with communism. They stated they could not imperil the free right of their banking institutions and businesses to take up the slack that might be created by U.S. economic sanctions. Altogether it was a very disturbing conversation. The Canadians were completely unwilling to accept the idea that international communism was attempting to subvert other countries. They took the view that people should choose for themselves and that it was their business if they chose communism. When US

\begin{footnotes}
\item[26] Ibid.
\item[27] Basil Robinson, Diefenbaker's World, 146.
\end{footnotes}
representatives had talked with the Canadians about conversations on this subject in NATO, the Canadians said NATO was not involved.  

In a White House conference with President Eisenhower a few days later, Canada was depicted as “disinterested” in the East-West aspect of Cuba, a position that surprised the President, who replied that he saw no such disinterest on Cold War issues when he met with Diefenbaker in June - although Cuba had not been then discussed in that context. Two months after Montebello, Livingston Merchant told Arnold Heeney, Canada’s Ambassador in Washington, that the United States government found Ottawa’s response to the Cuban situation as “cold and critical.”

As the months progressed and Washington forged ahead with its diplomatic, economic and covert efforts to isolate and destabilize the Cuban government, Ottawa’s view on the US-Cuban impasse and the advisability of economic sanctions regime remained unchanged. In mid-September, Howard Green reiterated to his Ambassador in Washington that any American request for Canadian participation in an embargo against Cuba was “totally unacceptable” to Canada. The two neighbours thus began a delicate dance, with each maintaining its position, all the while seeking to influence the other without fomenting a serious bilateral rift. On each side of the 49th parallel, this required considerable patience and empathy.

In keeping with its postwar multilateral foreign policy tradition, the Canadian government sought to align itself with like-minded countries, in order not to find itself isolated in differing from the United States. Apart from NATO countries, especially Great Britain, with whom Ottawa regularly compared notes, Canada also for one brief period liaised with Mexico and Brazil. These influential Latin American republics both shared Canada’s trepidation over US rhetoric on Cuba and wanted to play a useful role in mitigating the growing hemispheric crisis. Key to these efforts was Mexican Foreign Minister Manuel Tello. Having experienced its own revolution a half century earlier, Mexico sympathized with many of the Cuban revolution’s

29 Memorandum of Meeting with the President of July 19, 1960,” July 26, 1960 (Top Secret) DDRS Doc CK3100209386
30 Memorandum of Discussion with Livingston Merchant, Under Secretary for Political Affairs, September 13, 1960 (Personal and Confidential), Arnold Heeney Papers, MG 30, E-144, Vol. 1, File 1-15, LAC
31 Memorandum of Discussion with Minister, September 20, 1960 (Personal and Confidential), Arnold Heeney Papers, MG 30, E-144, Vol. 1, File 1-15, LAC
initial goals, although not its burgeoning communist orientation. Still, Cuban President Oswaldo Dorticos had been well received on an official visit to Mexico in mid June, and Tello bluntly told the conservative US ambassador in Mexico City, Robert C. Hill, that Cuba was “a problem for the United States – not for Mexico.” Canadian ties with Mexico had grown following Diefenbaker and Green’s visit there in April, and as the Cuban issue blew up in July, Ottawa was keen exchange views with the Mexicans on how the emerging Cuban-United States impasse would affect the relations of each country with the United States, as well as hemispheric relations in general. In a July 11 conversation on Cuba between Assistant Under-Secretary Cadieux and Rafael de la Colina, Mexico’s ambassador in Ottawa, the Mexican diplomat stressed that his government wanted to remain impartial, but Washington’s sudden cancellation of Cuba sugar purchases aroused greater than expected sympathy in Mexico, with many recalling American interference in its own revolution. Likely in reference to this conversation, Green suggested to the Cabinet on July 12 that Canada and Mexico act as private mediators, with Ottawa speaking for the United States and Mexico on behalf of Cuba, in an attempt to reduce tensions and repair US-Cuban relations.

On the evening of July 15, Canada’s Ambassador in Mexico City, Arthur Irwin, alerted Ottawa about a secret Mexican-led initiative inviting Canada to join with it and Brazil in a mediation effort involving “the USA’s best friends in this hemisphere.” The following day, De la Colina brought Diefenbaker a formal letter from President Lopez Mateos requesting Canadian collaboration with his government and that of Brazil. Foreign Minister Tello told Ambassador Irwin that the effort would be an uphill one, with the Cuban government now being “60 per cent communist.” Still, he thought the effort was worth it in comparisons to the

32 For an overview of Mexican views on the Castro revolution, and the parallel developments between Mexican and Canadian approaches in handling Cuban issues with the United States, see Christopher M. White, Creating a Third World: Mexico, Cuba and the United States during the Castro Era (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007).
34 Memorandum from Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (Cadieux) to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (N.A. Robertson) “Conversation With the Mexican Ambassador Concerning the Cuban Situation,” July 11, 1960 (Confidential) in DCER, Vol. 27, Doc. 583, 1146-1148.
36 Ambassador in Mexico to Secretary of State for External Affairs Telegram 134, July 15, 1960 (Top Secret/Canadian Eyes Only/Emergency) in DCER, Vol. 27, Doc. 588, 1156-1157.
37 Letter from Dr Adolfo Lopez Mateos, President of Mexico to Prime Minister Diefenbaker (Personal and Confidential), July 16, 1960 in DCER, Vol. 27, Doc 589 (enclosure), 1158.
alternatives of either a fully communist Cuba or overt US military intervention. Basil Robinson noted that behind this scenario was Latin America’s “profound suspicion of the United States.” These leading regional players had no desire to see a second Guatemala or worse, a reversion to the days of the Platt Amendment. It seemed natural within Canada’s foreign policy tradition of multilateralism and of serving as a so-called “helpful fixer” to offer its “good offices” on the Cuba problem in cooperation with the other two governments. However, the issue was identified as a highly sensitive matter, so much so that Ottawa kept the initiative secret even from its British allies (the latter learned about it months later from the Mexicans).

Diefenbaker and Green, while supporting the proposal, recognized it was risky for Canadian-United States relations. Going behind the backs of Brazil and Mexico, Green briefed US Ambassador Richard Wigglesworth on July 24, relaying a message to Eisenhower that Canada’s only objective was to be helpful. At the same time, Canada intended to send the President an official letter offering the mediation, as did Mexico and Brazil, only if acceptable to the White House.

Eisenhower never responded directly to Diefenbaker on this idea, but was advised to reject this proposal, as the United States official position was that its dispute with Havana was not bilateral in nature, but rather concerned the security of the entire hemisphere. A stubborn Green, loath to forfeit a potential Pearsonian moment and resolve a thorny international problem, refused to give up on this so-called “good offices” proposal. Again circumventing Brazil and Mexico, the Canadians again solicited the Americans’ opinion on July 28, only again to be rebuffed. Alerting all hemispheric posts about the initiative, Herter took the position that such an initiative would undermine US efforts to isolate Cuba in the upcoming OAS meetings in

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38 Ambassador in Mexico to Secretary of State for External Affairs Telegram 134, July 15, 1960 (Top Secret/Canadian Eyes Only/Emergency) in DCER, Vol. 27, Doc. 588, 1156-1157.
39 Memorandum from Special Assistant to Secretary of State for External Affairs to Secretary of State for External Affairs “United States-Cuba Relations” July 16, 1960 (Confidential) in DCER, Vol. 27, Doc 589, 1158.
40 Letter from British Ambassador to Mexico to H.A. Hankey of American Department, December 1, 1960 (Confidential) in Foreign Office FO 371/148220, UK National Archives (UKNA) Adam Matthews Publications Foreign Office files relating to Cuba, Reel 8.
That same day, Herter told Green over the telephone that while the United States appreciated Canada’s sentiments, it wanted no such informal efforts. The Eisenhower administration feared that if it leaked, this proposal would undermine its public diplomatic campaign against Castro.\(^{44}\) Even the moderate Assistant Secretary Rubottom distrusted the motives of all three countries, viewing the Canadians as “unable to see the Cuban problem in its truly menacing light.”\(^{45}\) The available record reveals the whole initiative was a combination of ineffective intrigue and fence straddling, which in the end pleased no one. Given the passion with which the Eisenhower administration regarded Cuban developments, Canada would find little room for its own direction on this issue, even as it sympathized with the Brazilians and Mexicans. By this point, at least on the means of solving the Cuba problem, the differences between the United States on the one hand and Canada and leading Latin American, and also NATO states, could not have been sharper.

At the same time as the “good offices” talks were under way, External Affairs sent Yvon Beaulne, the incoming Director of the newly created Latin American Division, on a fact finding mission of the island.\(^{46}\) For several weeks, the Canadian diplomat met with Cuban officials, foreign diplomats (including US Ambassador Bonsal), Canadian and Cuban businessmen, missionaries and journalists. The British embassy in Havana reported that Canada’s purpose in sending the diplomat was to determine “if the United States was not wrong about Cuba.”\(^{47}\) In his report to Anderson, Beaulne criticized the Castro regime as moving towards totalitarianism and conveniently using tensions with Washington as a scapegoat for internal problems. At the same time, he recommended that Canada “remain aloof” regarding Cuban developments and “abstain from approval or disapproval.” Beaulne also believed it was in Canada’s interests to keep the door open for aid, trade and other related interactions with Cuba should it turn westward, as well

\(^{43}\) State Department Circular to all American posts in the American Republics, no 174, July 28, 1960 (Secret) in DDRS, Document CK3100063880.

\(^{44}\) Memorandum of Telephone Conversation between Secretary of State Herter in Washington and Secretary of State for External Affairs Minister Green in Ottawa July 28 1960 (no classification marking) in FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol. VI, Doc. 568, 1037-1039.

\(^{45}\) Ibid.

\(^{46}\) Announced in May following the Diefenbaker-Green Mexico trip, the Latin American Division led by Beaulne was up and running in August – evidence of Latin America’s increasing priority in Ottawa. See John Hilliker and Donald Barry, *Canada’s Department of External Affairs, Volume II: Coming of Age, 1946-1968* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill Queen’s University Press, 1995), 180.

as seek ways to reduce Cuba’s ability to serve as a Soviet client state (while making no concrete suggestions). Ambassador Anderson reported to Ottawa that he had no quarrel with these assessments. Beaulne’s observations, although not his recommendations, were not radically different from those of US Ambassador Bonsal, although the latter had been annoyed by the Canadian’s suggestions that he extolled Castro’s continuing popularity in Cuba and disagreed with his colleagues and superiors at the State Department. While the former example was likely a distortion, Beaulne’s observations that internal disagreements existed within the State Department on Cuba policy were by no means wide of the mark. Reinforcing Canada’s positions, Beaulne’s Cuba trip did little to generate good will between Ottawa and Washington on Cuba during that uneasy summer of 1960.

Cuba was not the only bone of contention between Canada and the United States that summer, although it certainly added fuel to other smouldering disagreements of a more important and strategic nature. In Knowlton Nash’s account of Diefenbaker’s relations with two US Presidents, “enough combustible material” existed between the two neighbours to cause serious bilateral acrimony. The personal relationship between Eisenhower and Diefenbaker by all accounts remained unspoiled during this period, although to keep this discord from casting a cloud over Canadian-American relations in Eisenhower’s final months in the White House, the two leaders largely sidestepped Cuba in their remaining communications, both written and verbal. Such contentious issues were left to Cabinet members and bureaucrats, an approach that did much to mute the impact of such sticking points. However at these working and ministerial levels, significant discord had developed concerning defence commitments and over perceived anti-Americanism in Canada. By and large, Canadians still supported participation in the Western alliance. Yet since the late 1950s, voices that questioned Canadian subservience to

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51 For a good new overview of the Eisenhower-Diefenbaker relationship and the Cuban issue see Dennis Molinaro, “Calculated Diplomacy: John Diefenbaker and the Origins of Canada’s Cuba Policy” Our Place in the Sun: Canada and Cuba in the Castro Era Robert Wright and Lana Wylie, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 44-74. For an explicit pro-Eisenhower reference see Memorandum of Discussion with the Prime Minister, August 30, 1960 (Personal and Confidential) in Arnold Heeney fonds, MG 30, E-144, Vol. 1, file 1-15, LAC.
United States foreign policy and were worried about American influence on Canada’s economy, culture and media had grown louder. More were leaning towards nationalistic and even pacifistic positions, the latter influenced by the growing fear of nuclear war. Representing such currents of opinion were the organizations such as the Voice of Women, the Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CUCND), the Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards (CCCRH), as well as the mainline protestant churches (particularly the country’s largest, the United Church of Canada), labour unions, and individuals or collectives representing students, scientists and other academics.

The main concerns in this coalition were disarmament and Canadian sovereignty. For the most part, its advocates leaned leftward to some degree, and many of the more active and vocal members were also Cooperative Commonwealth Federation/New Democratic Party members. By no means were all pro-communist, although their detractors on the right lumped them as such, or at minimum as naive idealists who were serving the Soviet Union’s interests. Among these groups however were activists on the far left, including members of the Communist Party of Canada and other Marxists such as the Trotskyites. As a whole, members of these groups directed the brunt of their criticism towards the United States, laying on it much of the blame for the Cold War. Many indeed sympathized with the objectives of the Cuban revolution, and heartily opposed any US efforts to thwart it. Through letters to the government and through the media, they called for a made-in-Canada approach to Castro.

American diplomats in Canada were disconcerted by these developments, complaining in despatches about the so-called “neutralist” orientation of many Canadians and the influence of “naive” pacificist groups, particularly women’s groups such as the Voice of Women and Congress of Canadian Women, the latter of which was definitely considered to be “communist dominated.” The United States’ Consul General in Montreal, Jerome T. Gaspard, was particularly concerned about criticisms of United States policy towards Cuba in the French


53 McMahon, 64, 142-143

language press, particularly Le Devoir, and lamented that only the conservative Jesuit Relations gave the American position a sympathetic portrayal. Gaspard reported that “Castro obviously has some strong supporters in Montreal, particularly among the non-English speaking population,” although he also noted that in that same city, former Batista General Jose Pedraza had also attracted a small gathering of Castro opponents.  

Once the Quiet Revolution got going in earnest, many of its proponents would be Castro admirers, especially in the intelligentsia. Within a year, organized pockets of pro-Castro sympathizers under the umbrella of Fair Play for Cuba, would establish active chapters in leading Canadian cities, urging the Canadian government not to follow in the United States’ footsteps.

Despite his own occasionally nationalistic rhetoric, in the summer of 1960 Diefenbaker was greatly concerned about rising anti-American sentiment in Canada, a trend he believed to be true based on letters he received in the Prime Minister’s Office, as well as from media reports. Believing that a poisoned Canadian-American relationship was inimical to Canada’s interests, Diefenbaker instructed Ambassador Heeney that “nothing be done in the remainder of the Eisenhower administration to exacerbate relations between Ottawa and Washington.”

Apart from a casual reference to Castro’s lengthy UN speech, Eisenhower and Diefenbaker did not mention Cuba when they met in New York for the United Nations General Assembly that September. It was however, certainly on both of their minds, as were the emerging bilateral differences on handling Cold War issues in general. However, a perplexed Eisenhower did address the matter of Canadian anti-Americanism with Diefenbaker, commenting “it is strange how sensitive people are over the issue of domination when in fact is there is no basis for such concern.” He added that “mutual faith” among allies was essential, and pointed out that “the spirit of nationalism occasionally gets out of bounds and that is one of our greatest troubles.”

The President was followed by Secretary of State Herter, who requested and received an hour long meeting with Howard Green on the same topic. The defensive External Affairs


56 More detailed discussion of these pro-Castro groups in Quebec and elsewhere see Chapters 4 and 8.

57 Memorandum of discussion with the Prime Minister, August 30, 1960 (Personal and Confidential) in Arnold Heeney Papers, MG 30, E-144, Vol. 1, File 1-15, LAC

58 Memorandum of Conversation with the President, September 30, 1960 (Secret) in DPRS Doc CK3100057928.

59 Memorandum of Conversation with the President, September 30, 1960 (Secret) in DPRS Doc CK3100057928
Minister attributed the origin of such sentiments to traditional Canadian angst about living next to a powerful neighbour, but he also conceded that Canadians were “not nearly so worried about the Russians” as were the Americans, but were more afraid of nuclear war. Such perceptual differences permeated the respective Cuba policies of both countries. Thus the emerging gulf over Cuba, both the nature of the threat and the best response, could not have come at a more delicate time. However, the record suggests that by the early fall, the two neighbours, in realizing they were not going to agree, both made efforts to prevent the Cuba file from inflicting serious additional damage to Canadian-United States relations. The initiative would mostly come from Canada and for the most part, the dialogue would happen at the working levels.

In the interim, during the late summer the United States anti-Castro campaign intensified. On the diplomatic front, Herter obtained support at the OAS Foreign Ministers meeting in San Jose for a new declaration against “extra-continental intervention” in the hemisphere, clearly targeted at Cuba. By that time, Castro had lost considerable good will among other Latin American states, both on account of his lean towards the Soviet Union and especially with his call to “convert the Andes mountains to the Sierra Maestra of America.” Such sentiments encouraged even left-leaning governments, such as Venezuela and Brazil, which had to this point, sympathized with the aims of the Cuban revolution, to vote against Havana. The US resolution passed 19-0, with Cuba walking out of the meeting. In the meantime, American intelligence monitored the steady flow of Soviet arms to Cuba, and reported that Cuban pilots were in Czechoslovakia, presumably for training on Soviet MIGs. The CIA ran a radio station on nearby Swan Island that continuously broadcast anti-Castro messages, and had also landed agents in Cuba, along with arms for small pockets of counter-revolutionary insurgents. Reports from both the US and Canadian missions in Havana now regularly reported on the presence of these groups, with one Canadian embassy despatch mentioning landings on the Oriente coast – in a probable act of self-censorship, nothing in it

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60 Memorandum of Conversation between the Secretary of State and the Minister, September 23, 1960. (Personal and Confidential) in DCER Vol. 27, Doc 230, 457-459. For the American record of this conversation see “Memorandum of Conversation, September 30, 1960 (Confidential), White House Office of Staff Secretary (OSS) International Series. Folder: Canada (4) [Sept. 1960-Jan 1961] Box 2, Dwight D Eisenhower Library (DDEL)
62 Canadian Embassy Havana Numbered Letter L-500, August 2, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 7, LAC
suggested any United States involvement.⁶⁴ Following the capture and execution of several American mercenaries in October, the CIA and White House changed strategies and began to build and train a larger force of Cuban expatriates in Central America for what was intended to be a reverse of the *Granma* landing. Ballooning in scope, size and noise level, the United States lost its ability to plausibly deny such efforts. Thus Eisenhower bequeathed to his successor John F. Kennedy what became the disastrous Bay of Pigs affair six months later.⁶⁵

The third strand in the Eisenhower administration’s efforts, and the one that would have the longest term impact on Cuba, and on Canada, was economic sanctions. Defense Secretary Gates wrote Herter late in July that the United States had already crossed “the Rubicon” by its actions regarding oil and sugar, and that comprehensive economic sanctions against Cuba were urgently needed to discourage other Third World nations from turning towards Moscow as a protector.⁶⁶ Washington’s efforts were further fuelled by Castro’s August 6 announcement that property owned by American citizens would be nationalized – an act of retaliation for the US sugar embargo that immediately affected 26 companies in the sugar, oil and electricity industries.⁶⁷ Herter agreed with Gates, but admitted that obtaining support from other Latin American states and especially NATO allies would be difficult.⁶⁸ In addition, the White House anticipated additional fallout from Castro, including a possible break in diplomatic relations or even a forcible reclaiming of the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay. Eisenhower told his national security team that the latter would constitute a *causus belli* for a US invasion of the island.⁶⁹

Prior to imposing the sanctions, Eisenhower and Herter shuffled out the State Department’s most senior moderates on Cuba, Roy Rubottom and William Wieland at Inter

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⁶⁴ Canadian Embassy Havana Despatch D-745, October 12, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2 pt. 7, LAC
Also summarized and presented to President Eisenhower in “Synopsis of State and Intelligence Material,” October 18, 1960 (Top Secret) DDRS CK3100213566. For the program revision see Peter Wyden, *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story*, 68-72. And also Richard J. Bissell, with Jonathan Lewis and Frances Pudlo, *Reflections of a Cold Warrior: From Yalta to the Bay of Pigs*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1996), 154-156.
⁶⁷ Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to External Affairs no 73, August 8, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 5, LAC
American Affairs. With growing pressure from conservative Republicans in Congress, especially the Senate Internal Security Committee, which complained that these men were too soft on Castro, the senior Latin American position in the State Department was given to Thomas C. Mann, a hawkish conservative Texan and a strong proponent of sanctions. Ambassador Bonsal survived this purge, but given his skepticism concerning sanctions, he realized his days in Havana were clearly numbered. In one of his last letters to the soon departing Rubottom, he reflected closely the Canadian viewpoint when he wrote:

A new government here which was generally believed to owe its existence to the destruction of the Castro Government through United States economic sanctions would be a weak one at home and in the hemisphere. Castro and his followers would be the latest martyrs to American imperialism, instead of, as I would hope, a horrible example of what happens when the Communist International takes over a legitimate revolutionary movement in the Americas.

For the second time that year, Bonsal was recalled back to Washington in mid-October, this time not to return to Cuba. His valiant and long-suffering efforts to foster a *modus vivendi* with the Castro regime had sadly failed.

The only remaining question in Washington now concerned the scope and authority of the sanctions to be imposed, an outcome that would certainly affect allies such as Canada that were not intending similar measures. The more moderate course of action, under the Department of Commerce managed *Export Control Act*, required export licences for all goods destined for Cuba, but would not affect foreign subsidiaries of American firms. Under the more draconian Treasury Department alternative, the *Trading with the Enemy Act*, all Americans would be barred from conducting any commercial and financial transactions with Cuba. In addition, all of Cuba’s financial assets in the United States would be frozen, and most controversially of all, this statute’s jurisdiction would extend to foreign subsidiaries of US firms – an already sore spot with the Diefenbaker government over the shipping of Canadian grain to mainland China.

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Other allies, including the British, also resented the notion of extraterritoriality, and had no intention of halting their regular trade with Cuba.

Since July, the Canadians had anticipated the coming embargo with considerable trepidation, and as the two countries staked their positions early that autumn, significant dialogue took place. Following Green’s instructions, on October 4, Maurice Schwarzmann, then the Minister Counsellor at the Canadian embassy in Washington, approached the State Department requesting that Canada be notified in advance on any impending American action.74 Foy Kohler of the British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs section, which then handled Canadian affairs, cautioned Secretary Herter that “any act on our part which could be interpreted as interference with Canadian sovereignty would have serious repercussions upon United States-Canadian relations, in view of the current attitude of Prime Minister Diefenbaker and his Cabinet.”75 American embassy officials in Ottawa saw the timing as unfortunate, noting how “Canadians are particularly sensitive to US influence on their economy.”76 Kohler and other officials charged with handling Canadian affairs tended to be sympathetic to Ottawa’s concerns and the impact of specific US actions on relations across the 49th parallel. The same understanding could not be said for their counterparts at Inter-American Affairs, especially Mann, for whom get-tough measures against Cuba trumped concerns over the reaction in Canada and other allies. Ambassador Heeney challenged Mann’s new Deputy, Hector Mallory, about the wisdom of sanctions, arguing that such a course would only solidify Cuba’s turn to the Soviet bloc; Mallory responded that Washington would not ask Ottawa to impose its own sanctions.77 Mann bluntly told Canadian embassy officials on October 18 that the United States government and the American people alike now both identified Cuba as “the No. 1 foreign policy problem,” one that aroused more passion than any other, and thus requiring action.78

74 Memorandum of Conversation between R. Schwarzmann, Minister Counsellor, Canadian Embassy and Milton C. Rewinkel, Deputy Director of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, October 4, 1960 (Official Use Only) in RG 59, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Entry 5297, Box 5, File 16.5 “Cuba 1960-1961”, NARA
75 Memorandum from Roy Fohler to Acting Secretary October 5, 1960 (Confidential), in RG 59, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Entry 5297, Box 5, File 16.5 “Cuba 1960-1961,” NARA
78 Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 2627, October 18, 1960 (Secret) in DCER, Vol. 27, Doc. 628, 1205-1207.
Mann’s statement may also have been fuelled by Cuba’s rise to prominence that month in the hotly contested presidential election campaign between Vice President Nixon and Senator John F. Kennedy, particularly during the television debates. Cuba was at the center of the United States government and public concerns alike, and thus Washington had no intention of allowing Canada or any ally to delay the measures against Havana.

On October 19, Eisenhower finally imposed the long anticipated next phase of the embargo. All United States trade with Cuba was now banned except foodstuffs and medicine. At a Cabinet meeting the next day, Green recounted Canada’s unsuccessful efforts to dissuade the Americans from proceeding with the sanctions. A submission document correctly anticipated that Cuba would turn to Canada for goods denied by the United States, and also that subsidiary firms in Canada would likely feel most strongly the impact of Washington’s measures. Diefenbaker repeated to his Cabinet what he had already publicly declared: that there would be no Canadian embargo. Apart from this decision, the Prime Minister added that Canada would not serve as an embargo breaker and would seek to cooperate with the Americans wherever possible. Recommending that the United States government be informed of these export control revisions, the Cabinet submission noted:

Canada will continue to implement the long standing arrangement under which goods of U.S. origin, excepting only those goods which have lost their U.S. identity through processing or manufacture in Canada and goods which may be included in Canadian general export permits, will not be permitted re-export from Canada if such goods would be denied export licences for direct export from the U.S.

Diefenbaker’s decision to continue trade with Cuba was strongly supported by the domestic press. Ever so sensitive to public opinion, the Prime Minister was relieved to learn that the majority of editorials in leading Canadian dailies advocated resistance to American pressure; only a minority cautioned that Canada’s independence of action might generate ill-will with the United States, especially if Canada was seen to be actively seeking to profit in Cuba at the

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79 Cabinet Conclusions, October 20, 1960 (Secret) in DCER, Vol. 27, Doc 632, 1212; Also in RG 2, Series A-5-a., Vol. 2744, LAC. Online at http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/conclusions/index-e.html
80 Special Assistant to Secretary of State for External Affairs to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, October 20, 1960 (Secret) in DCER, Vol. 27, Doc. 629, 1208.
Americans’ expense.\textsuperscript{82} For the most part, Canada’s media and public alike not only opposed the embargo, but urged their government not to bend to Washington’s will. While this was a national consensus, such thinking was especially prevalent in Quebec, a point observed by US Consul General Gaspard, who described the French Canadian intelligentsia as especially wary of the extent of American influence.\textsuperscript{83}

With the US trade embargo now in place, the two neighbours were openly and publicly at variance regarding a hot-button Cold war issue. Nowhere would this difference play out more clearly than in the realm of economic relations. While agreeing that the communization of Cuba was an unwelcome development and destabilizing factor in the already volatile Caribbean basin, the record is clear that for the Canadian government, its greatest preoccupation concerning Cuba at this time was over economic issues. Commercial relations with Cuba were the common factor not only in Ottawa’s determination to continue normal relations, but also in Havana’s favourable treatment of Canadian firms, and in the adverse publicity Canada received in the United States’ media and Congress. Throughout the fall of 1960, the Diefenbaker government was on the defensive, facing a flurry of accusations by Americans that Canada was a disloyal ally and profiteering from Cuban communism. Commencing in earnest that October, relations with Cuba had now become for Ottawa a difficult balancing act between advocacy for its business and commercial interests, defence of its freedom of action, and limiting fallout with the United States.

In deciding to continue normal trade with Cuba, it seemed natural that Canada would benefit economically by stepping into the gap left by Washington’s boycott. Significant myths emerged at that time that Canada had much to gain from the American pullout. Despite these perceptions, the reality was quite different. Contrary to some propaganda initiated in Havana, Canada’s ongoing trade and business relationship with Cuba certainly did not mean endorsement of the revolutionary government’s ideology or behaviour. Reports from the Havana embassy from late 1960 reveal the considerable disdain that Canadian diplomats and business officials alike had over the Castro regime’s political and economic direction. In addition, the widespread belief disseminated across the United States that Canadian firms waited vulture-like

\textsuperscript{82} Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (N.A. Robertson) to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Green) “Survey of Canadian Press Editorials on Canada’s Position Concerning United States Economic Sanctions Against Cuba,” October 27, 1960 (Unclassified) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-60, pt. 6, LAC
\textsuperscript{83} See US Consulate Montreal Despatch, no 54, October 21, 1960 (Official Use Only) in RG 59, State Decimal file 437.4212/10-2160, Box 963, NARA
to exploit the vacuum created by the US embargo was a highly irritating and inaccurate overgeneralization. Canadian businesses were spared immediate intervention by Havana by simply not being American, but in reality Canadian firms and entrepreneurs experienced only slightly fewer difficulties than did their American counterparts in dealing with what was by then a communist government. Ottawa’s interests did not in fact always align with leading businesses such as banks and insurance companies, and the government at times wanted the latter to remain active in Cuba for political reasons, well after the firms’ executives had concluded that doing so was no longer profitable. A Trade and Commerce assessment from August reported that even as the profitability for Canadian banks and insurance companies in Cuba was declining, Yet their longevity and dependability had generated considerable good will for Canada, thus making them valued political assets that would give Ottawa some continued clout with the regime.84 For these firms, economic arguments would prevail, driving the banks to close their Cuban operations and ensnaring the insurance companies in litigations that would last over a decade.

Canada’s economic ties to Cuba could be categorized in two groups: exporters and firms having investment capital and a physical presence on the island. While trade remained central to the Canadian economy, in Cuba the dollar values tied to the latter category were larger, making them particular objects of Ottawa’s focus. In 1960, Canada’s trade with Cuba was small, and while then balanced, it would soon shift sharply in Canada’s favour. Canadian exports to Cuba were valued that year at $13 million, roughly 7 per cent of the country’s exports to Latin America as a whole, and 0.25 per cent of all its global exports – a slight decline from Batista’s last year.85 The Department of Trade and Commerce’s uncertainty regarding the future was reflected in a report from early July, when R.R. Parlour, Canada’s Commercial Counsellor in Havana, described Cuba as “plunging headlong into the Russian economic camp,” thereby putting the mainstay of Canada’s exports “in jeopardy.” Parlour singled out wheat, flour, newsprint, codfish and consumer goods as particularly vulnerable, as they had sufficient Soviet bloc replacements. In contrast, he observed no let up in Cuba’s purchases of less staple oriented goods, such as chemicals, industrial raw materials and even skim milk powder, even though these were all exported in smaller quantities. As the Cuban government was still making short-

84 Memorandum from Commercial Counsellor, Havana to Chief of the Latin American Division of the International Relations Branch “Canadian Investment in Cuba,” August 8, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 5, LAC
85 See Table A1 in James Rochlin, Discovering the Americas: The Evolution of Canadian Foreign Policy Towards Latin America, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994), 238.
term quick cash purchases of western goods, the Commercial Counsellor recommended that a Canadian trade officer be sent to the Havana embassy to respond to a short term increase in demand for Canadian goods should Washington impose an embargo, or should there be a “sudden change in government,” which might shift trade patterns. 

In the late summer, the Cuban government publicly identified Canada as an alternative supply source to the United States for goods, especially spare parts. Such hints from Havana, coupled with proposals made by a few maverick Canadian businessmen on visits to the island, contributed substantially to the image forming in the United States that its northern neighbour was undermining its efforts to squeeze Havana and was acting as an interloper, swooping in after its long term economic interests. These ventures in the end amounted to little, with Canadian exports to Cuba falling drastically for the next three years, not recovering until 1964. Selling goods to the rapidly communizing Cuba was very challenging for many Canadian exporters, especially as they now faced a single importer – the Bank for Foreign Commerce in Cuba (BANCEC). In addition, Cuba’s foreign currency reserves had declined substantially after the end of US sugar purchases. Estimates reported that as of October 31, such reserves were less than half their June 30 level, a trend Havana had tried to offset by an inflationary increase in the production of pesos, which reduced the country’s purchasing power. 

By the autumn of 1960, Cuba had become a very uncertain market indeed. Cuba’s currency depletion became sufficiently acute that serious doubts arose, both privately and in the press, over whether or not it could pay for goods and services ordered from Canadian businesses. This was especially problematic for two of Canada’s largest exports to Cuba: codfish and newsprint. Regarding the former, the cash strapped Havana approached Ottawa about a barter scheme of cod for sugar. Comprising some 20 per cent of all Canadian exports to the island, and with the cod industry vital to Atlantic Canada’s economy, Ottawa had to reject such an arrangement on principle. Canada’s cod trade with the island did continue but

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86 All quoted in Memorandum from Commercial Counsellor, Havana to Chief, Latin American Division, “Cuba’s Relations with the Soviet Bloc,” July 5, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 6, LAC
88 See Toronto Star, October 26, 1960 found in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 6, LAC
was reduced, with BANCEC having to licence private importers. The Canadian International Paper Company, which sold the Cubans considerable quantities of newsprint to Cuba, also ran into trouble in mid-October, when Havana repealed a decree that had set aside one million Cuban pesos for outstanding payments for filled orders. Unable to collect the $1.2 million the Cubans owed it, Company Vice President R.W. Beckett stopped future sales to Cuba and asked Assistant Under Secretary Ritchie to intervene on its behalf when a Cuban Trade Delegation visited Canada in December. Resolution would take several years, with Ottawa eventually negotiating quarterly lump sum payments with the Banco Nacional. The whole debt issue was not settled until the 1970s.

The most important Canadian economic presence in Cuba remained its banks. As of early 1960, the Royal Bank was not only the largest foreign bank in Cuba (with the Bank of Nova Scotia a significant but still distant fourth), but with its 24 branches scattered around the island, Cuba was the Royal’s single largest foreign operation. It had nearly as many branches in Cuba as in all of South America (27) and the British West Indies (26). As of the early summer, Ottawa did not know exactly how large their assets in Cuba were, as the banks zealously guarded their figures. According to an assessment provided to External Affairs in late August by Montreal brokerage house J. Hodgson and Company, as of June 1960, the bank’s world-wide assets totalled some $4.1 billion, with the Cuban portion estimated at roughly five per cent of the total. Proportionately, this figure was a third lower than it had been following the post World War I sugar boom, but was still significant.

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90 See also Canadian Embassy Havana Numbered Letter L-895, November 22, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 7, LAC.
91 Memorandum from Commercial Counsellor, Havana (Parlour) to Chief Latin American Division, International Trade Relations Branch, “Decree re: Debts of Periodicals,” October 25, 1960 (no classification marking) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 7, LAC and also Memorandum from Legal Division to File, “Cuba – Interests of the Canadian International Paper Company,” December 13, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 8, LAC.
92 For a summary see Memorandum from Economic Division (D.H.W. Kirkwood) to Mr. Langley, “Canadian Commercial Debts – Canada,” June 26, 1968 (Confidential), in RG 25, Vol. 15469, File 81-8-CUBA-1, pt. 1, LAC.
93 On concerns about possible nationalization see Memorandum from Commercial Counsellor, Havana to Chief, Latin American Division, “Cuba’s Relations with the Soviet Bloc,” July 5, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 6, LAC. For the Royal Bank’s secrecy regarding its figures see J. Hodgson and Company Memorandum to the Department of External Affairs, “Influence of the Political Situation in Cuba on the Earnings of the Royal Bank of Canada” August 31, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25 Vol. 5011, File 288-40 pt. 5, LAC.
95 Duncan McDowell, Quick to the Frontier: Canada’s Royal Bank (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993), 237 and 315.
The Hodgson memo also reaffirmed that Canadian banks had become the financial institutions of choice as the American-Cuban relationship grew more precarious and as American banks became increasingly vulnerable to Cuban government takeover - by then a foregone conclusion.\(^9^6\) Ambassador Anderson reported that Canadian banks were still useful to the Cuban government for financial transactions, but added: “if Che Guevara can find some way of operating without their services, they could be quickly nationalized.”\(^9^7\) The view in Ottawa was that given the size, dollar amounts and political capital gained for Canada by these leading financial institutions, “it would be extremely difficult for the Canadian government to dissociate itself entirely from actions of such an interest.”\(^9^8\)

Canadian banks in fact were spared takeover by the Cuban state, at least temporarily. When the Castro government announced its omnibus nationalization of banking in Law 891, its Article 16 specifically exempted by name the Royal Bank and the Bank of Nova Scotia.\(^9^9\) Robert Sayre, the Financial Officer at the US embassy, interpreted Article 16 as a symbolic gesture of friendship with Canada, adding that as both institutions had lost almost all their private customers in Cuba, in essence they were being subsidized by the Cuban government.\(^1^0^0\) The Cubans certainly liked to portray its action as friendly to fellow communist governments such as the Chinese, telling the latter that Cuban treatment of Canadian banks was the reason Ottawa did not impose an embargo –somewhat of a misreading of Canada’s opposition in principle to economic warfare.\(^1^0^1\) Havana’s real motivation in sparing the two Canadian chartered banks was probably to ensure it had a place to park its dollar accounts as it moved

\(^{97}\) Canadian Embassy Havana Numbered Letter L-664, September 20, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 7, LAC
away from the United States. Merely days before Law 891, the Banco Nacional had ordered that all dollar accounts in private banks be moved from American owned institutions to the Royal Bank, the Bank of Nova Scotia and the British-owned Westminster Bank.\(^{102}\)

Despite these favourable gestures, for the Royal Bank and the Bank of Nova Scotia alike, the sun was in fact finally setting on their long sojourn in Cuba. More forthcoming with figures as its financial situation in Cuba declined, the Royal Bank’s General Manager A.F. Mayne disclosed to A.E. Ritchie in mid-October that its deposit liabilities in Cuba totalled $150 million in local pesos, a 25 per cent increase from the previous year, while at the same time its outstanding loans had declined from $90 million to $40 million, of which only half were guaranteed by sugar shipments.\(^{103}\) At year end, Mayne told shareholders its total assets in Cuba at the close of 1960 were some $139 million; after subtracting liabilities its net investment was $8.8 million.\(^{104}\) The Bank of Nova Scotia’s assets were smaller. One of its officials disclosed to US Financial Officer Sayre that its Cuban assets were roughly $40 million, with a net investment of about $3 million.\(^{105}\) As the Castro government forged ahead in creating a socialist economy, the profit margins for Canadian banks shrank quickly, as private borrowers and businesses on the island disappeared. Ambassador Anderson learned from two local Royal Bank managers that the firm was losing $200,000 per month in Cuba since the summer, a decline it expected to worsen. Both financial institutions were having great difficulty collecting Cuban loans, and losses could not be compensated for through wage or staff reductions, actions that were now illegal in Cuba.\(^{106}\)

In a highly secret Ottawa meeting on Cuba held November 10 with External Affairs Minister Green, Under Secretary Robertson and his Deputy, A.E. Ritchie, and Finance Minister Donald Fleming all present, Mayne of the Royal Bank and Bank of Nova Scotia President W.


\(^{106}\) Canadian Embassy Havana Numbered Letter L-930, December 9, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 8, LAC
Nicks both shared their pessimism about the country’s political and economic future. Conceding that Castro had not threatened to intervene against them, both executives concluded that to meet shareholder obligations, they had to cut their losses and seek the best possible buyout of their Cuban operations by the Banco Nacional, while leaving liaison offices on the island to provide properly secured letters of credit for Cubans to import goods.\(^{107}\) Howard Green, worried that such a pullout might discredit Canada’s commercial policy, tried unsuccessfully to persuade them to stay in Cuba for political advantage.\(^{108}\) The Royal Bank announced its settlement with the Banco Nacional de Cuba for an amicable takeover on December 8, with the Bank of Nova Scotia following suit ten days later.\(^{109}\) As Cuban President Oswaldo Dorticos would tell Chairman Mao Zedong while visiting China the following year, Cuba had differentiated between “imperialist countries;” on the one hand, it had confiscated American banks without recompense, but had also negotiated with the Canadian banks and paid for their losses – an action that earned Mao’s praise.\(^{110}\)

The other significant Canadian players in the Cuban economy, the five leading life insurance companies, were also feeling the impact of the revolution. As early as April, their executives raised concerns with Ritchie over a Cuban government proposal requiring them to reinvest dollar for dollar all of their insurance sales in that country. Collectively having $59 million in Cuban liabilities, $44 million of which had already been reinvested on the island, the firms were loath to place the remaining $15 million in such an unfavourable climate.\(^{111}\) As Havana decreed its wave of nationalizations in October, the companies’ representatives approached External Affairs again through the Superintendent of Insurance. While not asking


\(^{108}\) See Memorandum from Chief of Latin American Division to Director, international Trade Relations Branch, “Withdrawal from Cuba by the Royal Bank,” December 8, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 8, LAC

\(^{109}\) Memorandum from the Under Secretary for External Affairs (N. A. Robertson) to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, December 16, 1960 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 8, LAC. The public announcement dated December 19 is in the same file.


\(^{111}\) See Memorandum from Economic Division (Dorothy Burwash) to File, “New Cuban Law on Insurance,” April 6, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 4.2, LAC
for Ottawa’s direct intervention, they did ask Department officials not to overlook the interests of Canadian life insurance companies in Cuba.\textsuperscript{112}

While not specifically exempted from nationalization like the Canadian banks, the life insurance companies were allowed to continue operating in Cuba. However, their position became more difficult for two reasons. Cuban’s Urban Law 890, which nullified mortgages as a step towards the elimination of private property, greatly threatened the investments of firms linked to Cuban mortgages, with Confederation Life requesting help to salvage the one third of its Cuban investments it now faced losing.\textsuperscript{113} Sun Life was in better shape as it had avoided mortgages, but was concerned that staying in Cuba might cost it valued American clients. After a recent visit to the United States, Sun Life Cuba veteran and Progressive Conservative Party activist H.A. Chisholm warned Trade and Commerce Minister George Hees that “the Americans are most touchy about the Cuban situation.” Hees was advised to weigh carefully the relative importance of millions of dollars in new Cuban sales versus billions in potential losses should American clients cancel their policies \textit{en masse}.\textsuperscript{114}

As with the banks, External Affairs officials believed a sudden exit would not only bring losses to the companies, but would hurt Canada politically.\textsuperscript{115} The companies’ stayed on, but nonetheless incurred significant losses. Several firms became entangled in US lawsuits, especially from Cuban expatriates, for insisting on compliance with Cuban law and contract terms, stipulating that any payouts had to be made in Cuban pesos (now inconvertible in the United States) and for some companies, such actions could only take place in Havana.\textsuperscript{116} Canadian insurance companies would be entangled in such US litigation for over a decade.\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{112} Letter from Assistant Superintendent of Insurance (Richard Humphrey) to Assistant Under Secretary for External Affairs (A.E. Ritchie) “Re: Canadian Life Insurance Companies in Cuba,” October 17, 1960 (no classification marking) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 6, LAC
\textsuperscript{113} Letter from President of Confederation Life (Macdonald) to Minister of Trade and Commerce (Hees), January 6, 1961 (personal and Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5012, File 288-40, pt. 9, LAC
\textsuperscript{114} Letter from H.A. Chisholm to Minister of Trade and Commerce (Hees), December 10, 1960 in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 8, LAC
\textsuperscript{115} Memorandum from Assistant Under Secretary for External Affairs (A.E. Ritchie) to the Minister (Green) “Canadian Insurance Companies in Cuba,” January 21, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5012, File 288-40, pt. 9, LAC
\textsuperscript{117} See Letter from President of Confederation Life (J. Craig Davidson) to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mitchell Sharp), March 3, 1972 in RG 25, Vol.13831, File 36-15-4-1-CUBA-USA, pt. 2, LAC and also Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (A.E. Ritchie) to the Minister (Sharp), “Request from
Washington monitored closely developments concerning Canadian banks in the latter part of 1960, both for their influence on Ottawa’s Cuba policies as well as their role in the disposition of Cuba’s gold and dollar assets. Such developments would affect Canadian-United States relations if Washington decided to freeze Cuban assets under the Trading with the Enemy Act, then actively under consideration. Discussing such a freeze at the July 7 National Security Council meeting, President Eisenhower recommended that “we should consult with the Canadians in advance of any US actions that we had under consideration and ask for cooperation if action should prove necessary.” Treasury Secretary Anderson thought it “inconceivable” that Ottawa would not do so, and the meeting concluded with a call “to obtain the cooperation of US allies, especially Canada and NATO to make economic measures against Cuba effective.” Washington held off on imposing such Trading with the Enemy Act measures for several years.

In early July, Anderson reported that the Economic Counsellor at the US Embassy in Havana had approached him about rumours that Havana had moved $100 million worth of gold bars, as well as its bank accounts, from American to Canadian financial institutions. The Canadian ambassador’s response is unknown, and the details surrounding the outflow of gold and dollars from Cuba, and the role of Canadian banks in such transactions, are murky and nearly impossible to determine conclusively without access to the banks’ archives. The evidence does suggest that the whisperings were not without foundation. By the early autumn, informants confirmed to the US embassy that Havana had ordered the movement of dollar holdings to non-American owned banks. A Trade and Commerce report from mid-October indicated that for some weeks, the two Canadian banks were handling all foreign financial

Confederation Life Insurance for Canadian Government Intervention in a Pending Case before the Supreme Court of the United States,” March 30, 1972 (Confidential) in the same file. On compensation see Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (N.A. Robertson) to the Minister (Martin) “Canadian Life Insurance Companies in Cuba,” June 5, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5077, File 4568-40, pt. 12, LAC


Canadian Embassy Havana Numbered Letter L-427, July 4, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 6, LAC

This author attempted unsuccessfully to gain access to the corporate archives of both the Royal Bank of Canada and the Bank of Nova Scotia. Access to such records are closed to outside researchers, citing stringent rules regarding the privacy and confidentiality of account holders.

transactions in Cuba. Without disclosing the actual figure, an official Bank of Nova Scotia history acknowledged years later that at the time, the Cuban government had placed with the bank “substantial foreign currency balances.” In early September, Ambassador Bonsal provided Under Secretary Douglas Dillon with Cuban National Bank balance statement data listing the country’s combined holdings of gold and convertible exchange as at the end of July as $191 million. The US ambassador acknowledged his difficulty obtaining the real figures, as well as confirming reports that Havana had ordered the sale of all its unpledged gold holdings. By early October, Bonsal suspected that Cuba had little gold remaining. IMF figures the embassy obtained hinted that Cuba’s gold reserves at an unspecified point in July were a much lower $19 million.

Confirmation came during a year-end British-American exchange of information on the Cuban financial picture. The Americans learned that Cuba’s gold reserves were down to $3 million by September, with all of it gone by mid December – presumably to finance procured Soviet bloc goods. American officials in December again raised with Canadian officials their country’s link to Cuba’s gold and dollar exodus. On December 6, Livingston Merchant spoke informally to Canadian embassy Minister Saul Rae about an impending transfer of Cuban funds through Canadian banks to a British counterpart, with the ultimate destination being a Soviet institution. Rae indicated he did not know about this transaction, and Merchant recorded that he reacted with surprise, disgust and embarrassment.

Evidently the Americans’ information was

122 Memorandum from Commercial Counsellor, Havana to Chief of the Latin American Division of the International Relations Branch “Cuba – Nationalization,” October 14, 1960, in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 7, LAC
125 Telegram from US Embassy Havana to Secretary of State no. 1636, October 7, 1960 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 837.10/10-760,NARA On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal Affairs 1960-1963, Reel 31
127 Memorandum from Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Livingston Merchant to Special Assistant to the Secretary of State (Max Krebs), “Copy of Letter to Bill Martin from Rafael Pico regarding alleged impending Transfer of Cuban Funds from two Canadian Banks to the Soviet State Bank via an Unnamed English Bank in London,” December 7, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 837.10/12-760, NARA on UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal Affairs 1960-1963, Reel 31
accurate, and despite diplomacy and efforts by Canadian bankers to delay the transfer, the Cubans went ahead. The British revealed to the Americans that about $50 million had been transferred across the Atlantic to the Westminster Bank, and it was gone by the end of the month, possibly to an unnamed London based bank that acted for Soviet interests. These details closely match what the Bank of England’s John Stephens told Treasury Secretary Anderson that month – that Cuba had moved some $60 million of currency from Canada to the United Kingdom, where it was held in sterling on behalf of the Moscow Norodny Bank.

Such intrigue regarding Canadian-Cuban commercial relations generated sufficient mistrust in Washington to trigger an intelligence gathering effort aimed at Canada’s business dealings with the Castro regime. Regarding finances, the Americans used an informant within the auditing firm handling the Cuban Central Bank, from which the US embassy received Havana’s balance statements. The source revealed, among other details, how the Bank of Nova Scotia had been “very helpful” to Cuba” by facilitating transactions enabling its National Bank to recover a portion of the $13.6 million in US securities formerly held at the Chase Manhattan Bank, before the United States could freeze such assets. On the flow of goods, the Eisenhower administration also turned to confidential sources in both Cuba and Canada on the Canadian business community’s activities regarding the former. The US Ottawa embassy was instructed to involve the consulates in obtaining data from across the country data on Cuba-related commercial activity. Fearing Canadian reproach for such interference, Willis Armstrong, then serving as interim Chargé d’Affaires for the recently deceased Richard Wigglesworth, wrote to his colleague Frederick Rope at the Montreal consulate:

The intelligence community in Washington is very interested in obtaining information on trade between Canada and Cuba. The Director of Naval intelligence has requested the Naval attaché


130 See US Embassy Havana Despatch no. 917, October 23, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 837.10/10-2360, NARA On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal Affairs 1960-1963, Reel 31

131 See Despatch from US Embassy Havana to Department of State, no. 949, October 26, 1960 (Confidential) and attached report, File 437.4241/10-2660, and also Telegram from Secretary of State Herter to US Embassy Ottawa no. 259, November 4, 1960 (Confidential), File 437.4241/11-460, both in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, NARA
to obtain information on ship and cargo movements. The Department of State and other agencies are interested in air shipments. In general the United States needs to be informed as much as possible on commercial transactions which take place between Canada and Cuba.  

Armstrong added that the United States was receiving assistance in this regard from the Royal Canadian Navy, as well as the RCMP – both of which shared the United States’ concerns about communist influences. Armstrong advised Consulate staff to discreetly court newspaper and business sources to learn about any attempts to ship US made goods to Cuba.  

Such calls were heeded, and reports revealed that American diplomats in Canada did develop such confidential contacts in the all-important banking and financial sectors. Individual Canadian businesspeople also occasionally shared with the Americans their perspectives on conditions in Cuba. Before its acquisition by the Cuban state, the Royal Bank’s officials had been providing detailed monthly field intelligence reports on Oriente province. Armstrong later wrote Herter that the “the bank wishes to cooperate with us in every legitimate way” and he described such relations as excellent. Foreign government representatives in Canada were also recruited for intelligence purposes. The Japanese consulate in Vancouver regularly forwarded to its American counterpart information on Cuba-bound cargoes aboard Japanese ships leaving British Columbia ports. The full scope of American intelligence activities in

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132 Letter from US Charge D’Affaires in Ottawa, Willis Armstrong to US Consul General in Montreal, Frederick T. Rope, November 25, 1960 (Secret - Official informal) in RG 84, United States Montreal Consulate General Records, Entry UD 2212, Box 5, Folder “510.1 Trade – Canada-Cuba 1959-1961”, NARA. This version was declassified in full. Another copy of this important document had been withdrawn in the RG 59 State Central Decimal files for 1960-1963 and was released to the author through a FOIA request in 2012, with several redactions, after a lengthy delay of nearly 3 years.

133 Ibid.


135 See for example US Consul, Santiago de Cuba Despatch no. 37, November 1, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 837/11-160, NARA and also US Consul, Santiago de Cuba Despatch no. 62, December 2, 1960 (Confidential), File 837/12-260, NARA. Both on UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal Affairs 1960-1963, Reel 29

136 Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 397, December 21, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 437.4241/12-2160, NARA

137 See Letter from Willis Armstrong, Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy Ottawa to Hayden Raynor, US Consul General Vancouver, July 20, 1961 (Confidential – Official Informal) in RG 84 United States Vancouver Consulate General Records, Entry UD 2239, Box 13, Folder “510.1 Trade with Cuba 1961”, NARA. See also US Consulate Vancouver Despatch no. 134, January 10, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 437.429/1-1061, NARA. There are other examples of cooperation with Japan on this issue in the files.
Canada on Cuban issues remains classified, but it is clear that during those early days of the US embargo, Canada was as much an intelligence target as a source, and the United States’ top concern was trans-shipment.

Assistant Secretary Mann had identified trans-shipment as the only anticipated bilateral problem emerging from the October 19 embargo, although he made it unmistakably clear to Canadian embassy officials that his government did not consider this to be a minor issue. On October 21, Mann bluntly told Heeney and Schwarzmann that in the event of a Canadian failure to stop embargo leaks, the United States would take unspecified steps to prevent such an occurrence, adding that the American public would not tolerate a Canadian loophole or backdoor to Cuba for US goods. Mann indicated he had few concerns about sales of wheat and fish, Canada’s leading exports to Cuba, but spare parts for oil and sugar refineries and other industrial plants were another matter. The United States knew Cuba was vulnerable in this regard, with so much of its infrastructure designed to work with American made machinery and other capital goods. This included its electrical system, which was based on the North American 110 volts, rather than the 220 volts used in Europe, including the East bloc. Canada, as a North American country, was a natural alternative source for such goods, and as such was under the United States’ gaze.

With the Americans having hammered their viewpoint home, it was clearly in Canada’s interest to cooperate with the United States on trans-shipment. Heeney repeated to Mann that Canada had no desire to profit from the embargo, and that it would make efforts to prevent such transhipments. Canada certainly had some opportunities to profit in this way. The Royal Bank’s Mayne told Ritchie on October 24 that both Canadian banks in Cuba were “inundated with calls by US businessmen” after the embargo was announced, wanting assistance to get

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139 Memorandum of Conversation, “United States Export Control to Cuba” October 21, 1960 (Secret) in RG 59, Subject Files of the Assistant Secretary of Inter American Affairs 1959-1962, Entry A1 3147, Box 1, File “Cuba (Oct-Dec) 1960,” NARA.
140 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 2671, October 22, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 6, LAC
141 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Secretary of State for External Affairs, no. 2627, October 18, 1960 (Secret) in DCER, Vol. 27, Doc. 628, 1205-1207.
142 Schoultz, That Infernal Little Cuban Republic, 201.
143 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Secretary of State for External Affairs, no. 2627, October 18, 1960 (Secret) in DCER, Vol. 27, Doc. 628, 1205-1207.
goods to Cuba through Canada. Accepting such American business would be very risky, both for the banks and for the Canadian government, neither of whom wanted to experience Washington’s wrath. Under Secretary Robertson cautioned his Minister that non-cooperation with the United States could backfire on Canadian manufacturers, should the latter be unable to obtain American made components or have to certify that such parts would not be used in products destined for Cuba. Meeting with Under Secretary Robertson, executives of the Canadian nickel giant Inco revealed their concerns that battery anodes made in the United States using Canadian nickel and shipped back to Canada would now be subject to the embargo, and that Inco would be vulnerable to US blacklisting if the anodes were exported to Cuba. Careful diligence was now required on exporting goods to Cuba, lest an error inadvertently create unwanted difficulties with the United States.

Concerned that major segments of the Canadian economy were susceptible to American pressure, Green instructed the Canadian embassy in Washington to make the trans-shipment problem a priority item to discuss with the State Department. Supporting the need for cooperation in this regard, Robertson reminded Green that by doing so in other contexts (likely China), Canada had averted new American export controls. Trade and Commerce Minister Hees reported to Cabinet on November 5 that a long held bilateral understanding was in place that if either country imposed an embargo against a third party, the other would not trans-ship goods covered by its terms. A follow up Cabinet paper argued that since the 1941 Hyde Park agreements, which had integrated the North American economy for wartime, Canada had been unique among nations in being exempted from US export controls. Thus Canada could theoretically evade Washington’s measures and re-export goods to Cuba, but the economic (and political) cost of doing so, and the risk of subsequently becoming subject to US controls

145 Memorandum for the Minister, “Memorandum to the Cabinet on Cuba,” October 28, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 6, LAC
146 Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (N.A. Robertson) to the Minister (Green), “Nickel Exports to Cuba,” October 28, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40. pt. 6, LAC
outweighed any benefits. To avoid having to certify that Canadian exports to Cuba were not American-made, the Cabinet was advised to ensure that no known US goods were re-exported to Cuba.\textsuperscript{150}

Anticipating Washington’s measures, back in October Trade and Commerce officials reviewed the policy and regulations of the 1954 \textit{Export and Import Permits Act}. The regulations included a General Export License, permitting Canada to sell any goods to any country, with the exception of a certain category of goods identified on an Export Control List, most of which were strategic in nature. Any item on that list could not be sold to countries governed by the Area Controls List – mostly Sino-Soviet bloc countries.\textsuperscript{151} The Diefenbaker government faced a dilemma. It wanted to avoid formally designating Cuba as a bloc country, which in turn would make it officially subject to mandatory COCOM export restrictions; at the same time, it did not want to categorize it as a special case, which would leave Canada open to Cuban accusations of discrimination. As well, for goods originating from the United States, the government needed to ensure that its otherwise open export policy would not be exploited by persons or firms attempting to bypass or undermine the American embargo. Ottawa’s decision was not to permit the re-export of US made goods to Cuba without a licence, although if goods with US made components were sufficiently reprocessed or manufactured in Canada, the final product would be designated as Canadian.\textsuperscript{152} Hees reminded Diefenbaker in mid-November that this had been the government’s approach to date, one he recommended be continued unless the Americans formally requested a change.\textsuperscript{153}

While publicly committing itself not to trans-ship, a full year would pass before the Cabinet issued an Order in Council revamping requirements so that all Group 9 (US origin goods) needed a licence for re-export to any country unless they had been substantially reconfigured.\textsuperscript{154} The Pearson government in 1963 revised the General Export Licence schedule.

\textsuperscript{150} Memorandum for the Cabinet (draft) November 8, 1960 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 7, LAC
\textsuperscript{153} Letter from Minister of Trade and Commerce (Hees) to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, November 17, 1960 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 7, LAC
to explicitly add Cuba to the list of prohibited destinations for strategic goods, although like other NATO countries, it still did not include it on the official COCOM list. In practice however, Cuba was treated as a COCOM country for all intents and purposes since December 1960.\footnote{155}

In early November, American officials repeated their warnings to the Canadian embassy that any discovery of American goods reaching Cuba by way of Canada would bring unpleasant consequences, especially if members of Congress or the press learned of such an incident.\footnote{156} One trigger for this reminder was a Cuban government publication that listed 36 Canadian businesses that were seeking representatives in Cuba to sell products ranging from foodstuffs to hardware to textiles to vehicles - a document that found its way into the hands of E.A. Gilmore, the Economic Affairs Counsellor at the US embassy in Havana.\footnote{157} A second such catalyst was a confidential report forwarded to the US embassy by “a responsible [anti-Castro] Cuban governmental official” that described the recent efforts of four Canadian businessmen, who had promised to replenish the Cubans with some $20 million in needed spare parts for its machinery, along with chemicals, new equipment and technical consulting advice. Suspecting that the spare parts would probably be of American origin, the State Department shared this report with Schwarzmann on November 4.\footnote{158} While not unaware that those individuals were in Cuba exploring commercial opportunities, Ambassador Anderson in Havana embarrassingly observed that American intelligence on these activities by Canadian citizens was superior to that of Canada.\footnote{159}

Indeed two Canadians in particular had drawn press attention in Cuba, which naturally became known to the Americans. One was sometime \textit{Toronto Telegram} newspaper reporter
Robert Starkey, who doubled as an export promoter and had managed to get an audience with Che Guevara. Guevara in turn suggested a scheme whereby Canadian Tire, one of Starkey’s clients, import Cuban gasoline made from Soviet crude oil – a proposal Anderson denounced as “dubious and devious.” Guevara also suggested the automotive retailer purchase US made auto parts for resale to Cuba. Keeping the Americans informed, Parlour let them know his government disavowed Starkey, expressing doubt that “any responsible Canadian interest would join the scheme,” however tempting it might be. Even more embarrassing for Ottawa was the publicity generated by maverick Toronto entrepreneur Albert A. Shea, who had travelled to Cuba after writing Castro and offering to help him procure Canadian goods ranging from agricultural products to hardware and building supplies. Anderson stressed to Ottawa that these businessmen created bad press for Canada south of the border, and were jeopardizing the ability of Canadian firms to get needed American supplies. To Ottawa’s relief, none of these ventures amounted to anything. In the meantime, other business executives, such as Toronto engineer A.D. Margison, had reached opposite conclusions and rejected Cuban government contracts. Margison expressed to Diefenbaker how he saw that country as rapidly turning communist, making it not a good climate for business. Parlour made certain this viewpoint was passed on to American officials as a contrasting example.

Making matters even worse for Canada’s reputation south of the border were Cuban government statements suggesting its trade policy meant Canada favoured Havana over

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161 Telegram from US Embassy, Havana to Secretary of State, no. 2069, November 4, 1960 (Official Use Only) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 437.4241/11-460, NARA


165 Telegram from US Embassy, Havana to Secretary of State, no. 2128, November 9, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 437.4241/11-960, NARA
Washington. In mid-October speech announcing that Canadian banks would be exempted from state takeover, Castro praised them for their “great service to the revolutionary government.”

A nearly mortified Anderson reported to his External Affairs superiors that the Havana embassy had subsequently received numerous angry telephone calls from Americans and anti-communist Cubans, accusing Canada of siding with Castro and with the Soviet Union. The frustrated Ambassador feared that his country was rapidly losing credibility, and that he could do little to alleviate Canada’s growing image problem. While supporting Diefenbaker’s rejection of a Canadian embargo, Anderson believed Canada’s efforts to stay on the sidelines of the US-Cuban rift had given off a misleading appearance both countries that Canada tacitly supported Castro. In a letter to Robertson he wrote:

But as for the present, if things go on as they are, we shall be considered as friends of Castro, and therefore of Khrushchev, and our popularity with our United States friends will continue to decrease. Our other NATO friends may become puzzled too. This is a most unwelcome thought, and yet, in spite of everything, I repeat that I do not see how we could bring ourselves to join the USA in controls against Cuba.

Diefenbaker had to ready a response to similar press statements attributed to Castro himself that Canadian ships were carrying foodstuffs from the Soviet Union to Cuba. In response to the Prime Minister’s queries, the Canadian Maritime Commission reassured him that no ships under the Canadian flag were involved in such trade, although it was possible that some of the thirty Canadian owned dry cargo ships sailing under the British flag may have carried such cargoes. Anxious for corroborating information from the Havana embassy, Anderson reported to Ottawa that according to an informant working for Cuban shipping agencies, no Canadian flag ships

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166 Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 115, October 17, 1960 (Secret/ Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 6, LAC. See also Globe and Mail, October 17, 1960 found in the same file. For the Law itself see Canadian Embassy Havana Numbered Letter L-813, November 4, 1960 (Restricted) and Enclosure E, Havana Chancery Letter No. 11011/60 of October 17, 1960 to America Department, Foreign Office [translation of Law 891 by UK Embassy, Havana] in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 7 LAC

167 Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 115, October 17, 1960 (Secret/ Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 6, LAC.

168 Canadian Embassy Havana Despatch D-742, October 18, 1960 (Secret /Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 6, LAC.


were in its ports save a vessel named the Saguenay, which flew the Union Jack. On a technicality, Canada was able to avoid this additional embarrassment, and over the next several years, Ottawa was able to gain some favour in Washington by being able to correctly state it had no ships in the trans-oceanic Cuba trade.

The noise level in the United States over Canada’s ongoing commercial relationship with Cuba grew substantially beginning in November, replete with press accusations and sharp criticisms on Capitol Hill of Canadian “bootlegging.” Irritated Americans wrote the Canadian embassy in Washington accusing Canada of failing to stand by its all important neighbour and ally. The Consul General in Chicago forwarded to his Department numerous critical newspaper editorials expressing the “incredulity and resentment” that politicians, military officers and business leaders felt regarding Canada’s non-participation in Washington’s embargo. A few businesses even threatened to boycott Canada. The executive of one importer of Canadian lumber wrote the Chicago Consul “whether the Canadian government realizes it or not, our problem in this regard is your problem.” Diefenbaker, ever concerned about public opinion, closely monitored incoming letters as a barometer of how people felt about his government’s policies and his leadership. The longer than average replies that correspondents received reveals Ottawa’s defensiveness and struggle to articulate its position effectively. In the coming months, a considerable portion of the time Diefenbaker’s government devoted to foreign policy matters was consumed managing such public opinion. On Cuba, Anderson, Green and the Prime Minister himself were all in damage control mode.

Ambassador Heeney was now of the opinion that Cuba had now become an urgent public relations problem in Canada-United States relations, requiring clarification at the highest

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171 Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Havana, no ET-1521, November 9, 1960 (Confidential) and also Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 152, November 11, 1960 (Confidential), both in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 7, LAC
172 Canadian Consulate, Chicago Numbered Letter 292, December 16, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 8, LAC. For letters from the American public criticizing Canada, there are examples in this same file.
174 For an overview of the importance Diefenbaker gave to public correspondence see McMahon, Essence of Indecision, 28-29.
175 “Letters received on Canadian Trade with Cuba”, John Diefenbaker papers, Series VII, File 722/C962, Reel M-8878, LAC – note the stamp “seen by John G. Diefenbaker.”
levels. Basil Robinson in the Prime Minister’s Office agreed, musing that such discord over Cuba had the potential to cause lasting damage. Advising his boss as such in mid November, Robinson told Diefenbaker that he that he would have to issue a formal public policy statement on Cuba, one ultimately aimed for an American audience. Concurring that this was needed, the Prime Minister began the drafting of such a statement in mid November, one he would eventually deliver in the House of Commons a month later. Diefenbaker’s direct involvement clearly suggests that the consequences of this policy disagreement with the United States weighed much more heavily on Canada. In contrast, the now lame duck President Eisenhower remained silent on the question of Canadian relations with Cuba, delegating the issue to the State Department. He did not even mention Cuba in one of his last letters to Diefenbaker on December 21, which instead concerned NATO matters; neither did he raise the matter in his final face to face meetings with the Prime Minister in Washington in January 1961.

The Eisenhower administration knew well that the Diefenbaker government was in a delicate position over its decision not to join the embargo. Strong domestic anti-communism, particularly towards Castro, reinforced Washington’s hard line position. While not stated explicitly in the records, such public pressure provided the United States government with a convenient motive to seek Canadian cooperation, if not outright compliance, with the embargo. At the same time, the Americans leveraged this knowledge very carefully and proceeded in this regard cautiously, knowing that Diefenbaker was a sensitive man and that any overt US pressure would backfire and unleash even stronger nationalist sentiments in Canada, possibly driving Ottawa in an even more independently-minded direction. Chargé d’Affaires Willis Armstrong described the Diefenbaker government as “increasingly restive” over the US press coverage and also highly embarrassed by the warm, friendly statements the Castro government had been making about Canada. Armstrong recognized that it was “anxious not to be considered politically sympathetic to Castro,” and was encouraged to know that an official statement distancing Canada politically from Cuba would soon be forthcoming. Convinced that Canada

\[176\] For the origins of Heeney’s request for a public statement see Telegram from Embassy in Washington to External Affairs, no 3065, December 9 1960 (Confidential), in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 8. LAC


\[178\] Message from Eisenhower to Diefenbaker transmitted in Telegram from Department of State to US Embassy, Ottawa, no. 348, December 21, 1960 (Confidential/ Priority) in White House Office of the Staff Secretary, International Files, Box 2, Folder “Canada (4) [September 1960-January 1961],” Dwight D. Eisenhower Library.
desired good relations with the United States, the American diplomat was confident Canada would cooperate to stop trans-shipments. In handling this contentious issue, Armstrong came up against voices within his own government, let alone the media and Capitol Hill. Such challenges in particular came from the Commerce Department and even State’s Inter-American Affairs Division, both of which wanted more overt and formal pressure on Ottawa. Siding with officials in the British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs Division well versed in Canadian affairs, Armstrong believed Canadian-American cooperation was more readily secured through informality and discretion. For the time being, the Eisenhower administration adopted this approach, all the while reserving the right to ask Ottawa directly for its cooperation should trans-shipment incidents either become frequent or widely known. For its part, Canada’s government agreed to inform American authorities promptly of any trans-shipment attempts, as well as to request that the responsive companies cease such activities. It also sought to do so discreetly, lest it appear to be responding to American pressure. Thus the era of genuine Canada-United States cooperation on Cuba began. The first real moves were made by the Canadians, but the Americans provided them with the necessary space to do so by backing off from overt and official attempts to shame Ottawa into conformity. A pattern of regular, proactive and above all discreet diplomacy became the modus operandi.

After a month of preparation, Diefenbaker finally unveiled his detailed policy statement regarding Cuba in the House of Commons on December 12. In this document, he repeated that Canada would maintain normal trade with Cuba, but it would neither allow the trans-shipment nor the re-export to Cuba of US made goods; neither would it sell Havana strategic goods – a de-facto designation of Cuba as subject to COCOM controls. The statement was appreciated in Washington. However, after weeks of delay, in the eyes of the American public, the damage had been done. In the intervening weeks, Cuba continued to occupy substantial energy in Ottawa from Diefenbaker down, as well as senior State Department officials and American diplomats.

The Prime Minister’s speech was given in the midst of an especially challenging and active week on the Cuban issue, as his government walked on eggshells regarding the United States but also Cuba. Ottawa had neither wanted to offend Havana nor to unnecessarily inhibit legitimate commerce. Only days before the Commons address, and just as the Cuban Central Bank was finalizing its acquisition of the two Canadian banks’ local operations, a Cuban trade delegation led by Economics Minister Dr. Regino Boti arrived in Canada, on the auspices of meeting with prospective exporters to obtain more Canadian goods. Following somewhat irregular protocol, the Canadian embassy in Havana received only 24 hours notice about the trip. While Boti was informed that his timing was less than ideal for the Canadian government, External Affairs Minister Green hastily arranged for the Cuban Minister to meet his Cabinet colleague George Hees and his Deputy, James A Roberts.\textsuperscript{182} A review memorandum to Green stressed the Cubans wanted trade, not aid, and that they still welcomed an advisory role for the Royal Bank on international financial transactions.\textsuperscript{183}

Upon arrival in Canada on December 8, two members of the delegation went to Montreal (likely to facilitate gold and currency transfers out of the Royal Bank to the United Kingdom) and another two went to Toronto, also to meet with banking officials. When Hees and Roberts met Boti in Ottawa the morning of December 9, the Cuban Minister revealed that he had secured the previous day a purchase of Canadian Holstein cattle, and that his next objective was agricultural equipment, $93 million worth of auto and truck parts, and other items generically categorized as “raw materials.”\textsuperscript{184} Hees indicated he was “happy to do business with Cuba,” but Roberts emphasized that trying to acquire US made goods would pose difficulties - a point the Cuban Economic Minister acknowledged. Boti’s delegation publicly declared Cuba wanted a ten-fold increase in trade with Canada, and indicated it had $150 million to spend.\textsuperscript{185}

To the dismay of many Americans, later that day Hees publicly praised his Cuban visitors, exclaiming “there are no better businessmen anywhere” - a comment that his Cabinet

\textsuperscript{182} Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (N.A. Robertson) to the Minister (Green), “Visit of Cuban Economic Delegation,” December 7, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 8, LAC
\textsuperscript{184} “Interview in Minister of Trade and Commerce’s Office, 10am Friday December 9, 1960” [meeting notes] (no classification marking) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 8. LAC
colleague, Finance Minister Donald Fleming, later described as “excessively fulsome.” At NATO meetings in Paris a week later, Douglas Dillon cornered Hees about his comments. The Under Secretary of State reported that the Trade and Commerce Minister “went to great pains” to explain that Canada did not intend to facilitate the Cuba trade, but also that “Canada was always glad to sell $150 million for cash to anyone.” What on the surface appeared to be good for business proved for trickier politics; given the state of Cuba’s finances, it was not necessarily so good for the former after all either.

After the Cuban delegation returned home, Chargé d’Affaires E.A. Gilmore at the US embassy in Havana wrote that the only Canada-Cuba deal he was certain of was for 1000 head of cattle – a deal that Parlour told him had already been well in progress. Gilmore doubted that Cuba was in a financial position to purchase $150 million of Canadian goods, especially with falling currency reserves and the estimated value of Soviet sugar purchases amounting to only $18 million. He saw as no accident Che Guevara’s request for a Soviet loan of $150 million to cover its imports for the following year. Parlour and Gilmore conferred at the end of December to compare data on Cuban finances, with the Canadian admitting over 500 Canadian businesses had inquired about the viability of the Cuban market. When Parlour shared his most recent Banco Nacional figures from late November, which suggested Cuba had $84.8 million in free foreign exchange reserves, Gilmore painted a much bleaker picture. Citing figures obtained from his confidential informant in the Cuban central bank, the American presented a considerably lower value of $15 million. Robert Sayre chimed in that unless the Soviet Union provided Havana with dollar credits, Canada would either have to extend Cuba credit or accept payment in Cuban pesos to increase exports to that country. Gilmore made it clear Ottawa intended to do neither, especially with the rapidly devaluing peso, and that Canadian businesses would insist either on cash or secured letters of credit payable on a Canadian bank. Thus,

187 Telegram from US Embassy Paris to Secretary of State, no. 2472, December 14, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 437.4241/14-1260, Box 963, NARA
Canada reassured the United States that while it was always open for trade, it would be selling little to the cash strapped Castro regime anytime soon.

In a convoluted statement in early January, Guevara himself indirectly confirmed that Cuba lacked the foreign exchange to purchase Boti’s $150 million in Canadian goods. All he left Canada with was a vague promise that Cuba might over time buy more Canadian goods as Ottawa continued to keep its commercial doors open.190 Fearing that Ottawa in the meantime might turn its back on Havana completely on account of the American pressure, Ambassador Cruz advised Roa early in January that Cuba should continue to pursue such opportunities with Canada, but “not to make too much noise” about its willingness to continue normal trade.191 As will be shown later, Cuban government officials later would make more noise, and cause Ottawa more embarrassment south of the border.

Hees’ moment of indiscreet exuberance further stoked the flames of American criticism. The following day, Senator Prescott Bush, a Connecticut Republican, told reporters that he could not understand the Canadian perspective and claimed “the Cubans are buying anything they want in Canada.”192 Canadian officials painstakingly sought to refute allegations that the Boti mission’s outcome was a formal Canadian “trade pact” with Cuba.193 Later that week, distorted reports emerged suggesting that Secretary of State Herter and Secretary of Commerce Frederick H. Mueller had complained to one another about how the Canadian government “rejected repeated requests” to cooperate with the United States on the Cuba trade.194 Herter himself entered the fray after hearing rumours that Boti was really after $400,000 in spare parts for buses, as well as sugar refining equipment, asking Willis Armstrong to confront Norman

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Robertson and remind him of “the almost inevitable psychological reaction in the US to such Canadian policy.”

Acting on Robertson’s follow-up instructions, Heeney had a very testy conversation with Mann in Washington on December 14 over spare parts and US distortions of Canadian policy. The angry Ambassador repeated Diefenbaker’s publicly announced commitments, and added that Canada “deplored the exaggerated press and radio accounts of Canadian-Cuban trade activities” and outlined how the Canadian position had not changed from that expressed to Washington back in October. He also challenged Mann that the United States had yet to identify a single incident of Canadian trans-shipment of American goods to Cuba. Changing the focus to Cold War basics, Mann challenged the Canadian Ambassador to see Cuba in the context of “a life and death struggle for the survival of western civilization.” Back in Ottawa, Armstrong expressed similar views, cabling Herter that the worst facet of Ottawa’s position was the absence of an unequivocal opposition to communism on the island, even though he also admitted that Canadian officials had little enthusiasm for the Castro regime. Slightly more positive than Mann, Armstrong nonetheless maintained a faith in the Canadian public, describing its “good conscience and sense of fair play,” and saw it as the United States’ best asset in this scenario.

In reality, Armstrong misread how the Canadian public for the most part encouraged Diefenbaker and his successors to stay the course on Cuba. American officials concluded that while the United States should use moral suasion to get Canada to oppose Castro politically, as well as adhere to its promises regarding export controls, it would not stop normal trade. Save two periods in 1962, December 1960 was when Canada’s different approach to Cuba generated  

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195 On the bus parts rumour see Telegram from US Embassy Havana to Department of State, no. 2425, December 8, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 59 Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 437.4241/12-860, NARA. For Herter’s instructions to Armstrong see Telegram from Secretary of State to US Embassy, Ottawa, no. 322, December 9, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 59 Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 437.4241/12-960, NARA
196 Memorandum of Conversation, “Trade with Cuba” December 14, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject Files of the Assistant Secretary of Inter American Affairs 1959-1962, Entry A1 3147, Box 1, File “Cuba (Oct-Dec) 1960”, NARA
198 Ibid.
199 Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Department of State, no.380, December 15, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 59 Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 437.4241/12-860, NARA
200 Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Department of State, no.380, December 15, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 59 Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 437.4241/12-860, NARA
the most public heat in the United States. It took time for the Americans to understand, and appreciate, that Canada was not trying to undermine United States policies, even if it did not replicate them. Heeney expressed such frustration to Robertson, concluding that he had failed to convince Mann and other US officials that Canadian differences with the United States on Cuba were a matter of tactics, not objectives. Quite accurately, he conceded that US anxiety on Canada’s Cuba trade would continue, as would American efforts to get Canada not to sell Cuba machinery parts, especially those readily compatible with American made machinery.

Convincing official Washington of Canadian good intentions was difficult enough. What was nearly impossible was doing so with the American public, and above all else expatriate Cubans. Taking special notice of the Canadian approach, the latter community was especially angry at Ottawa’s refusal to support the embargo. Correlating these actions with positive statements by Castro about Canada, its members believed the worst about Ottawa’s motives - that it sympathized politically with Castro and communism. As a consequence, the exiles became enemies of Canada, as well as Castro’s Cuba. As early as October, before the two Canadian banks wound up their Cuban operations, groups in Miami proclaimed that Canadian banks would be expelled from Cuba should they succeed in toppling Castro.201 Denouncing newsprint sales to Cuba as enabling the spread of communist propaganda, the Miami Cuban community advised local newspapers to acquire their newsprint from non-Canadian sources.202 Going even further, by early December, the so-called People’s Revolutionary Council threatened to sponsor a hemisphere wide boycott of Canada if Castro was toppled.203 Anderson wrote Robertson from Havana in mid-December that he expected the Cuban opposition to pose a problem for Canada. Repeating sentiments had expressed in October, the Ambassador wrote that:

we, by following our normal policy of continuing to trade with the regime, are being jockeyed into a position of appearing to support it. Our reputation with the anti-Castroists has already suffered badly, with no end in sight.204

201 Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to Department of External Affairs, no, 120, October 20, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 7, LAC
202 Memorandum from Assistant Deputy Minister for Commodities and Industries, Department of Trade and Commerce (Denis Harvey) to Assistant Under Secretary for External Affairs (A.E. Ritchie), “Re: Trade with Cuba” November 1, 1960 (no classification marking) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, pt. 7, LAC
In December and January, Cuban expatriates escalated their opposition to demonstrations in front of the Canadian embassy in Washington. Embassy officials met with Cuban opposition representatives to explain the Canadian position, opportunities encouraged by External Affairs. Security concerns stemming from the expatriates’ growing anti-Canadian feelings led the RCMP to recommend that Diefenbaker opt for Jamaica, rather than Florida, for his post-Christmas vacation – advice the Prime Minister heeded. The exiles would be an ongoing security concern for Canada for the next decade and a half.

Canada’s commerce was the principal, but not the only concern in the United States regarding its northern neighbour’s engagement with Cuba. Washington also worried about the growth of pro-Castro sentiments among trade unionists and other Canadian nationalists that leaned leftward. In mid-November, the British Columbia Federation of Labour voted to send a delegation of union leaders to Cuba on a so-called fact finding mission. That province’s labour movement already had a reputation for militancy, with several unions, especially the Mine Mill workers, having been under Communist Party influence at various points. Especially in the early 1960s, Vancouver had one of the most active Fair Play for Cuba chapters. To counter the official government propaganda the group would receive on its mission, State Department officials challenged their Canadian counterparts to balance out the labour delegation’s exposure to Cuba by means of a call on the Canadian embassy in Havana, and potentially, a stop in Miami. Ambassador Anderson certainly supported briefing the delegation, sharing the Americans’ concerns that the Castro government would tightly control

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205 Telegram from Embassy in Washington to Canadian UN delegation, no 3131, December 16, 1960 (Restricted) in RG 20. Vol. 2295, File 7-6C-2, pt. 8. LAC. Also see Telegram from Embassy in Washington to External Affairs, no 3243, December 29, 1960 (Restricted), and Telegram from Embassy in Washington to External Affairs, no 175, January 16, 1961 (Unclassified) both in the same file.

206 Robinson, Diefenbaker’s World, 166.


what the members could see.  

Under Secretary Robertson concurred, but External Affairs Minister Green scribbled on his memo that a visit to the embassy would be unprofitable. No further mention was made of the Miami option, and the Green’s reasoning for nixing the embassy visit is uncertain. As of the end of December, the visit had not taken place, and it was apparently postponed as the situation in Cuba grew tenser in the weeks leading up to the Bay of Pigs crisis. The Canadian Labour Congress apparently vetoed visits to Cuba, but individual BC unionists were at least planning visits into early 1961, and External Affairs records monitoring the travel of communist affiliated individuals contain a disproportionate number of travelers to Cuba, many being from British Columbia. Robertson would later request reports from the Havana embassy of Canadian visitors with communist sympathies. Cuba would later prove to be a divisive issue within British Columbia’s labour movement, and its New Democratic Party. Before 1961 had ended, George Kidd, Anderson’s successor as ambassador, described Cuba’s labour movement as “so totally different in nature and concept from western or Canadian unions that there seems to be little basis for any assistance or rapport.” Despite this, Cuba was a destination of choice for a number of Canadian trade unionists and other activists on the left for much of the next decade.

The United States also began paying considerable attention in late 1960 to another facet of Canadian-Cuban relations: civil air transportation. In August, the Cuban government approached Ottawa about establishing a regular Canada-Cuba passenger air service, a topic of on and off discussions since 1947. Anticipating difficulties with the Americans, Latin

211 Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (NA Robertson) to the Minister (Green), ”Visit of Trade Unionists to Cuba,” December 8, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40, Pt. 8, LAC
212 Canadian Embassy, Havana Numbered Letter L-941, December 13, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5011, File 288-40 pt. 8, LAC. See also Globe and Mail, December 30, 1960. No evidence was found that the trip took place based on searches of newspapers and relevant archival files.
216 Canadian Embassy, Havana Numbered Letter L-552, October 21, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 8, LAC
American Division Head Yvon Beaulne advocated further postponement of such an agreement. However, on this issue Castro was very determined, and early in November he instructed his acting Foreign Minister Carlos Olivares to tell Anderson about his “intense personal interest in having a direct air connection with Canada at this time.” His more immediate objective was to obtain a temporary licence for 12 experimental passenger charters between Montreal and Havana. With his rapidly disintegrating relationship with the United States, having such air links became urgent for the Cuban leader, both for better access to Canada for trade, but also for alternative connections between his country and the rest of the world, especially the Soviet bloc.

With Cuba now an acutely volatile issue in Canada’s relations with the United States, Green advised Diefenbaker against pursuing such an accord at this time. Complicating matters even further was that Czechoslovakia wanted permission for its national airline CSA to make technical landings at Gander on its Prague-Havana route. The United States embassy presented External Affairs with an aide memoire asking that Canada postpone granting CSA such permission until the two neighbours could properly exchange views, and until the United States made its own ruling regarding CSA landing rights at its Bermuda Air Force base. It also made it known Washington would welcome a denial, arguing that granting CSA permission would only strengthen Cuba’s connections with the East bloc. However, all four countries were signatories to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), obliging such permissions for aircraft of fellow member states. As compliance with an international treaty was non-negotiable for the Diefenbaker government, Canada refused either to object in principle or postpone allowing the CSA Gander stops.

ICAO compliance was one issue, but a bilateral agreement with Cuba was a different matter altogether. A memorandum for Cabinet outlined that Havana’s real goal was unlimited

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218 Memorandum from Latin American Division (Y. Beaulne) to Economic Division (Stoner), September 27, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. File RG 25, Vol. 6171, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 1.2 LAC
220 Memorandum from Secretary of State for External Affairs to the Prime Minister, November 10, 1960 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 6171, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 1.2, LAC
222 Memorandum from Secretary of State for External Affairs to the Prime Minister, November 10, 1960 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 6171, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 1.2, LAC
traffic rights for its Cubana airlines in Canada, as well as onward access to foreign destinations.\textsuperscript{223} Once again, the government had the difficult choice of either adding fuel for its American critics or offending Cuba and hindering opportunities for better relations.\textsuperscript{224} Anderson did not want Canadian-Cuban relations to appear warmer than they were, and worried that even charter flights would heighten expectations in Cuba that a regular service was inevitable. For symbolic reasons, he advised against the use of the national carrier Trans-Canada Airlines (later Air Canada), in part as it could reinforce the false impression that “Canada is pro-Castro and therefore anti-United States.”\textsuperscript{225} Seeking a compromise, Green’s Cabinet memo argued that “for political reasons it seems desirable to accede in part to Prime Minister Castro’s request,” and he recommended a three month temporary agreement allowing for periodic charter flights carrying both freight and passengers, to be shared by airlines of both countries.\textsuperscript{226} Nonetheless, Ottawa bypassed the thornier question of a regularly scheduled service by using the argument that parallel arrangements with other countries had also been postponed pending an overall review of Canada’s civil air transport policy, a position outlined to the Cubans.\textsuperscript{227}

In December 1960, even periodic Canada-Cuba charter flights were a difficult sell in the United States. State Department officials were already suspicious after learning that a Cubana Super Constellation had received last minute approval by the Air Transport Board to pick up in Montreal a cargo of printers’ ink and electronic equipment, a suspicion aggravated by External Affairs’ lack of response to American inquiries.\textsuperscript{228} In fact, the Board approved the flight believing Cubana was only dropping off aircraft engines for mechanical servicing, and was not intending to transport cargo back to Havana. As Ottawa had not explicitly prohibited the latter,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{223} Memorandum for Cabinet, “Cuban Request for Civil Air Privileges,” November 21, 1960 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 4986 File 72-AGS-40 pt. 2, LAC
\item \textsuperscript{224} Memorandum for Minister “Air Services between Cuba and Canada,” November 21, 1960 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 4986 File 72-AGS-40 pt. 2, LAC
\item \textsuperscript{225} Canadian Embassy Havana Numbered Letter L-894, November 28, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25 Vol. 4986, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 2, LAC
\item \textsuperscript{226} Memorandum for Cabinet, “Cuban Request for Civil Air Privileges,” November 21, 1960 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 4986 File 72-AGS-40, pt. 2, LAC
\item \textsuperscript{227} Memorandum from Latin American Division (Yvon Beaulne) to A.E. Ritchie, November 22, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4986, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 2, LAC.
\end{itemize}
the Cubans seized the opportunity to obtain needed supplies for its presses. This scenario did generate some mild embarrassment in Ottawa. Ten days later, a second Cubana aircraft flew to Toronto, bringing in 4000 pounds of tomatoes, and leaving with 24,000 pounds of turkey. In the meantime, Secretary of State Herter added civil aviation to the list of Cuba related items that he wanted Armstrong to discuss with senior Canadian officials. In his meeting with Norman Robertson on the Boti trade delegation, the Chargé d’Affaires indicated that the United States government also wanted to talk about civil aviation, although he did not raise specific issues. External Affairs advised Heeney not to be proactive on this topic in his conversations in Washington, but only to respond to direct questions as necessary to clear up misunderstandings. He was permitted to note the matter was under Cabinet review, but that Cubana had satisfied Air Transport Board requirements for charters.

The Cabinet met to discuss this issue on December 8, just as the Boti delegation arrived in Canada. While the minutes do not specify the speakers, they clearly reveal that the Ministers were divided on the charter flights. The proponents considered them to be good for normal trade relations, and naively thought that such normal commercial relations might enable Canada to bridge the gap between Cuba and the United States – a fundamental and profound misreading, if not outright denial, of the depth of American feeling against the Castro regime. Others wanted to avoid more American criticism, and sided with Ambassador Anderson’s concerns that the use of Trans Canada airlines would send the wrong message in Cuba and the United States alike. Making a compromise, the Cabinet shelved the scheduled service pending the policy review but allowed for periodic charter flights carrying cargo (especially livestock) and “non-revenue”

231 Telegram from Secretary of State to US Embassy, Ottawa, no. 322, December 9, 1960 (Confidential) in RG 59 Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 437.4241/12-960, Box 963, NARA
passengers (diplomatic personnel), on the stipulation that every flight had to be approved by the Air Transport Board.\textsuperscript{235} Trans Canada airlines was also not to be used.

Starting in late December, cargo charter flights commenced between Havana and Toronto and Montreal, with some 24 round trips occurring before the end of January 1961. The pattern was that incoming flights from Cuba generally carried either vegetables or aircraft engines for repair (in Montreal), returning to Cuba with Canadian poultry, medicine, the repaired engines and some additional machinery.\textsuperscript{236} Before long, logs of such flights were regularly shared with the State Department, including details on the cargo. Such would become the course of Canadian-Cuban air traffic for the next several years. As will be shown in subsequent, civil aviation quickly came to be one of the most discussed, and at times most contentious, Canada-United States issues with respect to Cuba until the second half of the next decade.

After a hectic December and a welcome rest in Jamaica, Cuba remained on Diefenbaker’s mind. Holding a press conference in Kingston on January 10, the Prime Minister repeated his public pronouncements of a month earlier, adding for emphasis that Canada “still did business” with the Soviet Union, despite vehemently disagreeing with its ideology. He could not resist pointing to the United States that even with its embargo, it residual Cuba trade in food and medicine substantially dwarfed all of Canada’s trade with the island.\textsuperscript{237} For Diefenbaker and his government, friction with the United States would continue apace, and become more complicated, as the year 1961 began.

During the final weeks of 1960, the United States and Cuba inched towards breaking diplomatic relations. Tensions fuelled by the US embargo, the growing Soviet bloc economic and military presence in Cuba and Washington’s escalating covert activities had generated a mini war scare at the end of October.\textsuperscript{238} A rupture in US-Cuba relations now seemed inevitable,

\textsuperscript{237} Telegram from US Embassy Kingston to Secretary of State, no 124, January 11, 1961 (Unclassified) RG 59 Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 611.37/1-1161, Confidential US State Department files: Cuba Foreign Affairs, 1960-1963 UPA microfilm Reel 1.
with the only question remaining which party would instigate the break. British diplomats suggested to the Americans that Canada might suitably represent US interests in such a contingency. The Americans thought differently, believing Canada would hinder its interests in Cuba, given its coolness to the embargo and its perceived “favored position” on the island. When the moment came, the Eisenhower administration opted for the Swiss. Cuban interests in the United States would be handled by Czechoslovakia.

The moment finally did come on January 3, 1961, in the closing days of the Eisenhower administration, with the President himself taking the lead. The immediate pretext of the rupture was Castro’s insistence that the United States drastically reduce the number of staff at its Havana mission, arguing (correctly) that such personnel were involved in efforts to undermine his regime. Livingston Merchant contacted Canadian Embassy Minister Saul Rae just hours before the break was made official. Apologizing for not giving Canada more notice, Merchant stated that the United States’ decision to terminate diplomatic relations was a recent one, after two years of putting up with the Castro government. This was somewhat misleading in that Washington had prepared some months for this eventuality. External Affairs officials sought to reassure the State Department that although Canada would stay in Havana, its decision did not mean Canada was either unsympathetic or wanting to appear as such to the Americans. In turn, the United States government did not pressure Canada to sever relations with Cuba. As with the embargo, the severance of US-Cuban diplomatic relations came as no surprise to Ottawa, although it served as another fundamental diversion point between the two neighbours over this issue. But as will be shown, its ongoing diplomatic representation in Cuba provided Canada with opportunities to be a helpful neighbour to the United States, as well as occasionally serving as an indirect conduit.


241 For evidence the US wanted the rupture sooner, see Despatch from Embassy in Cuba to the Department of State, December 16, 1960 (Secret) in FRUS 1958-1960, Vol. VI, Doc 623, 1178-1184.

Despite the turbulence, Canada had held its course regarding Cuba. The final six months of the Eisenhower administration were among the testiest in Canadian-US relations over Cuba, despite the positive Eisenhower-Diefenbaker relationship, a factor that likely kept the issue from being worse. Overall, bilateral relations became even thornier as the new administration of John F. Kennedy entered the White House. In an ominous signal, Dean Rusk, the Secretary of State designate, told Heeney that the new administration did not want any so-called “special relationship” with Canada to affect relations with other allies – in other words Canada could no longer count on special favour in Washington. Robinson recorded the Prime Minister’s trepidation as the steadying hand of Dwight Eisenhower departed from the helm. To Diefenbaker’s delight, he was invited to Washington January 17-19 to witness the Columbia River Treaty signing - one of the outgoing President’s last official acts was one that pertained to Canada. In a brief pre-ceremony White House meeting, the two men discussed the Cold War and the destructive potential of nuclear weapons. Cuba was not mentioned. As recorded by Robinson, the Prime Minister was left with the impression that Eisenhower did not hold his successor in high regard, a viewpoint closely matching his own. Diefenbaker felt especially honoured upon learning that he would be one of only five world leaders who would receive a final handwritten Presidential letter. A month later, Diefenbaker sent the now former President a “Dear Ike” letter, praising his leadership and fondly recalling their personal friendship. On Canadian-American relations he wrote “whenever matters of disagreement, actual or potential, were brought to your attention they were acted upon by you to the last extent possible.” The contrast in his personal feelings towards the new President could not be more apparent.

243 Robinson Diefenbaker’s World, 168. For Heeney’s account see Arnold Heeney, The Things That are Caesars: Memoirs of a Canadian Public Servant, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 177-172.
244 Robinson, 168.
245 Robinson, 167.
246 Memorandum for the Diary File “Prime Minister’s Visit to Washington, January 19, 1961 (Secret) in H. Basil Robinson fonds, MG 31, E-83, Box 4, File 4.3, LAC. The other four were Queen Elizabeth, Indian Prime Minister Nehru, West German Chancellor Adenauer and Mexican President Lopez Mateos.
247 Robinson, 168.
Chapter 4: Establishing Cooperation in the midst of tension: Canada, the United States and Cuba under Diefenbaker and Kennedy: January to November 1961

Canada’s already uncomfortable position with the United States regarding Cuba was certainly exacerbated by the acrimonious relationship that developed between John F. Kennedy and John Diefenbaker. John Kirk and Peter McKenna give significant weight to this personal clash in influencing Diefenbaker’s resolve to have a different Cuba policy than the United States, and argue it was in this period that this issue became a distinguishable Canadian-American difference. While the mutual dislike between the leaders cannot be ignored, it is essential to remember that Cuba had already generated considerable friction, arguably of greater intensity, in the last half year of the Eisenhower presidency, despite the leaders’ preservation of an amicable “Ike and John” rapport. Yet also significant is that those months between Kennedy’s inauguration and his May 1961 Ottawa visit were formative ones for the development of a Canada-United States modus operandi regarding Fidel Castro’s regime.

Apart from the leaders’ personal differences, Canadian-American friction over Cuba continued to be driven by clashing consensuses in the two countries, as manifested most prominently by the media and legislators in each country. In the United States, where the Cuba issue was a far more volatile matter, most of these voices advocated harsher measures against Cuba. These were contrasted in Canada by growing nationalism, disillusionment with the Cold War’s excesses and in some segments, overt anti-Americanism. In reality, behind the scenes and even occasionally in public statements, Ottawa expressed considerable sympathy for the United States, going against nationalist currents in Canada. Both the elected officials and senior public servants deplored Castro’s now overt embrace of the Soviet Union and the cause of international communism, and Ottawa continued to treat Cuba as a bloc country for all practical purposes. Despite Canada’s ongoing trade and diplomatic relations with Havana, the temperature between them was quite cool, with External Affairs officials and Diefenbaker himself having several frosty exchanges with Ambassador Américo Cruz concerning Cuban foreign policy and the trade imbalance that by then substantially favoured Canada.

1 The best account to date of how this relationship got started on such a poor footing is Knowlton Nash, Kennedy and Diefenbaker: The Feud that Helped Topple a Government (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990), 62-64. For his account of their first meeting in February 1961, see Ibid, 90-96.
2 John Kirk and Peter McKenna Canada-Cuba Relations: The Other Good Neighbour Policy (Gainseville: University of Florida Press, 1997), 46-47.
As it began in late 1960, the day to day management of Canadian-American differences was primarily handled at the working levels, even though there were probably more Presidential-Prime Ministerial conversations on Cuba during the Kennedy administration than at any other time. The parameters of cooperation set in late 1960 were solidified in 1961. The United States rejected any overarching mediatory role for Canada in its dispute with Cuba (although it would welcome Canadian help on specific matters). Canada firmly held to the promises Diefenbaker made to the House of Commons in December 1960 of refusing the export of US made or military oriented goods, and policed Cuban related exports carefully. It continued to deflect Cuban requests for regular passenger service to Canada, and tightly controlled charter flights. It monitored travel to Cuba, seeking to keep tabs on possible efforts by so-called subversives, whether they be Cubans or leftist oriented Canadians – or Americans. Also, on a confidential basis, Canada began to share with Washington intelligence reports from its Havana embassy. Those written by Ambassador George Kidd, which tended to interpret Cuban developments in a manner confirming American assumptions, were popular in the State Department and White House.

For its part, the Kennedy administration continued in practice to acknowledge a special relationship between Canada and the United States, despite Dean Rusk’s initial ambivalence. Concerning Cuba, this was exemplified by the deference it showed Canada by not imposing the intrusive Trading with the Enemy Act measures, even though such concessions went against Kennedy’s own inclination, not to mention the punitive mood of much of the American press and Congress. Kennedy and his foreign policy team struggled to find a middle course that would satisfy those calling for maximum toughness, while minimizing friction with its Canadian neighbour, and to a lesser extent other NATO allies. This would prove to be at times a bumpy but not seriously difficult endeavour.

Documentary evidence suggests that the US presidential election result may well have shored up Diefenbaker’s resolve to preserve Canadian freedom of action on relations with Cuba. Just a day after Kennedy’s razor-thin victory over Richard Nixon, Basil Robinson recorded that the Prime Minister had changed his tune on Cuba, moving away from close cooperation with the American embargo towards taking a more independent posture. It is not too much of a stretch

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to speculate that this shift had much to do with Diefenbaker’s foreboding and suspicion regarding the incoming US President. Diefenbaker’s sentiments about Kennedy well antedated their first meeting. According to Robinson, in the early summer of 1960 Diefenbaker had expressed great reservations over the prospect of a Kennedy presidency, confiding to his foreign policy advisor “I’d be worried if he became president.”\(^4\) In August, the Prime Minister candidly shared with Ambassador Heeney his dislike for Kennedy and his respect and admiration for Vice President Nixon.\(^5\)

Nixon’s personality, style and intellect both suited and struck a sympathetic cord with Diefenbaker, and indeed the two leaders had much in common. Both brilliant lawyers, the two men shared similar insecurities about their relatively modest backgrounds, and were jealous of Kennedy’s youth, wealth, charisma, and popularity. Also in common were their long memories, paranoid streaks, bitterness in defeat and deep resentments of the political and social establishments represented by their political nemeses, Kennedy and Lester B. Pearson. Nixon disliked Kennedy’s social circles and his entourage of Ivy League graduates, and the Prime Minister’s repeated grumbling about the “Pearsonalities” in Ottawa, especially the Department of External Affairs, was legendary.\(^6\) Despite Diefenbaker’s own nationalist and occasionally anti-American streak, Nixon recalled him favourably, especially in contrast to Pierre Trudeau, the Prime Minister he would face as President. In a White House conversation with then Canadian Ambassador Edgar Ritchie in January 1970, Nixon recalled that “Diefenbaker had reflected a mood [of healthy Canadian nationalism] and had been good for Canada in his day.”\(^7\)

How Canadian policy regarding Cuba might have evolved had Nixon won the 1960 election makes for an interesting counterfactual. While Kennedy outflanked Nixon on the right over Cuba in the famous October 1960 televised debates (for which Nixon never forgave his opponent), the reality was the Vice-President was considerably more hawkish on Cuba than


\(^5\) See Memorandum of discussion with the Prime Minister, August 30, 1960 (Personal and Confidential) Arnold Heeney Papers, MG 30, E-144, Vol. 1, file 1-15, LAC. For the similarities in personality between Nixon and Diefenbaker see Denis Smith *Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker*. (Toronto: MacFarlane, Walter and Ross, 1995), 377-378. According to Smith, Diefenbaker greatly appreciated the Vice President’s congratulatory note following his overwhelming election victory in the March 1958 federal election. See Smith, 283.

\(^6\) Robinson,117; for the “Pearsonalities,” see Denis Smith, *Rogue Tory*, 281.

Kennedy. When Nixon met with the new President in the Oval Office just days after the Bay of Pigs invasion’s disastrous failure, he told Kennedy that if he were President, he would “find proper legal cover and would go in” – in other words a full-fledged US military invasion of Cuba. Given the likelihood that Nixon would have proceeded with an invasion, Diefenbaker would have faced a difficult choice of either alienating his friend in Washington or supporting an action repulsive to most Canadians, not to mention Latin Americans. A Nixon presidency in 1961 would likely have set back Ottawa’s efforts to forge stronger ties in the hemisphere.

In preparing for the new President, Diefenbaker’s mood was certainly not helped by Dean Rusk’s pre-inauguration remarks to Heeney, words that for Prime Minister betrayed “a superciliousness or condescension towards Canada.” The Ambassador sought to reassure the Prime Minister that this was not in fact the case, and that Rusk ’s cageyness should be seen as a way to avoid showing favouritism among leading US allies. Heeney’s interpretation of Kennedy administration policy on Canada proved largely correct. The record shows that on Cuba in particular, Canada was the one country singled out for exceptions and gentler treatment. The new President wanted good relations with Canada, and during his shortened presidency, he devoted significant attention to Canadian affairs. Despite a rapidly deteriorating Kennedy-Diefenbaker relationship and the considerable exasperation that Dean Rusk and other officials felt towards Howard Green, the new administration sought to put its best foot forward with Ottawa. A March 1962 State Department policy guideline written well after these personal challenges were readily apparent, acknowledged that “our manner of conducting relations [with Canada] is of special importance. We must seek to moderate or remove points of friction on economic, defense or foreign policy problems.” At the same time, US diplomats were advised:

In the conduct of our relations with Canada it is essential to realize that the most important element in problems involving Canada is psychological. Among the major factors to be taken into account are the Canadian inferiority complex regarding the US, growing Canadian

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8 Nixon believed Kennedy jeopardized national security by exploiting in the debates classified briefings he had received as the Democratic Presidential candidate, although his rage was likely the political cost. See Stephen Ambrose, Nixon: The Education of a Politician, 1913-1962, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 569-570, 590-592.
11 Ibid.
12 For frustrations with Green, see Nash, 80-84,104-105.
nationalism and the tendency to inject relations with the US into Canadian domestic politics. US officials should be aware that while Canadians desire to preserve and promote a Canadian national identity, they also desire, and believe themselves entitled to, a privileged relationship with the US. We should expect in the immediate years ahead Canada may take a number of actions or initiatives which we will find extremely annoying.\textsuperscript{14}

Cuba served as a pivotal case study of an “annoying” issue that American diplomats and policy makers alike had to navigate.

Cuba was a prominent agenda item for the two leaders’ first meeting in Washington on February 20, 1961, the first such opportunity Diefenbaker would take to articulate the Canadian viewpoint at the highest level. Stressing that Canada was going over and above what was required to cooperate with the United States embargo, he told Kennedy and Rusk in the Oval Office:

> Canada’s policy is to trade with all Communist countries in goods other than those which have strategic importance. In the case of Cuba, however, Canada was going further than this criterion by forbidding trans-shipment through Canada of goods originating in the United States.\textsuperscript{15}

Kennedy did not protest Canadian policy. However, the Prime Minister elected to raise the delicate matter of American export control law and its extraterritorial reach, a subject that he went on at for some length, although in this context the focus was Canadian trade with the People’s Republic of China, rather than Cuba. Nonetheless, the issues were essentially identical, as were the respective Canadian and American positions. Kennedy argued that China’s hostile rhetoric was a sensitive issue for Americans, and that there was little prospect for better relations – the same argument he and his successors used regarding the Castro regime. Diefenbaker in turn railed on about the unacceptable infringement on sovereignty of US export controls, an issue he described as “politically inflammatory” to Canadians.\textsuperscript{16} Confronted head on, Kennedy conceded to the Canadian leader that “all these elements had not been brought out when he first considered the problem,” and he agreed that “a hard look at the broad question of US control of companies operating in Canada” was needed.\textsuperscript{17} His administration butted heads with Ottawa on several occasions concerning this issue, as would several of his successors in the White House, with no comprehensive resolution forthcoming. Diefenbaker got his point across, although not

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. 1144.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, 1145.
without negative fallout. Kennedy told Livingston Merchant in sending him to Ottawa as Ambassador that he liked the Prime Minister and asked him to resolve Canada’s irritation concerning shipping grain to China.18 Deeper down, Kennedy was highly irritated by Diefenbaker, muttering to his closest advisors that he hoped he would “never have to see that boring son of a bitch again.”19

John F. Kennedy, especially in the opening months of his presidency, was in no mood to be conciliatory towards the Castro regime. He opposed it on principle, had campaigned hard against it, and most Americans then supported a hard line posture.20 From the moment of taking office, Kennedy wanted to tighten the American squeeze on Cuba’s economy, hoping that by making life as difficult as possible, that country’s residents could be incited to revolt against the regime, an eventuality his administration hoped to kick start through covert paramilitary action. A serious miscalculation, this presumption contributed significantly to the failure at the Bay of Pigs. In his first weeks in office, the President was unsure as to the most effective means of strengthening the embargo. At the outset, members of his national security team advocated the imposition of blocking controls under the Trading with the Enemy Act, which would stop all American transactions with Cuba of any kind – an action Eisenhower had resisted the previous autumn. In February, the new President demanded an assessment of how Cuba, but also third countries, might be affected by additional sanctions.21 Inter American Affairs Assistant Secretary Thomas Mann (soon to be appointed US ambassador to Mexico), wrote his counterpart Foy Kohler in the European Affairs Bureau, that “differences with Canada loom because of the number and extent of US subsidiaries with Canada.” 22 Mann favoured notifying Ottawa before adopting new measures, but recommended that disputes with Canada be dealt with on a case by case basis, rather than by giving it any blanket promise. Mann, his colleagues in Inter American Affairs and members of the Treasury Department opposed giving blanket

19 Nash, 99. Also Smith, Rogue Tory, 378-382.
22 Memorandum from Thomas Mann (ARA) to Foy Kohler (EUR) “Further Economic Measures with Respect to Cuba,” February 17, 1961 (Confidential) in Dept. of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs Assistant Secretary’s Subject Files 1959-1962, RG 59, Entry A1 3147, Box 3, Folder “Cuba Jan-Mar 1961,” NARA
exemptions to foreign subsidiaries, lest they become leading sources of spare parts for Cuba and gain an unfair competitive advantage by having access to a market denied to other American firms lacking foreign subsidiaries. For decades to come, the United States would use this argument in refusing to give blanket general exemptions for foreign branches of American companies, even though Canada was asking for this very thing.

The now annual Joint Canada-US Economic and Trade meetings were scheduled for mid-March in Washington. Fully expecting Canada to raise the extraterritoriality issue, the State Department’s briefing paper argued that “we have the right to control US subsidiaries abroad”, even though they did not necessarily advocate asserting such control. During the official sessions, there was no discussion specifically on Cuba, although there was a spirited exchange on US Foreign Assets Controls, both in general and on transporting Canadian grain to China. Finance Minister Donald Fleming described Canadians as “not a volatile people,” but also added that many thought the United States had too much influence on the Canadian economy. Fleming added he could “not imagine a more serious problem” with the Canadian public should the United States extend its Foreign Assets Control regulations into Canada. The Minister of Agriculture, Alvin Hamilton, reinforced the Finance Minister’s views. Later on in his memoirs, Fleming recorded having an informal conversation with Rusk and Douglas Dillon, now the Treasury Secretary, recalling how both men had urged Ottawa to ban all exports to Cuba of spare parts and industrial machinery. Refusing to extend the Canadian embargo beyond strategic and US made goods, Fleming, perhaps unwisely, stated that Canada was not subject to the Monroe Doctrine, and that as Canadian assets in Cuba had not been expropriated by Havana, the two countries had no economic quarrels (a convenient sidestepping of the claims of Canadian life insurance companies and Canadian International Paper). Refuting arguments about the

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23 Memorandum to Thomas Mann (ARA) “Invocation of Trading with the Enemy Act and its Effects on US Subsidiaries in Canada,” February 15, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 59, Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs Assistant Secretary’s Subject Files 1959-1962, Entry A1 3147, Box 3, Folder “Cuba Jan-Mar 1961,” NARA


26 See Donald Fleming, So Very Near: The Political Memoirs of the Honourable Donald M. Fleming: Volume Two – the Summit Years (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 254-256. For the life insurance companies and Canadian International Paper, see Chapter 3 of this study.
embargo’s ineffectiveness, Mann argued to the contrary, and told James Roberts, the Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce, that it was in fact hurting key sectors of the Cuban economy. In this vein, he reinforced that denying Cuba spare parts for industrial machinery was for the United States, especially important. The Assistant Secretary insinuated that further measures were under consideration, although no final decision had been made. Having made their positions clear, neither of the two neighbours convinced the other to revise their positions.

The strength of Canadian resolve, especially regarding extraterritoriality, made a sufficient impression on the new US administration that it relented from adopting the Trading with the Enemy Act measures. Anticipating a challenging relationship with Ottawa, Kennedy and Rusk concluded such an action would generate more unwanted friction. The White House would wait before deciding on such controls until Rusk had returned from a series of overseas meetings, and the Canadian embassy was also promised 24 hours advance notice pending any further action. Such messaging did little to reassure Ottawa. Well aware of how politically volatile the Cuban issue was in the United States, Under Secretary Robertson informed Green on March 24 that he believed Trading with the Enemy controls were likely still on the table, and that Canada and the United States differed over what constituted a strategic good, with some Canadian exports, such as civilian aircraft, having potential dual usages. Robertson speculated that in order to avoid entanglements with the Americans, Ottawa might have to accept as a quid-pro-quo a commitment to not sell Cuba non-strategic but economically valuable capital goods, such as sugar refinery equipment and truck spare parts, categories of goods Cuba was anxious to procure from Canada, but ones that the United States was equally anxious that Canada not supply.

Cooperating with Washington’s request was awkward for the Canadian government, as the latter still sought as cordial a relationship with Cuba as possible. This clash of interests required skilful and delicate diplomacy on the part of Canadian politicians and officials. In

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27 See Memorandum for the Canadian Ambassador in Washington (Heeney) from the Minister Counsellor Economic (M. Schwarzmann) “Cuba”, [ca. March 13, 1961] (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 9, LAC
28 See Memorandum for the Canadian Ambassador in Washington (Heeney) from the Minister Counsellor Economic (M. Schwarzmann) “Cuba”, [ca. March 13, 1961] (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 9, LAC
29 Telegram from Canadian Embassy in Washington to External Affairs, no 961, March 24, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5012, File 288-40, pt. 9, LAC
30 Memorandum from Norman Robertson for the Minister “Further USA Economic Measures Against Cuba, March 24, 1961 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 5012, File 288-40, pt. 9, LAC
March 1961, the Director of Regional Political Affairs in Cuba’s Foreign Ministry, Commandante Guillermo Jimenez Soler, confronted Malcolm Bow, then the Counsellor at Canada’s Havana embassy (and a future ambassador) regarding public criticisms of Castro by Canadian officials but also on Cuba’s difficulties in obtaining spare parts. When Bow replied that the problem was that many such parts were US manufactured, Jimenez understood, replying that “the Cuban government understood the importance to Canada of maintaining good commercial relations with the United States” and that it had “no desire to create difficulties in this field.”

Frustrated by Canadian hesitancy to sell Cuba spare parts, Havana was even more disconcerted by the decline in its trade volume with Canada in 1961. Washington’s embargo robbed Cuba of a critical source of foreign exchange needed to buy western goods, and in July, the country’s Vice-Minister of Trade, Jacinto Torres, complained in writing to Trade and Commerce Minister Hees that during the first six months of the year, Canada imported only $1.6 million in Cuban goods, a substantial drop from the $7.25 million figure for all 1960.

Such a decline did not help Cuba’s foreign exchange situation, which in turn inhibited Canada’s willingness to sell that country goods it would have trouble paying for. Havana quickly came to realize that while Canada wanted good relations with Cuba, the latter would always take a back seat to relations with the United States. The sympathies of Canadian officials lay with the Americans in any event. George Kidd, arriving at the Havana post late in the summer of 1961, wrote that Cuba may have hoped Canada might prove itself “a friendly neutral”, but that it was vital that Ottawa disabuse the Castro government of any such notion, particularly after the Cuban leader openly declared in December that the revolution was Marxist-Leninist in character.

During both the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban missile crises, Canadian diplomats and officials showed themselves remarkably sympathetic to the United States, and equally disdainful of the ideological rhetoric that came from Cuba’s Ambassador to Ottawa, Américo Cruz.

The embargo was not the only major issue for Canada regarding Cuba that spring. The failed Bay of Pigs invasion in April sparked hostility towards United States policy across Latin America, and also generated considerable criticism in Canada. That Washington would try to

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32 Letter from Jacinto Torras, Cuban Vice Minister of Foreign Trade to the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Hees) July 25, 1961, in RG 25, Vol. 5012, File 288-40, pt.10, LAC
topple Castro was no surprise to Canadian diplomats. That previous July, Livingston Merchant had hinted that the United States government was preparing for an alternative Cuban government, telling Green:

in the long run reliance had to be placed on the Cubans themselves and on Latin American opinion generally. He said that moderate and highly respected expatriate Cubans who were not tarred with the brush of Batista were “coalescing” outside Cuba and might provide a possible alternative government.34

While not protesting such a development outright, Robertson warned the Americans that relying too much on expatriate Cubans might backfire, and that Washington might have greater success from an internal opposition.35 Castro’s government by that time had become increasingly successful in repressing the latter. In September, Robertson further expounded these views in a letter to Ambassador Heeney:

the U.S. seems to be following a “wait for Castro to fall” policy, in the hope that the Castro Government will be overthrown by an internal revolution, organized by Cuban exile groups with covert U.S. support, and made possible by Castro’s alienation of the Cuban middle-classes and the Church, and by the growing popular discontent resulting from the economic difficulties caused by government mismanagement and the suppression of the sugar a quota on the U.S. market.36

In his view, “for Canada, the political costs, and the risks of U.S. armed intervention would greatly outweigh the obvious advantages of Castro’s removal.”37 The rumblings of US regime change efforts continued during the early months of the Kennedy administration. At a March 1961 dinner in Washington, when Heeney questioned Rusk about the wisdom of Washington’s Cuba policies, the Secretary of State angrily retorted that a communist regime in Cuba was unacceptable to the United States, and that his government was considering military force to remove it - a point the ambassador later described in his memoirs as “a rendition of the Munroe [sic] doctrine with a vengeance.”38

34 Record of Meeting between Canada-United States Committee on Joint Defence, Montebello, July 12, 1960 (Top Secret) in DCER, Vol. 27, Doc 302, 577. Also online at Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) website http://www.international.gc.ca/department/history-histoire/dcer/1960/menu-en.asp
37 Ibid.
38 Arnold Heeney, The Things that are Caesars, 177. This incident is confirmed in Heeney’s Diary entry for March 12, 1961 in Arnold Heeney fonds, MG 30, E-144, Box 2, File 2-29, LAC
Despite the Canadian government’s coolness to any talk of toppling Castro, the Kennedy administration may have had reason to believe that when push came to shove, Ottawa would support its efforts, especially if the action was quick and decisive - a view it believed many Latin American governments also shared. At a dinner after the July 1960 Montebello meetings, a stunned Rufus Smith of the US Ottawa Embassy staff reported that the normally very discreet Cabinet Secretary Robert Bryce had casually suggested to him that the United States consider organizing the Cuban opposition. When Smith asked how Ottawa would react if the Americans tried to recruit Cuba’s former Ambassador Luis Baralt (who had defected), Bryce replied “why does the Canadian government have to know?” 39 Believing generally that such intrigue might harm “important trust and candour” between the two neighbours, Smith wondered if Canada was quietly winking at US anti-Castro intelligence operations. Bryce was likely voicing his own opinion only, although his views would have had support in the RCMP and the Canadian military. He was not speaking for Norman Robertson, and certainly not for Howard Green.

The Bay of Pigs invasion itself has received more than amply coverage in the literature, and its details need not be revisited here.40 As perhaps the worst kept secret operation in history, any observant reader of the American press in March and April 1961 could detect that something was afoot concerning Cuba.41 Observing Cuban exile activities in the in the lead-up months to the invasion, Canadian diplomats in Havana were incredulous that the new President would undertake such a politically risky adventure.42 Ambassador Anderson certainly thought any odds of success were very slim, telling officials during a brief Ottawa furlough in February that overthrowing Castro could be achieved “only with the greatest of difficulty and in all probability not at all.” To back his point, Anderson reported that the Cuban regime had actually become more confident and strident in its militancy, as its ties deepened with the Soviet

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42 See Munton and Vogt in Wright and Wylie ed. Our Place in the Sun, 55-57.
Anderson would leave the Havana post shortly after the debacle, and the writing a Canadian post-mortem on the Bay of Pigs fell to Malcolm Bow, who served as Interim Chargé d’Affaires until George Kidd’s arrival. Bow labelled the botched invasion “a tragic blunder” and for the Cuban government, it was “a point of no return.” Castro immediately afterwards declared his revolution to be socialist, and concluded that his government’s breach with the United States was now permanent. Bow also reported how the Cuban leader used the incident as a catalyst for a crackdown on opponents and on the church. Many would be arrested in its aftermath, including several Canadian Roman Catholic missionaries. At the same time, as it needed amicable relations with at least one western capitalist country, Castro chose Canada. As a good will gesture, he personally intervened on behalf of the arrested priests to secure their release, and as well, the tightly controlled official press characterized Canada’s foreign policy as being non-interventionist, independently minded and resistant of American domination – a depiction Bow saw as at best a mixed blessing. In advising his superiors in the External Affairs Department, Bow recommended opposing intervention in Cuba, but otherwise believed Canada’s posture towards Cuba should be “friendly but not fraternal.”

Canadian diplomats and policymakers alike were advised to avoid expressions of anti-Americanism or ideological sympathy to Castro’s regime, the latter of which they did not share in any case.

The Bay of Pigs invasion generated significant critical press coverage in Canada. The Prime Minister’ Office received a number of letters, most of which encouraged Canada to resist the American line and to carry on with Canada’s existing Cuba policy. As well, there were protests. The week of the invasion, small demonstrations denouncing the intervention took place in front of US consulates in Toronto and Montreal, events that did receive the notice of Canadian newspapers, the State Department and the RCMP. These gatherings were mostly

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\[43\] Canadian Embassy, Havana Despatch D-260, March 22, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 9, LAC

\[44\] Canadian Embassy Havana Despatch D-397, June 15, 1961 (Confidential) in Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited Collection, Doc. CU 00185. The original is found in RG 25, Vol. 5352, File 10224-40, pt. 11, LAC

\[45\] Canadian Embassy Havana Despatch D-397, June 15, 1961 (Confidential) in Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited Collection, Doc. CU 00185. The original is found in RG 25, Vol. 5352, File 10224-40, pt. 11, LAC

\[46\] “Letters received on Canadian Trade with Cuba”, John Diefenbaker papers, Series XII, File 722/C962, Reel M-8878, LAC – note the stamp “seen by John G. Diefenbaker

\[47\] For US State Department coverage see American Consul in Toronto Despatch no. 86 to Department of State, April 19, 1961 (Limited Official Use), in RG 84 United States Toronto Consulate General Records, Entry UD 2236, Folder “350 Political Affairs – Cuban Situation 1962”, Box 3, NARA. For the RCMP see RCMP Report
organized by the Fair Play for Cuba Committee Canada, a Canadian satellite of an American left-of-centre umbrella organization. Established in early 1961, the Canadian organization’s initial goals were to educate the public on the merits of the Cuban revolution by means of public meetings, the distribution of pro-Castro literature, media exposure, organizing and promoting travel to Cuba, and membership drives. While never representative of the Canadian mainstream, Fair Play did include some prominent individuals, including authors (notably Farley Mowat), journalists, academics, trade union leaders, students and liberal clergy, with many members also being activists in other pacifist and left leaning groups that were highly critical of the United States. One early member, University of Toronto historian Kenneth McNaught, initially supported the group’s efforts as he saw Cuba as a test case for Canada to make its own foreign policy, but later quit out of embarrassment when realizing that FPCC was principally, as he later described it, “the creature of American Trotskyists and Canadian communists.”

Coming under the leadership of the Trotskyite League for Socialist Action in 1962, for its remaining decade FPCC served as a mouthpiece for the Cuban government in Canada, with Ambassador Cruz being its favourite guest. The group also temporarily provided a haven for Robert F. Williams, a leading African-American activist and fugitive who embraced Marxism and subsequently settled in Cuba for a number of years, issuing his “Radio Free Dixie” broadcasts (later he would move to China). On account of all these activities, the RCMP would generate an extensive file on the organization.

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49 Described as its purpose in Minutes of Meeting of Fair Play for Cuba Committee January 26, 1961 in Ross Dowson fonds, R10995, Fair Play for Cuba Committee files, Vol. 69, Folder F5 (1961-1963), LAC


50 Information derived from various documents in RG 146, File “Fair Play for Cuba Committee, Toronto, Ont. Vol. 28, Correspondence 69-08-26 to [end]”, ATIP Release A2009-00183, Stack 4, LAC

51 On Williams’ career see Cynthia Wright, “Between Nation and Empire” in Wright and Wylie, Our Place in the Sun, 108-110. The Fair Play for Cuba Committee files in the Ross Dowson fonds at the Library and Archives Canada contain extensive documentation and correspondence with Williams, including a 15 page letter from Williams to FPCC Chair Vern Olsen after Williams moved to China from Cuba after clashing with Cuban authorities. The letter notes contacts with Canada. See Ross Dowson fonds R10995, Vol. 74, Folder 74-2 “Robert Williams Correspondence,” LAC
Early in April, it was announced that in mid-May, Kennedy would pay an official visit to Ottawa. Despite public criticisms of American foreign policy regarding Cuba and elsewhere, Canadians admired the young charismatic President. Diefenbaker knew he had to try and make this relationship work, especially with the visit now imminent. He concluded that it would be imprudent to rub salt in the wounds of the humiliated and chastened leader, who now had to convince everyone from the American national security establishment to his public to allies to Soviet Chairman Nikita Khrushchev that he had enough skill and chutzpah to lead the free world. In this context, Diefenbaker thought that publicly offering sympathetic statements might cover over earlier tensions and pave the way for a successful Ottawa meeting. Seizing the initiative on April 19, the very day of the operation’s collapse and defeat, the Prime Minister read a carefully crafted statement in the House of Commons, sharply criticizing the Castro regime’s communist orientation and expressing sympathy for American security concerns, all the while avoiding an open endorsement of the invasion. The Kennedy White House greatly appreciated this gesture, and Canada gained some much needed political favour in Washington. It even made the State Department’s list of countries it had judged to be “helpful” during the crisis. Diefenbaker’s gesture opened a window for improved Canadian-American relations and it would be remembered by Kennedy a year later, when he would ask the Prime Minister to use his oratory skills once again on behalf of the captured Cuban brigade members.

While it gained him American praise, Diefenbaker’s House statement was deemed to be too strong by some External Affairs officials, who feared that the Canadian public and the Cuban government would interpret the message as approval of the invasion, making relations with Cuba difficult. Canadian-Cuban relations were indeed strained after the invasion, and Canadian officials from Diefenbaker down laid before Ambassador Cruz much stronger anti-communist positions than they had given earlier. Recounting to US Ambassador Merchant his meeting with Cruz the day he gave his parliamentary speech, Diefenbaker had told the Cuban diplomat that the Cuban revolution’s Marxist, pro-Soviet turn was unwelcome in both the

53 Memorandum, “Attitudes of Countries on US Position on Cuba” April 27, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject Files of the Assistant Secretary of Inter American Affairs 1959-1962, Entry A1 3147, Box 3, File “Cuba (April-June) 1961”, NARA
hemisphere and the world. After Cruz blustered that Castro-inspired revolutions were imminent in seven Latin American countries, Diefenbaker denounced his government as a Soviet and Chinese satellite, a comment that ended the meeting “on a note something short of cordiality.”

Under Secretary Robertson held an equally terse conversation with the Cuban Ambassador at the latter’s initiative a week later. Fearing the prospect that Kennedy would try again to topple his government, Cruz attempted to draw out of Robertson Ottawa’s response. The Under Secretary ambivalently replied that Canada would meet its United Nations obligations, but that it was Cuba’s responsibility to behave in such a way as to dissuade the United States from taking such a drastic measure. As first steps, he advised that Cuba tone down its hostile rhetoric, treat the captured invaders humanely and cease persecuting the Roman Catholic Church. Cruz angrily retorted that Cuba had already made three unreciprocated overtures to the United States, and that the Americans’ real concerns were property, not communism. Similarly to Diefenbaker, Robertson begrudgingly acknowledged Washington’s claims that Cuba was a hemispheric security problem after all, despite having earlier resisted this viewpoint; in contrast, Cruz sought again to convince the Canadian that Cuba’s disputes with the United States were bilateral disputes, mostly about money. Acknowledging his country’s limitations in getting Ottawa to see its viewpoint, Cruz reported back to Havana:

we have been able to find out the real thoughts of this government and the their policy in relation to our struggle against imperialism … the meeting has allowed us to know that we can not expect much of this country and it shows that their position is right on the side of the United States.

This scenario would be replayed a year later during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Even as Canada appeared to take the United States’ side, not too much should be made of Diefenbaker’s so-called sympathy for the Bay of Pigs. In fact, the episode greatly irritated and concerned him. Twice the Prime Minister informed Merchant how he had gone out on a limb for President Kennedy, against the advice of senior External Affairs officials, and as a

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56 Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Robertson) to the Minister (Green) “Meeting with the Cuban Ambassador” April 25, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4183, File 2444-40, pt. 6, LAC
57 Ibid
consequence he had personally reaped “a torrent of abuse on him from socialists and the like.”

While Diefenbaker remained a committed anti-communist, his sympathy for the United States was countered by his private reservations about Kennedy and his seeming penchant for reckless decisions. At times he gave mixed messages. Basil Robinson recalled on the one hand, “it was not so much that [Diefenbaker] deplored the strike against the Castro regime, but that he was concerned about the failure to carry it through efficiently.” Yet on the other, as the Prime Minister indicated to Norman Robertson on April 26, he “did not wish the United States government to be left with the impression that it could count on Canadian support for anything foolish they [sic] might try to do in Cuba.” Overlooking the fact that the Bay of Pigs was supposed to be a covert and thus officially deniable operation, Diefenbaker was highly irritated about not receiving advance consultation from the White House. He stressed to Merchant that he saw it as vital that in the future, Canada be so consulted “before the USG took any drastic action with respect to Cuba,” a matter that re-emerged with a vengeance eighteen months later. When Ambassador Heeney met with Rusk in Washington in early May, the Secretary “made no rpt no attempt to defend USA involvement in the ill fated operations of Apr 17,” but argued that the aborted invasion had clarified the nature of the Castro threat.

Temporarily shelving covert paramilitary action, in May Kennedy turned back to economic warfare as a leading means of pressure on Castro. Once again there were substantial calls for harsher sanctions against Havana by means of the Trading with the Enemy Act. On April 25, Treasury Secretary Dillon advocated a retreat from Washington’s earlier promises to Canada about exempting subsidiary firms from the embargo. Kohler asked Acting Secretary Chester Bowles to reconsider Dillon’s proposal, describing extraterritoriality as “currently the most sensitive area in Canadian-US relations,” and reminding Bowles that Diefenbaker “spent

60 Robinson, Diefenbaker’s World, 192
61 Memorandum from H.B Robinson to Under Secretary Robertson “Cuba,” April 27, 1961 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 5068, File 4035-40, pt. 6, LAC
62 Ibid.
63 Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington DC to External Affairs no 1401, May 2, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 20 Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 9 LAC
more time and was more emotional about FAC [Foreign Assets Controls] than on any other subject” during his February meetings with Kennedy. In Kohler’s opinion, Canada deserved some favour on account of Diefenbaker’s statement, and Dillon’s proposal would sabotage the Ottawa visit. Heeding this advice, on April 27, Dillon relented and opted to allow the licencing of Canadian subsidiaries for Cuba trade, but not for other allies, and he rejected a blanket exemption. The Kennedy administration was skittish about poisoning relations with Canada, and was willing to go against calls for harsher measures against Havana, even though more drastic actions had broad domestic support in the United States. The special relationship between Canada and the United States thus continued to hold together, even if at times though gritted teeth.

Seeking to leverage whatever political advantage it had to sideline this contentious and divisive issue, the Canadian government did so by holding to a firm position. The Cabinet decided at its May 5 meeting reluctantly to accept a complete waiver for Canadian subsidiaries in lieu of its preference of an outright exemption, on condition that Canada did not have to apply to the United States for the waiver – a scenario which would signify recognition of American law on Canadian soil. In the meantime, Heeney told Dillon and the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, George Ball on May 8 that Ottawa had “a completely adamant attitude towards the application of Foreign Assets Controls regulations in Canada,” and objected to any attempts to impose them in Canada. Ball agreed to grant Canada licences for its subsidiaries to trade with Cuba, but refused a blanket exemption. With the two sides at loggerheads, Ball later telephoned Heeney indicating that he would present Canada’s case to Dillon and should a waiver were granted, it would be as a special consideration “because it is Canada.”

64 Memorandum from Foy D. Kohler (EUR) to Acting Secretary [Bowles] “Proposed Invocation of Trading with the Enemy Act Regarding Cuba,” April 26, 1961 (Secret) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 437.429/4-2661, NARA
65 Ibid
68 Memorandum of Conversation “Proposed Exempt.ion of Canadian Subsidiaries of US Companies to Application to Cuba of the Trading with the Enemy Act,” May 8, 1961 (Secret) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 427.4282/5-861, NARA
69 Telephone conversation between George Ball and Arnold Heeney, May 8, 1961 in George W. Ball Papers, Memoranda of Telephone Conversations Series, Box 2, Folder Canada 26 April 1961-8 November 1963, John F. Kennedy Library
telephone conversation with Dillon afterwards, Ball maintained his belief that in principle, the United States had the right to require American companies to obey its laws. Heeney informed Ottawa that he could not see the case-by-case approach as “other than objectionable” and he warned Ball, who in turn informed Dillon, that “Diefenbaker would talk about nothing else to the President,” if the Americans proceeded with this plan.

On May 9, Kennedy rejected blocking control measures for the time being, although contingency plans for their use remained ready if the need arose. Chester Bowles, acting for Rusk, informed both Heeney and Ambassador Merchant in Ottawa that the Treasury Department would waive the licencing requirements for Canadian subsidiaries to commercially engage Cuba. Finance Minister Fleming later credited the outcome to his firm stance at the bilateral economic meetings. The reality is that Kennedy administration reluctantly gave Canada special treatment in order not to spoil the upcoming Ottawa trip. American officials made sure their Canadian counterparts knew this concession had not been made without significant cost to the United States. Ball informed Heeney that the administration had received considerable pressure from ordinary Americans and especially from vocal Florida congressmen such as Paul D. Rogers, who called not only for blocking controls but also invocation of the so-called Battle Act, requiring the termination of all US assistance to countries trading with Cuba. The President discussed this domestic pressure with Diefenbaker when in Ottawa although he reassured the Prime Minister he would not impose harsher sanctions “until Cuba had take some new provocative measures.”

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72 Memorandum from Woodward (ARA) to George Ball “Possible Invoking of the Trading with the Enemy Act against Cuba,” July 27, 1961 (Confidential) RG 59, Subject Files of the Assistant Secretary of Inter American Affairs 1959-1962, Entry A1 3147, Box 3, File “Cuba (July-Dec) 1961,” NARA
73 Telegram from Department of State (Chester Bowles) to US Embassy in Ottawa no. 756, May 11, 1961 (Secret) in RG 59, Decimal File 1960-1963, Box 963, File 427.4282/5-1161, NARA
74 Fleming, 255.
75 Telephone conversation between George Ball and Arnold Heeney, May 9, 1961 in George W. Ball Papers, Memoranda of Telephone Conversations Series, Box 2, Folder “Canada 26 April 1961-8 November 1963,” John F. Kennedy Library
76 Memorandum of Conversation between Prime Minister Diefenbaker and President Kennedy, “Canada, the OAS and IA-ECOSOC,” May 17, 1961 (Confidential) in FRUS 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, Doc. 422, 1156.
in June that by that point, the US-Cuba trade had no strategic and negligible economic significance, and the impact of Trading with the Enemy measures would be more political than economic in nature. Kennedy would revisit this question several times before finally proceeding in July 1963.

While the United States deferred to Canada on a more robust economic blockade, it would not do so in other aspects of its Cuba policy. The Kennedy administration was as iron-clad as its predecessor in rejecting any Canadian offer of “good offices” to help repair the Cuba-United States relationship. The President and Secretary of State Rusk were dismayed by unguarded comments Howard Green made to a journalist en route to the May 1961 NATO meetings in Brussels. Thinking wishfully, the External Affairs Minister expressed hope that Ottawa could play a helpful diplomatic role in bridging the gulf between Havana and Washington, as it had tried to do the previous summer in collaboration with Mexico and Brazil. Kennedy had already rebuffed offers of “good offices” by both Argentina and Ecuador in the weeks before the Bay of Pigs. Rejecting Green’s premise that the gulf between Washington and Havana was a bilateral rift and not a matter of hemispheric security, the Americans once again viewed Green as myopic, naive and perhaps a slow learner. The President himself described how the External Affairs Minister’s suggestion revealed “[a] distressing lack [of] awareness of facts in [the] Cuban situation.” Unlike Diefenbaker’s clearly articulated recognition that the Castro government posed a broader threat, Green’s framing of the Cuban-American problem was in fact closer to that of Cuban Ambassador Cruz than the

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77 Memorandum from the President’s Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to President Kennedy, “Present Trade with Cuba,” June 28, 1961 (no classification marking) in FRUS 1961-1963, Vol. X, Doc 240, 615.
78 For discussion on the Brazil and Mexico collaboration see Chapter 3.
79 For Argentina see Memorandum of Conversation “Argentine Proposal to Use Good Offices in Cuban Problem”, March 31, 1961 (Official Use only) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 611.37/3-1361. NARA. On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Foreign Affairs 1960-1963, Reel 5. For a Canadian report see Canadian Embassy Havana Numbered Letter L-203, March 6, 1961 (Restricted) in RG 20, Vol. 2294, File 7-C6-2, pt. 9, LAC. For Ecuador see Memorandum of Conversation “Ecuadorean Efforts to Ameliorate Cuban Problem”, February 6, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 611.37/2-661, NARA on the same reel. See also Stephen Rabe, The Most Dangerous Area in the World, 58.
80 Smith, Rogue Tory, 384-385. For the Cruz-Robertson conversation see Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Robertson) to the Minister (Green), “Conversation with the Cuban Ambassador,” April 25, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4183, File 2444-40, pt. 6, LAC
White House. As long as Cuba drew nearer to Moscow, and was committed to fostering revolutionary activity among its neighbours, no rapprochement of any kind between Washington and Havana was possible.

For Kennedy and Rusk, Green’s statements undermined the progress they believed the Canadian government had been making in seeing Cuba from its perspective. The Americans were aware that Canada perceived the problem differently, and that variations in opinion existed within the Diefenbaker Cabinet and the Department of External Affairs. Mindful of these realities, Washington made a concerted effort to dissuade Ottawa from offering any further mediation suggestions. In a rather terse conversation with Green at the Oslo NATO Ministers meeting, Rusk hammered home the hemispheric security argument, stressing that the United States had in fact attempted three times to redress issues with Cuba, to no avail – a mirroring of what Cruz had told Robertson about the Cuban government’s efforts. Backtracking, Green skirted this issue and turned the conversation towards direct American military intervention in Cuba, arguing such an action would be poorly received in both Canada and across Latin America. Rusk was concerned enough afterwards that he cabled President Kennedy and Acting Secretary Bowles, urging the President to speak to Diefenbaker in Ottawa about “neutralist tendencies in Canadian foreign policy especially as presented by External Affairs Minister Green.” When he met with Kennedy, Diefenbaker denied that Green had actually offered to mediate, but he distanced himself from his Minister, adding that he wanted nothing to do with any such suggestion. For the United States, the damage had been done. In post-visit follow up conversations, American officials revisited their opposition to the notion of mediation, insisting that Canada understand the United States view on Cuba with a persistence matching Ottawa’s on extraterritoriality. The Prime Minister and the leading diplomats had to reassure Washington for some time that Green’s comments did not reflect Canadian policy. From this

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82 No record viewed suggested that Washington was aware of the contents of the Cruz meetings with Diefenbaker and Robertson, although US officials may have either been briefed or learned from intelligence sources.
84 Telegram from Secretary of State Rusk to Department of State, no. 113, May 15, 1961 (Secret) in FRUS 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, Doc. 420, 1152-1153.
86 See for example Memorandum of Conversation between Rufus Z. Smith and W.H. Barton, May 22, 1961 (Secret) in RG 59, Records of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, Entry A1 3165, Folder “Relations Canada–Cuba 1961” Box 24, NARA.
point onwards, the Canadian government would resiliently resist later calls by Canadian diplomats to re-open that question.

Cuba ranked high among the agenda items for Kennedy’s meetings with Diefenbaker. A CIA assessment on Canada reported that its trade with the island was less than 0.5 per cent of its total volume, although that figure was expected to rise. As Diefenbaker was always quick to point out, the assessment also acknowledged that the volume of United States trade with Cuba, even though now restricted to food and medicine, still exceeded that of Canada. The CIA correctly assessed that “the Canadian government would probably not comply with a US request to impose a total embargo on Canadian goods [to Cuba],” but it also recognized that Canada was refusing trans-shipments of US goods and concluded that “there is no evidence that Canada is attempting to take advantage of the US embargo.”

The Department of External Affairs worked diligently in the lead-up to President Kennedy’s arrival in Ottawa. Like its American counterparts, it also identified Cuba as a high priority agenda item, with Basil Robinson ranking it just below NATO and nuclear weapons, and the role of the United Kingdom in Europe. He recommended that the Americans be pre-briefed that the Canadian government wanted to hear their views on Cuba, and that it was hoped Kennedy would begin that particular discussion (to which Diefenbaker could reply with Ottawa’s view). Cuba even became an issue in the protocol planning. The External Affairs Protocol Office was asked by the White House to ensure that the President and his entourage would be spared any embarrassing encounters with diplomats from either Cuba or the Dominican Republic, as the United States had severed formal relations with both countries.

On the guest list for the reception, the names of both ambassadors were crossed out from among the diplomatic corps invitees list. To Ottawa’s relief, Américo Cruz declined to attend the

89 Memorandum from Office of Secretary of State for External Affairs to H.B Robinson, Prime Minister’s Office “Visit of President Kennedy” April 27, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5584, File 12850-X-3-1-40, pt. 1, LAC
special session of the House of Commons that the President would address, and his Dominican counterpart was also conveniently out of town.  

On May 16, 1961, the President finally landed in Ottawa to very enthusiastic crowds. His first foreign visit since taking office, the fact it was Ottawa, and that he made the trip when he did attests to the importance he gave to good relations with Canada. As Kennedy biographer Robert Dallek points out, the President did not postpone the trip, even though he could have easily done so, given the serious domestic and foreign policy challenges he was then facing—the increasingly violent resistance to the civil rights movement in the American south, and the impending Vienna summit with Soviet Chairman Khrushchev. Dallek incorrectly argues that Diefenbaker sought “to separate Canada from US Cold War policies,” although this view accurately identifies that such a perception indeed existed in some Washington circles, especially on account of Howard Green. The Prime Minister did not share the United States’ view that being a loyal ally required Canada to station US nuclear weapons on its territory or aircraft, to join the Organization of American States, or to participate in the embargo against Cuba. Such differences, coupled with a back injury the President sustained while planting a ceremonial tree, cast a shadow over what the White House considered to be a successful trip.

For Diefenbaker, the Kennedy visit was anything but successful.

In their closed door meetings, Diefenbaker and Kennedy had two conversations covering Cuba, Latin America and the Organization of American States. In the Cuba portion, Kennedy candidly revisited the Bay of Pigs, reflecting that it had “raised the question whether it is possible to conduct covert operations in an open society.” After Diefenbaker repudiated Green’s mediation comments, the discussion turned to the prospect of further intervention. Kennedy responded in the negative when Diefenbaker asked him if the United States had evidence of Soviet nuclear weapons in Cuba. Kennedy did not say what he would do in such a circumstance, although he reassured the Prime Minister that he would not intervene militarily in Cuba “unless there was a flow of interventionist activities from Cuba to other countries in the hemisphere” or as a countermeasure to Soviet action against Berlin. He also promised to share with Diefenbaker

93 Dallek, 389.
94 See Nash, 109-110.
in advance any military plans before implementation – a promise that contributed greatly to the nearly open rift that occurred in the autumn of 1962.\textsuperscript{95}

The private talks were in themselves, relatively civil. It would be Kennedy’s address to the House of Commons, and the discovery of a misplaced presidential briefing document that drew out Diefenbaker’s most negative personal attributes. Firstly, Kennedy surprised the Prime Minister in public by calling on Canada to join the OAS, arguing that neither Canada nor the United States could “turn their backs” on the hemisphere’s countries, and that both countries’ “talents and resources,” were necessary to safeguard the region from communism.\textsuperscript{96}

Diefenbaker saw this as manipulative public posturing, particularly as he had just told the President privately that if it did join the OAS, Canada would face the dilemma of either having to disagree publicly with the United States or be portrayed as its puppet, neither of which would be good for Canada’s domestic or international interests.\textsuperscript{97} This viewpoint reflected what the Prime Minister had privately told Robinson at the end of April, namely that “Canada would not be ‘tied up in’ any OAS moves in respect of Cuba.”\textsuperscript{98}

Diefenbaker’s irritation at Kennedy for publicly blindsiding him on the OAS paled in comparison to his inferno following receipt of a briefing memo written by economist and Deputy National Security Advisor Walt Rostow, urging Kennedy to “push” Canada into OAS membership.\textsuperscript{99} The very use of that word, appearing three times in the document, confirmed for Diefenbaker all his worst suspicions regarding Kennedy, showing him to be a bully as well as contemptuous of Canada. Contravening diplomatic protocol, Diefenbaker kept the document, which was classified “Secret,” in his possession. When a year later Diefenbaker threatened to expose the document, George Ball issued a stern warning that doing so “would cast a grave

\textsuperscript{95} Memorandum of Conversation between Prime Minister Diefenbaker and President Kennedy, “Cuba and Latin America”, May 17, 1961 (Top Secret) in FRUS 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, Doc. 421, 1154-1155. For the Canadian version see “Visit of President Kennedy to Ottawa – Meetings with the Prime Minister May 17, Part 1, Latin America,” May 17, 1961, (Secret/Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 5584 File 12850-X-3-1-40, pt. 2, LAC


\textsuperscript{97} Memorandum of Conversation between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Diefenbaker: Subject Cuba and Latin America, May 17, 1961 (Top Secret/ Eyes Only) in FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, Doc 421, 1154.

\textsuperscript{98} Memorandum from H.B Robinson to Under Secretary Robertson “Cuba,” April 27, 1961 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 5068, File 4035-40, pt. 6, LAC

shadow over public attitudes between our two countries and make difficult future relations between the President and the Prime Minister.”

Observing his boss’ fury, Basil Robinson confided to his diary that this infamous document “would be with JGD until he dies.”

On learning of Diefenbaker’s blackmail threat, Kennedy responded with a torrent of profanity.

With their working relationship now irreparably damaged, the stage was set for the lowest trough to date between a President and Prime Minister, which would occur a year later with the missile crisis.

Now firmly resolved to not joining the OAS, Diefenbaker and Green were nonetheless curious about the opinions of the Canadian public and of professional diplomats alike on possible membership, particularly given the conundrum Canada found itself with the United States over Cuba. The day after Kennedy left Ottawa, Under Secretary Robertson sent a circular to all posts in Latin America, soliciting the mission chiefs’ opinions on Canadian OAS membership and whether or not it would make Canada a more effective and influential player in the hemisphere. The diplomats’ responses varied, with some thinking Canada’s voice would be louder as an OAS insider, and believing the Cuban situation made the issue more urgent.

At the same time others, especially Alfred J. Pick, who became the External Affairs Department’s leading Latin American expert for the next decade, opposed Canadian OAS membership, predicting that it would only lead to “friction with the United States which by history and instinct assumed an almost divine right of hegemony over Latin America.” In Pick’s view, Washington’s commitment to eliminating Castro precluded Canada’s being able to play any useful role in resolving the region’s most urgent problem. Pick’s argument carried the day, and in early July, the Canadian government formally declined Kennedy’s invitation.

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101 Robinson, 247, 250.

102 Nash, 120-122 and also Robinson, 206-209.

103 Numbered Letter from Under Secretary Norman Robertson to Latin American posts, XL (various), May 19, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5068, File 4035-40, pt. 6, LAC

104 See Canadian Embassy Buenos Aires Despatch 309, June 12, 1961 (Confidential) and Canadian Embassy Caracas Despatch 242 June 16, 1961 (Secret) both in RG 25, Vol. 5068, File 4035-40, pt. 6, LAC


106 Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington DC to External Affairs, no. 2135, July 5, 1961 (Unclassified) in RG 25, Vol. 5068, File 4035-40, pt. 6, LAC
This decision aligned well with Canadian public opinion, which had moved away from membership on account of the Cuban situation. Between January and November 1960, Departmental incoming correspondence favoured Canadian membership by a figure of nine to three.\(^\text{107}\) This trend was thoroughly reversed in early 1961, largely over Cuba and American pressure. From April to June, External Affairs received 41 letters against Canadian OAS membership versus only 19 in favour. This paralleled the figures for the Prime Minister’s Office (21 con and only 4 pro).\(^\text{108}\) While some of this opposition was on the far left (the more mainstream Canadian Labour Congress actually favoured membership, believing it would lead to more trade and more jobs),\(^\text{109}\) enough Canadians saw the OAS as a tool of American policy, and worried that membership would inhibit their country’s freedom of action in Latin America.\(^\text{110}\) By staying out, the Canadian government avoided some additional and unwanted sources of both domestic and international pressure. As over the next few years the United States government turned to the OAS as primary vehicle for legitimizing its overall anti-Castro strategy, Ottawa’s instincts proved correct.

Kennedy failed to secure Canadian OAS membership as his very objective – getting Canada more in alignment with US hemispheric policy by means of a multilateral organization - was the very thing Ottawa feared. Aware how sensitive Diefenbaker was to domestic public opinion, American diplomats in Canada sought to influence the latter as well. Dovetailing on the Kennedy trip, the State Department staged a mostly unsuccessful public relations campaign trying to convince Canadians of the merits of its position on Cuba. In a lengthy letter to Ambassador Merchant, Frederick C. “Church” Hutton, the US Consul General in Winnipeg, recounted his frustration after discussing Cuba with the city’s journalists and editors. Partly

\(^\text{107}\) Memorandum from Under Secretary Robertson to the Minister of External affairs (Green) “Survey of Public Correspondence on Canadian Membership in the Organization of American States, June 2, 1961 (No classification marking) in RG 25, Vol. 5068, File 4035-40, pt. 6, LAC.

\(^\text{108}\) Memorandum from Under Secretary Robertson to the Minister of External Affairs (Green) “Survey of Public Correspondence on Canadian Membership in the Organization of American States”, June 2, 1961 (No classification marking) in RG 25, Vol. 5068, File 4035-40, pt. 6, LAC.

\(^\text{109}\) See Memorandum from Under Secretary Robertson to the Minister of External affairs (Green) “Letter from Mr. [Claude] Jodoin [President of the Canadian Labour Congress],” May 30, 1961 (No classification marking) in RG 25, Vol. 5068, File 4035-40, pt. 6, LAC. See also Canadian Labour Congress Press Release, May 16, 1961 in the same file. For the CLC’s veto of Cuban visits see Canadian Embassy Havana Despatch no. DS-2, January 3, 1961 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 8541, File 11357-D-40, pt. 2,1 LAC. Unions in BC were then still trying to organize Cuba tours.

\(^\text{110}\) Memorandum from Under Secretary Robertson to the Minister of External Affairs (Green) “Survey of Public Correspondence on Canadian Membership in the Organization of American States”, June 2, 1961 (No classification marking) in RG 25, Vol. 5068, File 4035-40, pt. 6, LAC
blaming the influence of liberal American newspapers, Hutton bemoaned how even so-called “responsible people in the press” in Canada failed to appreciate how a communist Cuba threatened the whole western hemisphere.”111 Calling for “a massive information job” in Canada, Hutton advocated the broad distribution to Canada’s media and universities of a State Department White Paper on Cuba published that argued how Fidel Castro betrayed a popular revolution for communist ends – a document published just before the Bay of Pigs.112 The US embassy had already requested additional copies after having distributing the few that it had to the office of the Prime Minister, senior officials in the Department of External Affairs, and even a high level official in the Canadian Labour Congress.113 Ambassador Merchant believed that the pamphlet had influenced Diefenbaker’s House of Commons remarks, which used the “revolution betrayed” language.114 Merchant and his colleagues naively believed that influential Canadian voices would be convinced by such an official publication. Most saw it as a classic piece of Cold War propaganda.

Along with this public relations initiative, the United States also worked behind the scenes to convince Ottawa of its case against Castro by regularly sharing with External Affairs officials finished intelligence reports and diplomatic traffic documenting Castro’s subversive efforts in the hemisphere.115 A precedent had been set a year earlier. According to a brief for Secretary Rusk, by late summer 1962, Canada had received access to some 120 CIA and Foreign Service reports on Cuban propaganda and paramilitary efforts in Latin America.116

113 Telegram from the US Embassy, Ottawa to the Secretary of State, no. G-246, April 21, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 737.00/4-2161, NARA. On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal Affairs 1960-1963, Reel 10.
114 Ibid.
115 See Memorandum of Conversation [with First Secretary of Canadian Embassy], April 10, 1962 (Confidential) in Dept. of State. Records of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs. RG 59, Entry 3165, box 28, Folder “Memoranda of Conversation”, NARA. There are other records referring to such sharing, as well as copies of US intelligence reports in Department of External Affairs records, usually either on the subversion issue or analyses of Cuban domestic and foreign policy developments.
116 Memorandum from Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Ed Martin) to the Secretary of State Rusk, “Your Visit to Ottawa August 24 - Cuba”, August 23, 1962 (Secret) in RG 59, Records of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, Entry A1 3165, Box 28, Folder: “Cuba Interdepartmental memos July-Sept. 1962,” NARA.
Transcript summaries of such finished estimates, and actual copies of State Department Bureau of Intelligence and Research reports, appear regularly in Canadian files, at least into the mid-1960s. As trust increased, American intelligence analysts invited Canadian input on Cuba-related products, especially members of the National Defence Joint Intelligence Committee.117 Intelligence sharing emerged in 1961 as one of several principal theatres, along with embargo enforcement and civil aviation, where Canada and the United States managed their disagreements over Cuba advantageously and with considerable success.

As the United States prepared in late 1960 to sever diplomatic relations with Cuba, staff at the US Embassy identified the loss of intelligence as a major consequence of such a break.118 The Kennedy administration’s terrible misreading of the Cuban populace’s mood regarding the exile invaders laid bare the criticality of having accurate information on Cuba’s government and people alike.119 Now lacking its own diplomats on the island, the United States naturally turned to those of its NATO allies for information. As early as January 1961, a State Department Bureau of Intelligence and Research memo was reporting that “the UK, Canada, France and Germany have been requested to provide the Department with both their raw and finished intelligence on Cuba.”120 One week after the Bay of Pigs, Theodore C. Achilles, Director of the State Department’s Operations center, mentioned to Heeney that the United States would welcome receiving Canadian reports from Cuba.121 Such requests for information were certainly not new. Canada, the United States and Great Britain had been sharing intelligence closely since the end of World War II, and a tradition of regular exchanges of information and opinions between Canadian and American ambassadors in Havana was well in place before the revolution. But now the need for on-the-ground intelligence was more urgent, with

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117 See for one example Memorandum from A. Malysheff, JIC Secretary to the Joint Intelligence Committee, “The Effects of Hurricane Flora on Cuba”, January 27, 1964 (Restricted with Secret Enclosure) in RG 24, Vol. 21809, File 2438:1, pt. 5, LAC. The document it is commenting on is CIA SNIE 85-3-63, “The Effects of Hurricane Flora on Cuba,” November 15, 1963 (Secret), which is available on the CIA FOIA website http://www.foia.cia.gov/search.asp


121 Telegram from Washington Embassy to External Affairs no, 1333, April 26, 1961 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 4183, File 2444-40 pt. 6, LAC
revolutionary Cuba now a major Cold War hot spot. As the CIA acknowledged, “after the Bay of Pigs practically all intelligence nets on Cuba were completed neutralized.” The Agency’s Clandestine Services section subsequently established a comprehensive Cuban intelligence collection program, and western diplomats in Cuba were targeted as essential sources, with the CIA identifying them as especially valuable so-called “support assets.” Cuban embassies in friendly countries were also targeted, although according to the one readily accessible report, Cuba’s mission in Ottawa was not on the list of those successfully penetrated by the CIA. However a later CIA cable, documenting the Cuban embassy’s response to President Kennedy’s November 1963 assassination (which will be covered in Chapter 7) suggests that information from that embassy was also reaching CIA ears, although whether the transmission was by way of an informant (Cuban or Canadian) or through intercepted signals intelligence is unknown and not likely to be knowable for some time, if at all.

The Canadian embassy in Havana began early in 1961 to regularly share its reports with the United States. Much of what was passed on to Washington were diplomatic despatches providing ground level views on Cuban politics, the economy and living standards, and social and cultural developments; many of these were simultaneously provided to the British. In addition, the Canadian embassy provided the Americans with difficult to obtain Cuban publications, which they were all too delighted to receive. To protect the flow of this information, in May 1962 an embarrassed State Department was asked by Ottawa to intervene against zealous US customs officials in Miami, who were holding up Canadian government

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122 CIA Memorandum, “Clandestine Services Cuban Collection Program” undated [ca. 1964 based on internal evidence], (Secret) in CIA Deputy Director of Plans files, JFK Assassination Records Collection, Doc 104-10310-10005, NARA. Accessible online via Mary Ferrell Organization www.maryferrell.org Records disclosed under the JFK Assassination Records Act have nonetheless provided historians with some very valuable evidence that otherwise might not ever be available, given how zealously intelligence agencies guard sources and methods

123 CIA Memorandum, “Clandestine Services Cuban Collection Program,” [undated but clearly post missile crisis, ca. 1964], (Secret) in CIA Deputy Director of Plans files, JFK Assassination Records Collection, Doc 104-10310-10005, NARA. Also online via Mary Ferrell Organization www.maryferrell.org

124 Ibid.

125 For example see CIA Message Cable from Ottawa Station Chief to Director of Central Intelligence, no. 1277, November 27, 1963 (Secret) in CIA, Lee Harvey Oswald File 201-289248, Volume 7, JFK Assassination Records Collection, Doc 104-10015-10423, NARA. Accessible online via Mary Ferrell Organization www.maryferrell.org.

126 A general comment based on observations of Canadian reports being regularly found in State Department files and also files from the British Foreign office. British telegrams were also regularly forwarded to the Canadians and there are many examples of these in the records of the Department of External Affairs.
parcels destined for Ottawa but ultimately for the United States embassy there.\footnote{Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington to Department of External Affairs, no. 1516, May 17, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4183, File 2444-40, pt. 8, LAC. See also Letter from A.J. Pick, Latin American Division to the Canadian Ambassador in Havana, George Kidd, May 18, 1962 (Confidential) in the same file.} In a briefing for Dean Rusk prior to an August 1962 Ottawa visit, the Secretary of State was reminded of the value of the information on Cuba it had received from the Canadians, particularly the highly prized Cuban publications.\footnote{Memorandum from Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Ed Martin) to the Secretary of State Rusk, “Your Visit to Ottawa August 24 - Cuba”, August 23, 1962 (Secret) in RG 59, Records of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, Entry A1 3165, Box 28, Folder: “Cuba Interdepartmental memos July-Sept. 1962,” NARA}

Washington was especially pleased with Ambassador Kidd’s reports, both for the content provided but also as he largely shared Washington’s dislike of the Castro regime. So enthusiastic was the State Department that it wanted to share Kidd’s despatches with ambivalent Latin American governments such as Brazil, to convince them of the American viewpoint.\footnote{Memorandum from .K. Starnes Defence Liaison (2) to Under Secretary for External Affairs (Robertson) via Latin American Division (Beaulne) August 30, 1961 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 5352, File 10224-40, pt. 11, LAC} This irony was not lost on the Department of External Affairs, which was well aware that at that moment, several of the larger republics had a Cuba policy similar to that of Canada, including Mexico, Argentina and Brazil. Deciding it was improper to permit the State Department or CIA to forward such reports directly, the Latin American Division certainly had no trouble with trying to convince Latin American governments of the Canadian viewpoint, an issue that would soon prove challenging following the Punta del Este OAS meetings the following January.\footnote{Brazil’s views would of course change after the March 1964 military coup, as would Argentina’s after the military overthrow of the Frondizi government in March 1962, with the successor governments both being firmly right of center and anti-Castro.}

These findings tend to support Don Munton’s argument that the United States shared information on Cuba with its allies principally to secure cooperation and enhance its security, whereas Canada was motivated to prove itself as a helpful ally.\footnote{Memorandum from Latin American Division (Beaulne) to Under Secretary for External Affairs (Robertson) September 6, 1961 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 5352, File 10224-40, pt. 11, LAC} By and large, Canada succeeded in that context. Munton is correct in that Ottawa was not coerced into helping the Americans on Cuban intelligence. However, it was quietly eager to please the Americans to the maximum extent allowable, without compromising its own policy or being seen as selling out. Secret intelligence was one realm where it could largely do so with relative impunity at home and with the Cuban government, although the latter almost certainly suspected that Canada

shared its information with the United States behind its back, and was known to have its own highly effective secret service. It would be some decades before this facet of the Canada-United States Cuba triangle became publicly known.

Intelligence was one obvious theatre with which Canada could be helpful to the United States on Cuba. The other obvious candidate was embargo enforcement. A February 1961 report issued by the Canadian-American Committee, a bilateral group representing leading business executives, called for cross-border cooperation, arguing “no serious conflict of views currently exists between the Canadian and US governments with respect to present differences in trading relationships with Cuba;” and any existing divergence was on means, not the goal of containing communism in the hemisphere. The Committee advocated close consultation between Ottawa and Washington, and called for understanding by the people in each country. The Canadian embassy found the report useful, and it circulated widely in Florida newspapers, as well as in larger ones in Texas, and also to editors who had written critically on the Canadian policy a few months earlier.

The reality was that despite understanding among key elements of the business community (and not all were so understanding), Canada’s trade with Cuba continued to arouse the suspicion, if not hostility, of Americans. Still smarting over charges of profiteering, the Diefenbaker government did not want further accusations of being an unreliable and untrustworthy ally. External Affairs and Trade and Commerce officials were vigilant about enforcing the commitments Diefenbaker had laid out the previous December, promptly informing their American counterparts when learning of actual or even rumoured transgressions. Also on the bootlegging question, the Department of Trade and Commerce monitored the sales of industrial goods to Cuba very closely, wanting to confirm if Canada was actually becoming a real alternative to the United States for vehicle or sugar refinery parts. A March 1961 assessment for Deputy Minister James Roberts concluded that Canada would not profit at the

133 For an overview see Brian Latell, Castro’s Secrets: The CIA and Cuba’s Intelligence Machine (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
134 “Canada’s Trade with Cuba and Canadian-American Relations: A Statement by the Canadian American Committee of the Private Planning Association of Canada and the National Planning Association USA,” February 6, 1961 in RG 20, Vol. 2294, File 7-C6-1, pt. 5, LAC
135 Canadian Embassy Washington Numbered Letter no. 225, February 14, 1961 (Unclassified) in RG 20, Vol. 2294, File 7-C6-1, pt. 5, LAC
136 For an example of a Canadian MP receiving sharp criticism from a US financier about Canada’s trade with Cuba see Letter from Alan Macnaughton, MP to Reta Taylor, Private Secretary to the Minister of Trade and Commerce, February 22, 1961 in RG 20, Vol. 2294, File 7-C6-1, pt. 5, LAC
United States expense, as Canadian production costs were higher, and that vehicle parts were mostly American made and thus would not be licenced for export to Cuba. Canada had some advantages in areas of lesser concern, such as electrical and mining equipment, valves and pipes, and agricultural machinery. The tone of the memo indicated that for Ottawa, concerns about friction with the Americans, especially the bootlegging charges, outweighed any economic advantages from reduced competition with the Americans.137

In February 1961, US customs officials in New York seized a shipment of some 450 spare auto parts en route from Canada to Cuba that were clearly labelled as American made.138 The exporting firm was Ralph Malak Industries of Montreal.139 Ambassador Cruz was informed by Canadian officials that Ottawa would not have granted this firm an export licence for this shipment.140 Although it took a year, Malak was prosecuted, and the Canadian government encouraged its American counterpart to publicize this fact.141 Determined to avoid further such embarrassment, Canadian officials remained vigilant, although that did not completely stop other occurrences. Customs officials were directed to seize any cargoes en route to Cuba where the goods were clearly of American origin, and to hold pending detailed inspection any cargoes suspected of so being.142 The General Export licence covered only US made food and medicinal products, which in 1961 the United States itself had not yet banned for export to Cuba; even then, Trade and Commerce insisted that detailed documentation accompany the cargo.143 The few American made items exported to Cuba that year that were mechanical in nature included an engine for a Canadian aircraft grounded in Cuba, a 30 year old carbonizer, and a 10 year old

137 Memorandum from A.M Tedford, Director Commodities Branch to Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce (Roberts),"Trade with Cuba," March 16, 1961 (no classification marking) in RG 20, Vol. 2294, File 7-C6-1, pt. 5, LAC
139 Memorandum from Economic Division to Assistant Under Secretary of External Affairs Edgar Ritchie, February 28, 1961 (Unclassified) in RG 25, Vol. 5012, File 288-40, pt. 9, LAC
142 Letter from G. M Schuthe Chief of Transportation and Trade Division, Dept. of Trade and Commerce to G.F. Colbeck, Ports Administration Branch, Customs and Excise Division, Dept. of National Revenue, March 12, 1962 (No classification marking), in RG 20, Vol. 899, File 6-3-3-1 (T-6-1), pt. 1, LAC.
143 Letter from G. M Schuthe, Chief of Transportation and Trade Division, Dept. of Trade and Commerce to P.A. Savard, Commercial Counsellor, Canadian Embassy Havana, "Shipments of Medicinal Products to Cuba", February 20, 1962 (No classification marking), in RG 20, Vol. 899, File 6-3-3-1 (T-6-1), pt. 1, LAC.
chick hatcher and incubator, all long pre-dating the Cuban revolution. Ottawa also refused to
service four Cubana aircraft engines with US parts, returning them to Cuba unrepai red.\textsuperscript{144}

The Canada-Cuba trade flow was closely monitored in the other direction was well, to
ensure prohibited Cuban goods did not find their way from Canada to the United States. Such
occurrences were less frequent, as by this time Canada was importing relatively little from
Cuba. Late in June 1961, Secretary Rusk requested that the US embassy in Ottawa investigate
an occurrence of Cuban molasses entering the United States via a Montreal firm. He could not
ask Ottawa to stop such an export, as molasses did not require an export licence and such
agricultural goods were not then officially prohibited, although the United States was not buying
Cuban sugar, and molasses was a sugar derivative.\textsuperscript{145} The following March, just as tighter
embargo measures were coming into force, Canadian officials alerted American authorities that
a shipment of Cuban watermelons, cucumbers and tomatoes had been exported to the United
States by Fisher Brothers, a Montreal firm (new labels had been applied indicating the produce
was Canadian).\textsuperscript{146} Wanting to prevent any publicity regarding this incident, Canadian officials
investigated the case thoroughly. The Customs Division of National Revenue could confirm that
the fruit was indeed imported, and that Fisher Brothers did trade with Cuba, but could not prove
that the shipping date the of the produce in question post-dated new embargo regulations
prohibiting Cuban foodstuffs. Using some creative hairsplitting, the Department of Agriculture’s
position was that its export regulations did not apply to repackaged imports.\textsuperscript{147} Ottawa
nonetheless opted to proactively alert the Americans that it had investigated the allegation and
that Canada would cooperate with them regarding any future such occurrences.\textsuperscript{148} Ottawa would
continue to show its due diligence.

Canada’s civil aviation connections to Cuba also continued to draw Washington’s
attention, as it tied the island more closely to its Soviet bloc sponsors. The patterns regarding

\textsuperscript{144} Memorandum “Shipments to Cuba with significant US content which were export licenced in 1961”, March 1,

\textsuperscript{145} Telegram from Secretary of State Dean Rusk to US Embassy in Ottawa and US Consul General Montreal,
Control no. 100, June 30, 1961 (Limited Official Use) in RG 84 United States Montreal Consulate General
Records, Entry UD 2212, Box 5, Folder “510.1 Trade Canada-Cuba 1959-1961,” NARA

\textsuperscript{146} Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington DC to External Affairs, no 803, March 15, 1962 (Confidential)
in RG 20, Vol. 939, File 7-544-2, LAC

\textsuperscript{147} Memorandum from A Bruce Marshall, Director of Agriculture and Fisheries Branch “Trade with Cuba – Fruits
and Vegetables”, March 16, 1962 (no classification marking) in RG 20, Vol. 939, File 7-544-2, LAC

7-544-2, LAC
civil aviation mirrored closely those regarding trade. Canada clung firmly to its principles – that it would have normal trade with Cuba and more importantly, that it would meet its obligations as a signatory of full of complying with the international obligations of a signatory to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which required it to allow overflight reciprocity and technical landing rights to fellow members. At the same time, the Canadian government shared its neighbour’s concerns about the spread of the Soviet influence this side of the Atlantic, and sought additional opportunities to prove itself as a reliable and committed US ally. In order to do so, while sticking to its principles and interests, Canada ended up pleasing no one. As with the produce example, it would often revert to technicalities, hair splitting and stalling tactics that irritated the Americans but also the Cubans. In keeping with its principles and traditions, Ottawa at times trod a narrow and uncomfortable path, but it continued to find ways to cooperate with the United States, with the latter recognizing that intelligence and other benefits were to be gained from Canada’s monitoring and control of the Cuba-East Bloc air traffic.

The Canadian government was loath to cease air links with Cuba, as air transportation was an important means of moving goods between the two countries, especially Canadian agricultural produce, for which there were significant Cuban orders. There had been 74 flights between December 1960 and June 1961, and with Cuba’s demand for Canadian livestock, especially baby chicks, the need arose for up to 300 flights, which had all the semblance of a scheduled service. Acknowledging the importance to Canadian farmers of keeping air corridors open, in June 1961 the Cabinet resisted calls from Canadian aviation companies to terminate the charter flight provisions it had granted Cubana airlines, despite complaints from Canadian airlines that Havana had failed to grant them reciprocal privileges (which Cubans rationalized on the basis of cost effectiveness). Cuba continued to call for scheduled flights, which Ottawa resisted, again invoking as its excuse that Canada would not negotiate such bilateral agreements until it had completed its larger aviation policy review.

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Cubans made for Canada some awkward moments, but it was a price Ottawa decided was worth paying in lieu of greater difficulties with the United States. American officials indicated they were concerned about the number of Cubana flights landing in Canada, which they saw as a de-facto air service, even though every individual flight needed approval by the Air Transport Board. When proposals were set in motion early in 1962 for a series of Montreal-Havana charters featuring Cubana and Montreal-based World Wide Airways, Ambassador George Kidd argued against the plan, citing “the serious political and security objections in the establishment of such a service, as well as the delicate consular problems such a passenger service would create for the mission.” Restrictions on such charter flights applied to frequency, passengers (only diplomats and airline staff), and cargo. Even though Board approval was still needed, even that process became a routine formality.

While Ottawa used technical and policy arguments to prevent other passengers on the charters, its real sources of hesitation concerned the nature of the passengers, who could be spies and propagandists, and the anticipated American response. External Affairs Economic Division Head O.G. Stoner made this clear in a memorandum opposing passengers on the World Wide charters:

while we believe there would be serious political objections and security objections to the proposed arrangement, we are of the opinion that it might not be necessary to rely on those objections to find sufficient reasons for not permitting the proposed arrangement to be finalized.

The Canadian government recognized these as valid concerns, but concluded that normal relations with Cuba required at least some minimal air links, even though it had to accept the appearance in both Cuba and the United States of being duplicitous, a price it reluctantly paid.

In no rush for a Canada-Cuba passenger service, Ottawa was nonetheless determined to comply with its ICAO obligations, meaning that Cubana could refuel at Gander on its long flights to and from Eastern Europe, and that the airline could get technical assistance and repairs

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153 For American expressions of concern about regular Cubana traffic to Canada, although in the context of onward flights to Prague, see Telegram from Canadian Delegation, NATO to Department of External Affairs no. 1729, July 4, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4986, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 3, LAC
in Canada for its aging fleet of British-made Britannias. The United States took the position that the ICAO convention had more loopholes than Canada believed existed, and that Canada could do more to restrict access to its airports for violations. Already unhappy that Canada allowed Prague-bound Cubana charter flights to make technical landings in Gander and even occasionally Montreal, it did not wish to see the Czech airline CSA obtain the same privileges, which the latter was pushing for in the summer of 1961. For the United States, “keeping Soviet bloc airlines out of Latin America in general and Cuba in particular” was a key national security objective. Earlier, Ottawa had honoured an American request to postpone its decision the CSA flights, even though Czechoslovakia was also an ICAO member. Canada was inclined to respond favourably, subject to ICAO Article 35, which prohibited the carrying of munitions. Ambassador Merchant told Under Secretary Robertson that his government was “greatly disturbed” at this decision, arguing “the establishment of fast line communications between the Soviet bloc and Cuba had most serious implications.” Merchant also lamented Robertson’s seeming lack of sympathy for Washington’s concerns about enhanced Cuban connections with communist countries. State Department officials labelled Robertson “the grey eminence behind Green and Diefenbaker.” When Robertson and Edgar Ritchie met with Merchant and Armstrong a month later, the Canadians told their counterparts that Canada could

161 Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 1047, June 16, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 937.7249/6-1661, NARA. On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal Affairs 1960-1963, Reel 38.
162 Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 1047, June 16, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 937.7249/6-1661, NARA. On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal Affairs 1960-1963, Reel 38.
163 For a more general discussion of how US officials viewed Robertson, see Nash, 84.
no longer in good conscience delay approving the CSA request, especially as it was already permitting Cubana charter flights to Prague to make technical stops on Canada.164

The United States still hoped Ottawa might find a way not to make it easier for the Czech airline to fly to Havana. It protested more vehemently in October, when Ottawa allowed Cubana’s now regularly scheduled Havana-Prague flights to make technical stops at Gander. The Americans argued that Canada’s action contradicted the western alliance’s response to the Berlin Crisis, which was then nearing its tensest point. At a minimum, Washington asked Ottawa to defer granting further such permissions until after the crisis lifted.165 Canadian officials would not refuse the landings, but agreed not to allow regular stops at Montreal, near sensitive military bases, nor to allow the passengers to deplane.166 Some Americans were also writing their Senators and Congressional representatives about flights between Canada and Cuba traversing its territory, requiring responses noting that the ICAO precluded the United States from preventing such overflights, and acknowledged that American airliners en route to the southern Caribbean and South America also still regularly overflew Cuban territory – with both examples being ones for which Washington wanted minimal publicity.167

When William Armstrong of the US Embassy met with External Affairs and Air Transport Board members on October 30, he was informed that Ottawa decided to permit the landings “after careful consideration” and after they had “exhausted all ability to delay on technical grounds.” The Canadians added that not even the United States had been willing to violate the ICAO, and added that such prohibitions would not ultimately stop air transportation between the Soviet bloc and Cuba.168 While the record is somewhat unclear about the follow up, what is unmistakeable is that Canada cooperated with the United States to the greatest extent

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165 Telegram from Secretary of State to US Embassy Ottawa no. 426, October 13, 1961 (Secret) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 937.7249/10-1361, NARA On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal Affairs 1960-1963, Reel 38.
166 Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 401, October 12, 1961 (Secret) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 937.7242/10-1261, NARA On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal Affairs 1960-1963, Reel 38.
168 Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 454, October 31, 1961 (Secret) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 937.7249/10-3161, NARA. On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal Affairs 1960-1963, Reel 38.
possible, stalling on controversial decisions to the point its own integrity was questioned. Even then, Ottawa only did the bare minimum, to satisfy its international commitments. The Gander landings of CSA Prague-Havana flights began in January 1962, subject to stringent Canadian requirements, including airport restrictions, and provision of the flight path, a crew list and details about the cargo (which could not contain munitions). Also, as per the State Department’s request, External Affairs officials forwarded it information on all flights between Canada and Cuba. As well, much like the Montreal-Havana charters, detailed logs of every East bloc flight landing at Gander would be forwarded to Washington, a process that went on for a number of years.

United States’ Cuba policy entered a lull in the summer of 1961, lowering that country’s profile somewhat in Canadian-American relations. As Diefenbaker was all too glad to point out, the United States trade volume with Cuba was still larger than Canada’s. Washington exports for the first half of 1961 were some $35 million in food and medicine, and in turn it imported a comparable volume of foods and textile fibres. Still this was a fraction of the once half billion dollar a year figure before the revolution. Politically, Kennedy’s gaze temporarily turned from Cuba to Berlin and the Soviet Union (having been bullied and humiliated by Khrushchev at the Vienna summit), as well to the growing communist insurgencies in South Vietnam and Laos. Cuba however would not go away. A post-mortem of the Bay of Pigs advised the President that for the United States, “there can be no long-term living with Castro as a neighbour,” and Kennedy always kept open the option of direct military force. After the acute crisis over

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171 There are numerous examples of such logs in the Department of State records at NARA.
172 Memorandum from the President’s Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to President Kennedy, “Present Trade with Cuba,” June 28, 1961 (no classification marking) in FRUS 1961-1963, Vol. X, Doc 240, 615.
Berlin settled down in November, Kennedy commenced an aggressive new covert action program, one that would be run out of the White House. He also prepared for additional sanctions against Cuba. After a summer on simmer, the heat on Cuba would be drastically turned up in the late fall and into 1962.

As 1961 closed, differences between Canada and the United States over Cuba had worked largely in Canada’s favour. Ottawa fairly successfully weathered its first stormy season on this issue during the Kennedy-Diefenbaker period, no mean feat given the leaders’ poor interpersonal rapport and the size and power differences. On the economic front, Canada’s strong posture against extra-territoriality, coupled with Diefenbaker’s denunciations of Castro communism during the Bay of Pigs crisis unquestionably influenced the Kennedy administration’s decision not to invoke the *Trading with the Enemy Act*. Successfully resisting American pressure to join the OAS, Canada almost certainly avoided additional aggravations over Cuba, as well as the possible loss of freedom of action. Finally, Canada began that year to prove itself in earnest as a helpful, even at times valuable partner to the United States on Cuban issues at the working levels, which did much to keep relations between the various Canadian and American Departments civil and even friendly, despite the mutual antipathy between the two leaders. This foundation would be especially important as an even stormier period on Cuba soon commenced.
Beginning late in the autumn of 1961, Cuba once again became the top foreign policy focus for the Kennedy administration. Redoubling its earlier efforts to bring about the demise of the Castro regime, the Kennedy White House took direct leadership over an intensified and riskier three pronged anti-Castro campaign. Code named Operation Mongoose, this plan aimed to topple the Cuban government by means of diplomatic isolation, economic warfare and a renewed covert action program consisting of harassment, sabotage and assassination plots. Not unlike the lead-up to the Bay of Pigs, this latter group of activities grew sufficiently “noisy” in 1962 to largely discredit their plausible deniability. They did much to convince Castro and his Soviet backers that Cuba’s socialist revolution was in imminent danger of being toppled by American force, and thus a military counterweight was required. Preservation of Moscow’s client in the Caribbean is now considered Soviet Chairman Nikita Khrushchev’s primary motivation in placing offensive nuclear missiles on the island, bringing the world to the cliff edge of nuclear war in October 1962.¹

Mongoose and the missiles provide the most dramatic elements of the US-Cuba narrative for the year 1962, and have thus spawned a considerable volume of literature. For the Canadian government, of greatest significance was Washington’s expanding economic warfare against Cuba and its high pressure diplomacy to corral it and other NATO allies into supporting American policies. Early in the year, and again during the missile crisis, such American pressure drove the Diefenbaker government to its most intense soul-searching on Cuba, matched only by the experience of autumn 1960. It found the price of differing with the United States at times very exacting, requiring considerable energy to justify its position both to American and also Latin American critics. Remaining in step with Canadian public opinion, Diefenbaker stayed the course on Cuba. His government made minor adjustments to placate the United

¹ Because of important archive declassifications in the 1980s and 1990s, the literature on Mongoose is now extensive. For good summaries on its connections to the origins of the missile crisis see Lawrence Freedman, *Kennedy’s Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), Ch 16 and 17, Don Bohning *The Castro Obsession*, Ch.5 and 6 and also Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble: Khrushchev Castro, Kennedy 1958-1964* (New York: Norton, 1997), Ch.7-8. For the relationship between the Cuban perception of the US threat and the Soviet missile decision see Fursenko and Naftali, 139-142 and 158-170. For Cuban and Soviet perceptions that the US was preparing to attack Cuba see James G. Hershberg, “Before the ‘Missiles of October: Did Kennedy Plan a Military Strike against Cuba?” *Diplomatic History*, 15 (2), 1990, 163-198.
States, particularly tightening controls over the export of industrial goods having potential dual military uses, and it continued to be as proactive as possible in cooperating with the United States in various theatres at the working levels, including export controls, intelligence, civil aviation and containing subversion. These efforts effectively cushioned Ottawa from Washington’s wrath in a year when Cuba was front and centre, and personal relations between Kennedy and Diefenbaker went from merely bad to non-existent. Canada and the United States successfully emerged from this year of severe testing still in disagreement over Cuba, but largely in a spirit of partnership.

Canada appears to have been both a vicarious player, as well as a target, in the Mongoose operations, which were formally set in motion by a top-secret directive Kennedy signed on November 30, 1961. Committing the United States “to help Cuba overthrow the communist regime,” this document is a rare explicit written Presidential call to topple a foreign government. All three of its attributes went ahead at full steam in the first half of 1962. Canada would be impacted most significantly by the more public diplomatic and economic aspects. However, many of Mongoose’s secret or non-publicized elements also touched Canada. A mid-July 1962 State Department review of the project’s first phase identified as primary goals “to increase US intelligence with respect to Cuba and Cuban activities in the hemisphere,” as well as “to undertake as many political economic, psychological and other actions as feasible, designed to weaken the Castro regime and isolate it from the Hemisphere.” On the first point, Canada had already emerged as a principal contributor of on-the-ground intelligence in Cuba. The Phase I report listed as one of its successful achievements Washington’s improved access to reports from friendly embassies, as well as its acquisition of Cuban publications, many of which the Americans were obtaining from the Canadian embassy in Havana. Concerning the second goal, Canada was portrayed as somewhat cooperative, but falling short of the United States’ overall objective of eliminating Cuba’s trade with the west. It was still identified as a

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4 Department of State report on Phase I Mongoose, July 19, 1962 (Top Secret) Digital National Security Archive, Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited Collection, Doc. CU00291.
5 Department of State report on Phase I Mongoose, July 19, 1962 (Top Secret) Digital National Security Archive, Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited Collection, Doc. CU00291. See also Chapter 4.
problematic source of critical spare parts, along with the United Kingdom.\(^6\) Canada experienced considerable pressure that spring, especially Deputy National Security Advisor Walt Rostow’s vigorous campaign to secure from NATO a collective formal invocation of COCOM controls on Cuba.\(^7\) While these matters will receive greater elaboration further on in this chapter, it is important to note that they were included as activities under the broader Mongoose umbrella.

As Mongoose moved into its more aggressive Phase II in August, Canada became a potential target for hostile covert US measures, as well as a participant. Reminiscent of the failed Bay of Pigs a year earlier, the Kennedy White House sought to instigate by October a rebellion on the island to topple Castro, with the possible help of the US military. At the September 14 meeting of the Special Group (Augmented) which oversaw the operation (chaired by Robert F. Kennedy), Deputy CIA Director Marshall S. Carter proposed sabotaging a shipment of airplane parts from Canada to Cuba, while at the same time hoping the Agency could secure Canadian intelligence on Cuban support of so-called “subversive elements.”\(^8\)

While it is unclear from the available record whether Carter’s suggestion was ever put into action, the fact such ideas were entertained reveal a tension and dichotomy in the US intelligence community, and indeed in the entire Kennedy administration, regarding Canada’s Cuba policy. On the one hand, the Americans wanted to keep Canada from giving Cuba any helpful support; yet at the same time, they did not want to lose a valuable supply of much needed information, as well as other helpful support. Earlier that spring, CIA Director John McCone, agitated by an intelligence report revealing how Canadian exports were helping the Cuban economy, wrote Secretary of State Rusk asking what might be done to curtail such trade.\(^9\) Alexis Johnson, responding on Rusk’s behalf (after nearly a three week delay) acknowledged McCone’s concerns, but pointed out that Canada had actually done more than other NATO countries in curtailing the flow of COCOM controlled goods to Cuba, and that on


\(^{7}\) Department of State report on Phase I Mongoose, July 19, 1962 (Top Secret) Digital National Security Archive, Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited Collection, Doc.CU00291

\(^{8}\) Minutes of the Special Group (Augmented) Meeting on Operation Mongoose, September 14, 1962 (Top Secret) in JFK Assassination Records Collection, Doc. 202-10001-10225, NARA

\(^{9}\) Memorandum from CIA Director John McCone to Secretary of State Rusk, no ER--62-3588, May 25 1962 (Secret) in CIA Crest Database, Document CIA-RDP80B01676R002900230007-1, NARA. Now also accessible online through the “Best of CREST” search engine on the CIA FOIA website http://www.foia.cia.gov/search_archive.asp.
the whole it was cooperating within the United States within the limits of its domestic politics.\textsuperscript{10}

While the conservative Republican McCone vented against Canada for its policies, nothing suggests that the CIA or other administration hawks did much more than that. The Diefenbaker government would not be coerced into following the Americans.

Canada was certainly not formally brought into the loop on Mongoose. However, as with the Bay of Pigs run-up, Canadian diplomats in Havana could observe that anti-Castro actions had been increasing apace from late 1961 onwards. In October, the newly arrived Ambassador Kidd reported that after a relatively quiet summer, Castro had upped the anti-American rhetoric, accusing Washington of holding secret meetings and conducting sabotage efforts and assassination plots against him and the Cuban leadership.\textsuperscript{11} Castro’s assessment was of course not inaccurate, and Kidd certainly believed Havana’s fears about a possible second US invasion were not entirely unreasonable. At the same time, the Ambassador was skeptical about the full scope of Castro’s charges, dismissing them as a way of distracting the Cuban public’s attention away from shortages and economic difficulties.\textsuperscript{12} Even as the CIA sponsored exile raids and sabotage incidents grew louder and more frequent in the summer of 1962, Canadian embassy reports remained reticent about laying the blame on the United States. Kidd described Havana’s anti-Americanism as “a constant ingredient in the revolutionary religion,” adding that “as increasing troubles have beset the island republic, the need to find a whipping boy to chastise in front of the public becomes more and more imperative.”\textsuperscript{13} More than any Canadian Ambassador in Havana except Hector Allard, Kidd gave the United States the benefit of the doubt, and did not probe too deeply the source of anti-Castro actions. He was somewhat slow to recognize Kennedy’s determination to eliminate Fidel Castro’s government, and that the President had no intention of failing a second time.

The Cuban government sought to convince Kidd and Canadian officials that its claims of American responsibility for sabotage incidents, and its belief in an impending invasion, were not

\textsuperscript{10} Memorandum from U Alexis Johnson to CIA Director John McCone, June 15 1962 (Secret) in CIA Crest Database, Document CREST CIA- RDP80B01676R002900230007-1, NARA. Now also accessible online through the “Best of CREST” search engine on the CIA FOIA website \url{http://www.foia.ucia.gov/search_archive.asp}

\textsuperscript{11} Canadian Embassy, Havana Despatch D-546, October 20, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 9, LAC

\textsuperscript{12} Canadian Embassy, Havana Despatch D-546, October 20, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 9, LAC

just exaggerations. In early September, Ambassador Américo Cruz left two notes for External Affairs Minister Green on the incidents. Meeting with Under Secretary Robertson, Cruz recounted in detail how “pirate ships” from Florida were conducting pinprick attacks, which he stressed were probably precursors to a larger event.\textsuperscript{14} Canadian officials were considerably less worried less about exile raids than by the rapid Soviet military build up in Cuba, about which Diefenbaker was personally briefed by Rusk in Ottawa on August 24.\textsuperscript{15} After Robertson pointed out to Cruz that Cuba now had the appearance of a Soviet satellite, the Ambassador angrily denied that his country was again becoming subservient to a foreign power. Cruz countered that Moscow’s aid to Cuba helped the people, rather than just a few American capitalists. Robertson noted afterwards “it is hard to believe that an intelligent man like Dr. Cruz can be so honestly so naive about the nature of Soviet aid and the role to be played by Soviet technicians.”\textsuperscript{16} Ideological blinders and Cold War mistrust continued to cloud and limit effective communication between Cuba and Canada, particularly over the October missiles.

As the United States government pressed on with its undeclared war against revolutionary Cuba, it also explored more the public, and politically popular avenue of economic warfare. Throughout 1961, Congressional representatives, especially from Florida, lobbied relentlessly for new legislation that would impose a total embargo on Cuba. The State Department believed this was unnecessary, and that appropriate legal instruments already existed allowing the United States to tighten the squeeze.\textsuperscript{17} In September, Kennedy signed into law the \textit{Foreign Assistance Act} (FSA). Its Section 620a specifically prohibited aid to Cuba and authorized the President “to establish and maintain a total trade embargo upon all trade between the United States and Cuba.”\textsuperscript{18} Keeping Canada and others in mind, goods passing through the St. Lawrence Seaway were exempted, and the FSA did \textit{not} apply to foreign subsidiaries and allowed for special licences. Kennedy thus had the best of both worlds. He could satisfy

\textsuperscript{14} Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Robertson) to the Minister (Green). “The War of Nerves between Cuba and the US”, September 5, 1962 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 4183, File 2444-40, pt. 8, LAC
\textsuperscript{16} Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Robertson) to the Minister (Green). “The War of Nerves between Cuba and the US”, September 5, 1962 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 4183, File 2444-40 pt. 8, LAC
\textsuperscript{17} Telegram from Canadian Embassy in Washington to External Affairs, no 2923, September 15 1961 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 939, File 7-544-2, LAC
\textsuperscript{18} For description and background see Draft Memorandum from Secretary of State Rusk to President Kennedy, “Desirability of Invoking Section 620a of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961,” [undated but October 1961], (Secret) in Dept. of State. Records of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, RG 59, Entry A1 3165, Box 16, Folder “Economic Measures – Cuba 1961,” NARA
Americans wanting more comprehensive sanctions, while still avoiding the thornier *Trading with the Enemy Act* with its extraterritorial reach.\(^\text{19}\)

Preoccupied with Berlin, Kennedy waited until early 1962 before concluding that circumstances now favoured additional sanctions against Cuba. On February 3, he signed Proclamation 3447, which barred all Cuban goods from coming in to the United States, thus eliminating the residual trade between the two countries in agricultural and pharmaceutical products.\(^\text{20}\) Two factors influenced Kennedy’s decision: Fidel Castro’s December 1961 declaration that the Cuban revolution was Marxist-Leninist, and the OAS de-facto expulsion of Cuba at its January 1962 foreign ministers meeting at Punta del Este, Uruguay. Following the State Department’s recommendation that he use Section 620a as his authority, the President called for even tighter enforcement of the embargo by improving detection of US goods transshipments, coupled with renewed diplomatic pressure on allies to stop the sale to Cuba of industrial goods and spare parts.\(^\text{21}\) Obtaining Canadian cooperation in both regards was deemed essential to the measures’ success, and was thus a key reason why Kennedy used the FSA, rather than the *Trading with the Enemy Act*. As Under Secretary of State George Ball explained to Bundy on February 2, by using the FSA, “we would not have to extend it [the embargo] to American companies and not get into the Canadian problem. We would explain it to the Canadians when we do it in order not to get into a flap.”\(^\text{22}\)

Problematic for Kennedy was that the new measures contained loopholes enabling third countries to export to the United States goods containing Cuban ingredients, especially cigars and confectionary. In early March, Treasury Secretary Dillon wrote Kennedy that the FSA was inadequate for curtailing the import of foreign made cigars containing Cuban tobacco, a point

\(^{19}\) Ibid.


also noted by the anti-Castro lobby in Congress.\textsuperscript{23} Canada indeed manufactured and sold to the United States cigars made from such tobacco. However, the total value of these exports was a minuscule few hundred dollars per year, in comparison to the much larger volumes exported by Mexico and Spain.\textsuperscript{24} Dillon argued “the Canadians were disposed to be cooperative,” but the others less so; therefore once again, he advocated the \textit{Trading with the Enemy Act}.\textsuperscript{25} Concerned mainly about Canadian sensibilities, Kennedy chose an intermediate measure: the United States would use that statute, but only to close this import loophole, leaving aside for the time being matters concerning financial assets. Giving the Canadian Ambassador a one day courtesy notice, the State Department reassured the soon departing Heeney that these new measures were limited in scope and would not open the extraterritoriality question.\textsuperscript{26} Given the very low dollar value of these Canadian exports, the impact of these new measures was negligible. Kennedy added these additional restrictions on March 24, although as his Press Secretary Pierre Salinger recalled years later, he did not do so until Salinger had secured for him some 1200 fine Cuban cigars, a product for which both men had a fondness.\textsuperscript{27}

Kennedy had again resisted imposing the full embargo regimen allowable under US law, and all evidence suggests that a desire to avoid “serious strain” with American allies, Canada in

\textsuperscript{23} Memorandum from Secretary of the Treasury Dillon to President Kennedy, undated but March 1962, in RG 59, Records of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, Entry A1 3165, Folder, “Embargo January-April 1962,” Box 28, NARA.
\textsuperscript{24} See Memorandum from J.R. Downs, Chief of United States Division, International Trade Development Branch (ITB), Dept. of Trade and Commerce to R.E. Lattimer, Director ITB “US Embargo on Trade with Cuba” March 26, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 939, File 7-544-2, LAC and attached Draft Statement for the Minister of Trade and Commerce in the same file.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid
\textsuperscript{26} Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington DC to External Affairs no 912, March 23,1962 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 939, File 7-544-2, LAC
\textsuperscript{27} Salinger recalled this incident in an interview for the magazine publication \textit{Cigar Aficionado}, found online at http://www.cigaraficionado.com/webfeatures/show/id/Kennedy-Cuba-and-Cigars_8283 and a YouTube video exists of Salinger discussing the incident at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHazLBTZUEs although in the latter, he indicates then the signing took place earlier, just after the Bay of Pigs. Unfortunately, Salinger neither mentions it in his Oral History, found at the John F. Kennedy Library, nor in his memoir \textit{With Kennedy} (Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1966), although at that time no former Kennedy official was prepared to destroy the Camelot myth. He also fails to mention this occurrence either in his 1995 work, \textit{P.S. A Memoir}, which followed the passage of much time, with much of the Kennedy mystique then debunked. Salinger does relate however in both the oral history and in the 1995 work that Khrushchev gave Salinger a box of Cuban cigars that had been given to him by Castro, which the Soviet leader wanted to pass on to the President. Kennedy ordered Salinger to destroy the cigars immediately upon his return to Washington. Salinger did however keep the box. See Pierre Salinger, \textit{P.S.: A Memoir}, (New York; St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 152-153. Canadian officials also had to have Cuban cigars for Kennedy on his May 1961 Ottawa visit. See Nash, 105.
particular, strongly influenced his restraint. Blocking controls still remained a contingency in the President’s back pocket. As US-Cuban trade was now nil, the impact of further measures would be mostly political and psychological in nature. By the early fall of 1962, the Soviet build-up sparked renewed discussions in Washington about blocking controls. This time, American policymakers concluded that with the decline of Canada’s Cuba trade and a shift in Canadian public opinion slightly in Washington’s favour, blocking controls were less risky. That intervening missile crisis increased Canadians’ sympathy for the United States, although that event and its aftermath further delayed a final decision on blocking controls until the summer of 1963.

Trade and the embargo remained front and centre in Canada-United States conversations on Cuba in early 1962. The topic surfaced at the annual meeting of the Joint Committee on Economics and Trade, held in Ottawa in mid-January. State Department briefing documents portrayed Canadian-US relations, as “generally good, including in the economic field,” although they did mention “attendant Canadian sensitivities” – a not so cryptic reference to the rather spirited discussions a year earlier over sovereignty, American investments and extraterritoriality. By this point, the Department’s bureaucrats had assessed John Diefenbaker as an indecisive leader who faced an uphill battle regarding the Canadian economy and in the anticipated 1962 election. Both these assessments accurately anticipated the impending Diefendollar fiasco and the June election, in which Diefenbaker’s Progressive Conservatives would retain power, but were reduced to a minority government. In preparing to discuss Cuba, Richard Goodwin of the Inter American Affairs Bureau reported to Under Secretary Ball that the projected year-end value of Canadian exports to Cuba for 1961 was some $30 million, more than double the 1960 figure of $13 million. In his view, while Canada would indeed be politically vulnerable by this trend. So too would Washington, in the eyes of some Americans, for not leaning hard enough on

28 See Memorandum from John Hugh Crimmins (Caribbean and Mexican Affairs) to Edwin Martin (Inter-American Affairs), September 29, 1962 (no classification marking) Dept. of State. Records of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, RG 59, Entry A1 3165, Box 28, Folder “Foreign Assets Control – Cuba 1961,” NARA
29 Memorandum from John Hugh Crimmins (Caribbean and Mexican Affairs) to Edwin Martin (Inter-American Affairs), September 29, 1962 (no classification marking) Dept. of State. Records of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, RG 59, Entry A1 3165, Box 28, Folder “Foreign Assets Control – Cuba 1961,” NARA
allies such as Canada. Havana’s ability to obtain spare parts and industrial machinery remained the United States’ principal concern, and American officials intended to revisit this matter with the Canadians, but hoped to do so in a side conversation.

External Affairs officials in Ottawa also readied themselves to discuss Cuba at the meetings. Conceding that Castro’s regime was now undeniably communist, thus precluding any repair in US-Cuban relations, Ottawa nonetheless remained resolute on retaining its commercial and diplomatic engagement with Havana. As a consequence, industrial capital goods and spare parts that were neither strategic in nature nor American made were still deemed exportable to Cuba, although such exports were expected to decline as Cuba relied increasingly on the East bloc for supply. Embarrassed at the rise in exports, Canadian officials were eager wanted to placate the Americans wherever possible. They rushed to provide the State Department with a confidential, advance briefing showing how Canadian exports to the island had declined sharply late in 1961, and that most of what had been sold was connected to agriculture. In addition, the brief noted that Canadian businesses were hesitant to fill Cuban orders, given Havana’s low foreign exchange reserves.

At the Ottawa meetings, Cuba remained off the main agenda, although Ball and Finance Minister Fleming indeed discussed the issue on the side. Putting Fleming on notice that the United States intended to cease all its Cuba trade after the OAS meetings in Punta del Este, Ball reassured him that the United States did not intend to put Canada on the spot regarding the embargo, but he did ask that Canada continue to prevent trans-shipments of American goods and to refuse “technical facilities relating to shipments to Cuba.” Already diligently complying with the first request, honouring the second would be considerably more difficult for Ottawa. The latter included the technical servicing of Cubana airlines’ Britannias – which the...

31 Memorandum from Richard Goodwin (ARA) to Under Secretary (Ball) [January 11, 1962] (Secret) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 437.429/1-1161 [date error on document reads 1961], NARA
32 Memorandum from J. Robert Schaezelt, Special Assistant to the Under Secretary to Mr Carlson, Northern European and British Commonwealth Affairs Section, December 29, 1961 (No classification marking) in RG 59, Records Relating to the Joint US-Canada Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs, Entry A1 3078, Box 2, File “1962 Meeting,” NARA
33 Memorandum from Under Secretary Robertson to the Minister of External Affairs (Green), “Joint Canada-USA Meeting on Trade and Economic Affairs: The Cuban Question”, January 11, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 6057, File 50316-7-40, pt. 1.1, LAC
34 Telegram from US Embassy in Ottawa to Department of State no. 675, January 18, 1962 (Official Use Only) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 437.429/1-1862, NARA
Canadian government interpreted as an obligation under the ICAO. Ottawa was still allowing periodic charter flights, now also using Canadian carrier World Wide Airways, to transport livestock, agricultural produce but also some machinery between Canada and Cuba. Also, it allowed relatively small Cuban ships to carry cargoes to Canadian ports. These transportation and other issues made for some testy Canadian American dialogue in the coming months.

The United States gave Canada a mixed message on Cuba in early 1962. On the one hand, it sought to soothe Ottawa’s anxiety about the forthcoming additional embargo measures by arguing little would change. On the other hand, Washington was clearly intending to turn up the political and diplomatic heat on Canada, as well as other American allies still commercially engaged commercially with Havana. Following the bilateral economic meetings, Ambassador Heeney met with Robert Hurwitch of the State Department’s Cuban desk. The latter made it clear that regardless of the outcome at Punta del Este, the United States intended to proceed with tighter sanctions. When Heeney reminded him about the May 1961 understanding on extraterritoriality, Hurwitch replied that Canadian subsidiaries would likely get an unconditional exemption, but that Ottawa could expect an American request to reconsider selling the Cubans spare parts and sensitive items such as electrical transformers.36

Canada’s image in Washington was not helped when US diplomats in Brazil reported how Cuban President Oswaldo Dorticos had told the Brazilian Foreign Minister that “Cubans now have [a] daily plane to Canada which picks up all essential spare parts according to priorities established by the regime.”37 Equally embarrassing were recent statements by Cuban Foreign Under Secretary Carlos Olivares that Cuba would alleviate its foreign exchange shortage by selling Canada a significant quantity of Cuban sugar.38 Ambassador Cruz touted a similar line to a Montreal student group in February, complaining that Canada’s $4 million in purchases from Cuba for 1961 was a mere tenth of what Cuba bought from Canada. He asked Canada to close this gap by purchasing more Cuban sugar. 39 Rusk instructed Ambassador

37 Telegram from the US Embassy Rio de Janeiro to Secretary of State no. 1740, January 29, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 737.561/1-2962 in Confidential US State Department files: Cuba Internal Affairs 1960-1963 UPA microfilm Reel 26
38 Telegram from the Secretary of State to the US Embassy in Ottawa no. 678, January 15, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 837.00/1-1562, cross filed with 437.4241 Box 963, NARA
39 See Embassy Ottawa Airgram A-304, February 19, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 59, Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 437.4241/2-1962, NARA and also US Embassy Ottawa Despatch “Canadian Trade with Cuba”, no.916,
Merchant to caution Ottawa that it might have difficulties in Latin America if it were seen as a source for foreign exchange that Havana could use to support guerilla insurgents and propaganda in the region’s countries.\textsuperscript{40} With the impending OAS meetings and Washington’s renewed attention on Cuba, the Canadian government had to brace itself for a flurry of activity concerning its relations with Havana. For the next two months, Cuba moved to its highest prominence in Canadian-American interchange.

The outcome of the OAS meetings at Punta del Este meetings in late January was a critical diplomatic milestone for the United States in its efforts to isolate Cuba diplomatically within the hemisphere, a process that ultimately took two years. Despite Dean Rusk’s considerable pressure on Latin American governments, the regional organization neither officially expelled Cuba from the OAS nor did it impose comprehensive sanctions. However, Colombia’s resolution barring Cuba from participating in the organization’s agencies passed by a two-thirds majority, as did a second resolution declaring Marxism-Leninism, with its implied allegiance to Sino-Soviet foreign policy and revolutionary internationalism as incompatible with the Inter-American system.\textsuperscript{41} Cuba quit the organization in protest. Reporting from Havana, Kidd described the outcome as “a major defeat for Cuba,” one that further stoked fears that the United States was determined to change its government, which indeed was the case.\textsuperscript{42} Having declined OAS membership the previous summer, Canada did not participate at Punta del Este, a decision that spared it having to take a formal either/or stand between the United States and Cuba. Still, Canada’s non-participation did not shield it from resulting fallout, either in the press or in its relations with either the United States and various Latin American states, all on account of its position regarding Cuba.

John Diefenbaker was always sensitive to criticism in the press, and in those opening months of 1962, media criticism of Canada over its Cuba trade rose significantly. His government was out of step with the growing hawkish mood from the south. A State

\textsuperscript{40} Telegram from the Secretary of State to the US Embassy in Ottawa no. 678, January 15, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 437.4241/5-2862, NARA
\textsuperscript{41} For details see Memorandum from Under Secretary Robertson to the Minister of External Affairs (Green), “Notes for Reply to Possible Questions in the House on the Punta del Este Conference,” February 1, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5012, File 288-40, pt. 10, LAC
Department survey of American public opinion on Cuba revealed early in March how American newspapers were now almost universally calling for a total US embargo of that country, with a number of them, including the Washington Post, advocating that Canada and other NATO allies do likewise (although the latter did not suggest that the US coerce its allies). More conservative papers such as the Tampa Tribune, the Chicago Tribune, the Cleveland Plain Dealer and the US News and World Report were more openly and sharply critical of Canada. Writing to Howard Green about the spike in American press criticism after Punta del Este, Arnold Heeney requested that Canadian consulates across the United States closely monitor the local press on Canada, which he anticipated might be even more unfavourable than in the larger centres.

It was not only the print media that had Canada in its sights. American legislators on Capitol Hill continued to loudly and harshly criticize Canadian policy. Most notorious was Senator Kenneth Keating; the outspoken New York Republican claimed that even Canadian food exports shored up Cuba's communist government, and suggested that their complete discontinuation might spark popular discontentment among hungry Cubans (as President Eisenhower had privately mused in January 1960). Florida Congressmen such as Republican William C. Cramer and Democrat Paul G. Rodgers continued their regular attacks on Canadian trade with Cuba. Taking a slightly different tact, others such as Senators Wayne Morse and John Sparkman advocated direct bilateral negotiations with Ottawa regarding trade with Cuba and other communist countries. Basil Robinson recorded in his diary early in February 1962 that “the PM [is] steamed by the bad press Canada is getting in US re: trade with Cuba.” Once again the Diefenbaker government was in a damage control posture, busily occupying the attention of Canadian diplomats and civil servants with correcting the record from inaccuracies and misperceptions, an exercise as unsuccessful as the American effort to “educate” Canadians the previous spring.

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45 Robinson, 248. See also Memo to File, “From the Programme ‘Enquiry’ February 7, 10:00pm,” February 8, 1962, in H. Basil Robinson fonds, MG 31, E-83, Box 5, File 5.18, LAC
46 Telegram from Canadian Embassy in Washington to External Affairs, no 683, March 5, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5012, File 288-40, pt. 11, LAC
47 Robinson, 247.
Anticipating a wave of criticism after Punta del Este, on February 3, the very day Kennedy proclaimed the new sanctions, the Canadian Embassy in Washington issued a press release on “Canadian Trade with Cuba.” Repeating the standard promises about Canada’s refusal to export to the island strategic or American origin goods, the statement sought to convince Americans that the trade balance overwhelmingly favoured Canada, and thus Cuba was not gaining significant foreign currency. The Americans were mostly unconvinced, seeing Canada as an unreliable ally that gained commercially by its refusal to join the embargo – a reprise of the “bootlegging” accusations of a year earlier. Greatly concerned about Canada’s declining reputation in the United States, Heeney wrote in early March:

Cuba continues to cast a deepening shadow upon our reputation here. The whole question is deeply emotional among the Americans; their attitude is rooted in their history and their frustration compounded by the very mistakes of the recent and less recent past.

Piqued and frustrated by criticism he saw as unfair, Diefenbaker was further enraged when on January 28, Arthur M. Schlesinger, a historian and White House advisor to President Kennedy made a brief statement during a flight stopover at the Vancouver airport, accusing Canada of hurting “democratic reform in Latin America” by trading with Cuba. Schlesinger cabled back to Washington that he had clarified his remarks by adding that the decision was Canada’s to make. A raw nerve had nonetheless been struck. Green criticized Schlesinger in the House of Commons. The press in Canada, and even some more liberal American publications, denounced Schlesinger’s comments as unwanted interference in Canadian affairs. Quoting Harvard sociologist Everett C. Hughes, the New Republic magazine described how Canadians were “fighting mad” by the White House aide’s criticisms.

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48 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to External Affairs, no. 627, February 3, 1962 (Unclassified) containing contents of “Canadian Trade with Cuba” press release, in RG 20, Vol. 899, File 6-3-31 (T-6-1), LAC.
49 Telegram from the Department of External Affairs Economic Division (Wilgress) to the Canadian Embassy, Washington DC, E-691, March 28, 1962 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 5012, File 288-40, pt. 11, LAC.
House was greatly surprised at the harsh response, and Schlesinger responded with an open letter in the magazine claiming his comments had been taken out of context and blown out of proportion. Robinson wrote in his diary that the Prime Minister angrily saw the incident as yet another example of United States interference in Canadian policy.

Criticism of Canada’s Cuba policy extended even further south, as revealed in correspondence and newspaper articles from several Latin American countries. Much of this criticism came from the political right, which wholeheartedly supported United States policy and thought Canada’s should align with its neighbour. For over a year, Canadian diplomats and bureaucrats had been receiving negative letters not only from Cuban expatriates in the United States, but also from similar communities and the like-minded in countries such as Costa Rica and Venezuela. Several countries were alarmed at reports that Canada had sold industrial dynamite to Cuba. In response to press reports originating from Central America decrying Canada’s “intense arms traffic” to the island, Canada’s Ambassador to Colombia had to refute an editorial in Bogotá’s El Tiempo. The ambassador in Costa Rica, then representing Canadian interests in all Central America, had to do the same in a Managua paper, as well as to dispel rumours that Diefenbaker had dismissed criticism in Latin America as coming from “banana republics.”

Ironically, Canada even got a little American advice for addressing its critics south of the Rio Grande. Rusk told Heeney that many Latin Americans did not understand Canada’s position on Cuba, and suggested its diplomats in the region explain it accordingly. In response, External Affairs Minister Green instructed all Canadian missions in the region to assess the extent of anti-Canadian sentiment in their respective countries. The findings largely aligned with the OAS vote on the Cuba motions. As Canada’s ambassador to Brazil reported, in the larger

56 Robinson, 246-247.
57 For examples see Letter from Dora Rojas de Rodriguez, Secretary of the Feminine Anti-Communist Movement, to the Canadian Ambassador in Venezuela, January 31, 1961 in RG 25, Vol. 5012, File 288-40, pt. 9, LAC and Memorandum from Under Secretary (Robertson) to the Minister of External Affairs (Green) “Trade with Cuba,” January 10, 1961 in the same file.
“more evolved” Latin American states, such as Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, the press and governments alike shared the Canadian perspective. In contrast, the criticism of Canada’s Cuba policies was much harsher in countries with traditional oligarchic dictatorships, as in Nicaragua, or in those facing strong pro-Castro movements, such as Peru, Colombia and Venezuela.

All the criticism south of its border gave the Diefenbaker government reason for pause and reconsideration. Was Ottawa excessively stubborn in preserving its freedom of action in Cuba, and as a consequence harming its position in Latin America? Was its policy still the correct one? Canada had received considerable international exposure after a testy February 15 House of Commons session, in which Trade and Commerce Minister Hees was grilled by opposition leader Lester Pearson and his foreign affairs critic Paul Martin over the definition of strategic goods. This exchange was triggered by press reports that not only had Canada sold the Cubans industrial explosives, but other dual use items such synthetic rubber, steel (sheet and strip), electrical transformers, and aircraft engines and parts. The US embassy in Ottawa watched with amusement as Diefenbaker and Green were forced on the defensive, as was apparent when Hees’ refused to divulge to Parliament the specifics of the COCOM list that Canada had declared it was following as its export guideline. Regarding its Cuba trade, the Canadian government indeed looked exposed and on the ropes.

Aware that its northern neighbour was feeling the heat, the Kennedy administration concluded the time was ripe to try again to bring Canada on board to its position. Appealing to Ottawa’s penchant for multilateralism, and armed with the OAS resolutions, Washington instigated a two month diplomatic offensive aimed at NATO in general, and Canada in particular. The State Department had no illusions that Canadians would be easily convinced of the American position, let alone their government. As Ambassador Merchant reported, Canadians generally believed that American policy had been “inept and short-sighted from the beginning.” American officials were exasperated at their counterparts reticence and seeming inability to perceive the threat from Cuba that Washington was convinced existed. While failing

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61 This would change after rightist military coups in Argentina in March 1962 and Brazil in April 1964.
to change the mind of either Ottawa or the Canadian public at large, Washington’s persuasion offensive challenged the Canadian government to weigh the merits of its policy against the reality of American power. American pressure did influence some changes in Ottawa’s behaviour, and as will be discussed, its influence did sway public opinion slightly in the favour of greater care and discretion in what Canada sold the Cubans. The Diefenbaker government made some minor adjustments in its rhetoric and its export list, and recommitted itself to cooperate with the Americans in particular areas and instances. But it would take a testy few weeks to get there.

Merchant began this persuasion initiative on February 8, when he met with several Cabinet ministers and told them “more in sorrow than anger” that Canada’s recent positions on various issues, including Cuba, were putting the country at risk for a loss of influence both in the United States and in NATO. The following week, the US Ambassador spent time in Montreal conducting television interviews, meeting with business leaders and other prominent citizens, after which he concluded that “serious misunderstandings” still remained. Believing his arguments would have greater credence if reinforced by Latin American voices, Merchant suggested that the State Department encourage several Latin American governments to have their representatives in Ottawa discuss their views on Cuba. Predicting an uphill journey, Merchant concluded:

> [the Canadian] Government, including PM, is extremely sensitive to criticism and heated pre-election atmosphere they continue [to] blow [the] bagpipe of Canadian sovereignty and strut [the] virtue of independent Canadian policies free from our domination on various issues. I tell them privately that within limits this can be understood but in their own interest they should avoid like the plague divergence on issues such as China and Cuba where US policies are in our view not only sound but carry high content of public emotion [in the United States].

Another State Department visitor to Ottawa, the veteran Theodore C. Achilles, found himself similarly exasperated, especially after meeting Norman Robertson, whom he described as having an “Olympian detachment” on the Cuban issue. Compounding Achilles’ annoyance

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was the Under Secretary’s skepticism about the genuineness of Castro’s communist faith, despite the Cuban leader’s public profession of Marxism-Leninism, and his assignment of blame to United States for the revolution’s Soviet orientation. Rubbing in matters further, Robertson told the American diplomat that by preserving normal relations with Cuba, Canada had successfully protected the interests of both its businesses and its missionaries on the island - the former point doing little to dispel American suspicions of Canadian profiteering. Achilles reported that Robertson responded evasively when asked how the United States should handle Cuba.67

There were similarly charged discussions in Washington, including two between Heeney and Rusk, in which Cuba was the dominant subject. The first, held on February 10, was a relatively routine debrief for the Ambassador of Punta del Este and why new embargo measures were being adopted. In that meeting, Rusk cautioned the Canadian that his government intended to ask NATO as a whole to designate Cuba as a Soviet bloc nation under COCOM, and for individual members to cease chartering ships flying their flags to service the Cuba trade.68 Six days later, the two men met again, with Heeney accompanied by embassy staffers Saul Rae and Maurice Schwarzmann, in what was to be a lengthy and focussed discussion. For Rusk this would be his longest and probably most cantankerous such conversation with a Canadian official on Cuba, one that at times bordered on outright acrimony. In a lengthy lecture that adopted a “with-us-or-with-them” approach, the Secretary of State argued that “divergence between the two countries on a fundamental matter would of course be a cause of real concern,” and that Canada and the United States could not end up on opposite sides in a battle over the Western Hemisphere. 69 Repeating concerns about subversion and hemispheric security, for Rusk the problem was not Castro’s socialism, but his government’s serving as “the chore boy for the Communist bloc” in the western hemisphere. To prove his point, Rusk offered Heeney

evidence of Castro’s efforts to instigate revolution in other Latin American countries, presumably from finished CIA intelligence.\(^\text{70}\)

In response, the Canadian ambassador stated that Canada needed to think in its own long term interest, one that did not always coincide exactly with the United States. After also repeating standard Canadian positions, Heeney stressed that not only was his country applying de-facto COCOM standards to Cuba, it had made special efforts to keep spare parts for the oil, sugar and public transit industries from getting to Cuba, with Rusk dismissing their ineffectiveness. Upping the ante and catching the Ambassador off guard, the Secretary asked bluntly whether Canadian interests were well-served by allowing a pro-Soviet Cuba to survive. Heeney lamely responded that Latin American issues were traditionally remote for Canada, and accordingly, they were less sensitive.\(^\text{71}\) The conversation ended more positively on the topic of cooperation, with a non-committal Heeney promising to examine the US view on specific attributes. Perhaps more than any other bilateral conversation on Cuba before or since, the February 16 meeting revealed how differently the two neighbours perceived both the problem and solution.

Despite the scant progress the American officials made with Canada’s ministers and bureaucrats, they were more hopeful regarding its ordinary citizens. Merchant believed “the broad base of [the] Canadian public itself is not so deluded as Green” and that most Canadians thought more like Americans than they would care to admit.\(^\text{72}\) Detecting what he saw was a slightly favourable shift in Canadian public opinion early in February, the US Ambassador observed that the normally pro-government Ottawa Journal recently matched the American media in reporting how Canada had in fact benefitted economically from the embargo, revealing “Canadian twinges of conscience” on Cuba.\(^\text{73}\) Not expecting the Diefenbaker government to do an about face, Merchant was nonetheless delighted some Canadians were questioning their country’s policy and were worried about its loss of influence south of the border as a

\(^{70}\) Ibid.

\(^{71}\) Ibid.

\(^{72}\) Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 1025, April 11, 1962 (Secret) National Security Files, Folder: Canada: General April 1-May 15 1962, Box 18, John F. Kennedy Library (JFKL). On UPA microfilm John F. Kennedy National Security files (NSF), Western Europe Supplement 1, Reel 2

\(^{73}\) See also US Embassy Ottawa Airgram A-292, February 8, 1962 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59, Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 437.427/2-862, NARA
American policymakers viewed a shift in the views of ordinary Canadians away from a default nationalist position as an absolute prerequisite for any serious policy revision in Ottawa.

Despite these indicators, the reality was that Canadian public opinion still largely favoured staying the course on Cuba. An External Affairs’ departmental survey of the Canadian press for February 1962 revealed that 10 out of 18 leading Canadian newspapers remained positive about Ottawa’s Cuba policy. While the other 8 expressed certain reservations, they advocated that Ottawa take a less nationalistic tone and tighten its export controls on semi-strategic or dual purpose goods, but otherwise continue trade and relations with Cuba. None suggested that Canada mirror the United States by having its own embargo. Another Departmental assessment of incoming letters told a similar story. From April-June 1961, the ratio of letters favouring Ottawa’s approach to those that were either unfavourable or mixed was 12 to 4. From July 1961 to January 1962, the Department reported receiving only 4 letters on Cuba, all of which supported Canada’s continuing trade with the island. Howard Green did receive at least one critical domestic letter, arguing that “this Communistic state of Cuba is getting too close to home to view through our rose coloured glasses” and warned against seeking more trade with Cuba for election dividends. Such was a minority view. Readying himself for a spring election, Diefenbaker concluded he could walk more closely with the United States regarding Cuba on some very specific issues, and within carefully defined boundaries, but that a wholesale adoption of the United States’ line was another matter entirely.

Washington in the end conceded more or less the same position. Disappointed that they were unable to bring Canadians to the United States’ position, the Americans maintained that they had made progress. Embassy Counsellor Rufus Smith observed in early April that Cuba had received significantly more coverage in Canadian newspapers in recent months, matching

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74 Embassy Ottawa Airgram A-304, February 19, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 59, Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 437.4241/2-1962, NARA. For Merchant’s direct warning about the loss of such influence see US Embassy Ottawa Airgram A-291, February 8, 1962 (Confidential/ Limit Distribution) National Security Files, Folder: Canada: General February-March 1962, Box18, John F. Kennedy Library (JFKL). On UPA microfilm John F. Kennedy National Security files (NSF), Western Europe Supplement 1, Reel 2 Also quoted in McKercher, 73
75 Memorandum from Under Secretary Robertson to the Minister of External Affairs (Green), “Press Reactions to Canadian Trade with Cuba”, [undated but first week of February 1962] (No classification marking) in RG 25, Vol. 5012, File 288-40, pt. 10, LAC
76 Memorandum from J.R.B. Chaput, Head of the Latin American Division to the Economic Division, “Canadian Trade with Cuba: Survey of Public Correspondence since January 1, 1961,” March 6, 1962 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 5012, File 288-40, pt. 11, LAC.
Merchant’s assessment that the demeanour of Canadian opinion had shifted significantly since April 1961. More Canadian editorials conceded that Castro had contributed significantly to the course of US-Cuban relations, and had created “a harsh and repressive communist dictatorship.” In Smith’s view, most Canadians disliked Havana’s Marxist-Leninist world view, and were disturbed by the spectacle of the Bay of Pigs trials and the arrest and persecution of missionaries. Finally, he pointed out that trade statistics had embarrassed Canada, with the rise in exports the previous year lending credence to American accusations that Canada had gained economically from the US embargo.

In response to the recent flurry of conversations with the United States about Cuba, Diefenbaker and Green were determined to chart a course that would placate the Americans on specific grievances while simultaneously avoiding the appearance of caving in to American pressure. Digesting the recent discourse and press coverage, the Prime Minister emphasized to his Cabinet on February 20 the seriousness of the growing gap with Washington. At a follow-up meeting several days later, the conversation turned to the dynamite sales. Diefenbaker recounted the critical feedback he had recently received on this matter while visiting Alberta, and Hees promised to explore measures that would restrict future exports to Cuba of such semi-strategic goods. During the meeting, several ministers advocated that Canada make some adaptations to reduce friction with Washington, although others countered that Canadian policy had already been clearly articulated, and as Great Britain and several leading Latin American states did not support new sanctions against Cuba, neither should Canada.

Not wanting to subordinate Canada to all of Washington’s wishes regarding Cuba, Diefenbaker and his External Affairs Minister did not want the issue to be a festering sore, especially as larger and even more contentious decisions regarding nuclear weapons loomed. Acknowledging Canada’s small volume of trade with Cuba was not worth an imbroglio with Washington, Green conceded:

we had to recognize that whatever the rights or wrongs of American policy may have been and however responsible the U.S. government might be for the present state of affairs in their

79 Ibid.
relations with Cuba, the fact remained that the Cuban problem had thoroughly aroused public and Congressional opinion in the U.S.A. It was therefore of the uttermost importance that we cease treating the Cuban problem as simply one of trade or of relations with Cuba, but rather as a highly sensitive issue in Canada/US relations.\footnote{Memorandum from Ross Campbell to Undersecretary Robertson, “Cuba – Trade Policy,” February 23, 1962 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 5102, File 288-40, pt. 10. LAC. In this memo, Campbell is recounting statements made by Green at recent meetings on Cuba policy.}

The Diefenbaker government thus reaffirmed that American public opinion had a considerable influence on the White House. Seeking to reduce calls for pressure on Canada, Diefenbaker advocated that Ottawa handle the Cuba file more discreetly, in particular by toning down the nationalist arguments.\footnote{Memorandum from Ross Campbell to Undersecretary Robertson, “Cuba – Trade Policy’ February 23, 1962 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 5012, File 288-40, pt. 10. LAC} The Prime Minister agreed with Heeney that selling questionable goods that could have strategic uses was highly embarrassing. Heeney admitted to George Ball at the beginning of March that “some things had gone to Cuba which shouldn’t have,” adding that Diefenbaker was angry about this fact and as a consequence, the Canadian government would be reviewing its export control lists.\footnote{Memorandum of Conversation “Canadian Trade with Cuba,” March 2, 1962 (Secret) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 437.429/3-262, NARA} In this regard, the combination of Washington’s efforts to shift Canadian behaviour and the negative press had carried some weight in Ottawa.

While Canada was singled out to a significant degree by the Kennedy administration in its efforts to obtain allied support, it was certainly not alone. Walt Rostow, now with the State Department’s Policy Planning section, attended NATO’s mid-February council meetings to brief the member states on the outcome of Punta del Este and as Rusk had warned Heeney, he called on NATO as an organization to officially designate Cuba as a member of the Sino-Soviet bloc, thereby automatically subjecting it to COCOM controls on strategic goods. He also called for NATO to report on any extensions of credit to the island by member states.\footnote{Telegram from Canadian NATO Delegation Paris to Department of External Affairs, no. 450, February 20, 1962 (Confidential – Emergency) in RG 19, Vol. 4200, File 8660/E19-4, LAC} Sympathizing with American strategic concerns, the NATO members nonetheless questioned the appropriateness of extending the alliance’s jurisdiction to Latin America, the very region from which the United States had traditionally excluded European powers through the Monroe Doctrine. The pros and cons of Rostow’s arguments would be weighed for the next two months before a collective decision was made not to formally designate Cuba as subject to COCOM.
Member states also refused to suspend normal trade or diplomatic relations with the Castro regime.

For the most part, individual NATO members closely resembled Canada in their relations with Cuba, and many were even more liberal in their export regimes. Unlike Canada, leading NATO members, including Great Britain, extended export credit to Cuba and even had ships active in the Cuba trade. In the first eight months of 1962, some 141 ships originating from NATO member states had been chartered to East bloc countries, and these vessels had made 209 visits to Cuban ports.\(^{86}\) Large hull vessels were the Soviet bloc’s principal means of delivering arms, heavy machinery and vehicles to Cuba, and thus the Kennedy White House paid particularly close attention to such maritime traffic. Pressure was building in the United States for closing American ports to any ship that transported goods to Cuba, a measure the President approved in early October.\(^{87}\) Canada’s refusal to extend Cuba credit, and the fact that no ships flying the Canadian flag were involved in the Cuba trade gained it significant political capital in Washington, muting to some degree American displeasure with its other commercial activities on the island.\(^{88}\)

Rostow’s push for NATO-wide COCOM controls and the resulting Canadian-US discussions on the subject led Robertson to draft a memorandum for Cabinet exploring whether or not Canada needed to formally revise its Cuba policy. Posing four questions, Robertson’s paper asked if Ottawa’s policy had been effective, whether it had been well presented and communicated, how Ottawa should respond to Rostow’s request, and if Canada needed to do anything additional to cooperate with the United States.\(^{89}\) Referring the COCOM decision to Cabinet, Robertson offered a detailed analysis of the other three questions. He concluded that Canadian policy had been effective, especially in stopping re-exports of American goods, although he believed greater stringency was needed regarding goods that had been slightly reworked in Canada but remained in essence American. In answering the most delicate issue about additional cooperation with Washington, the Under Secretary concluded the country could

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\(^{86}\) Telegram from the Canadian NATO Delegation, Paris to the Department of External Affairs, no. 2069, September 5, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 19, Vol. 4200, File 8660/ E19-4, LAC

\(^{87}\) See Memorandum from Acting Secretary of State Ball to President Kennedy, October 2, 1962 (Confidential) in FRUS 1961-1963, Vol. XI, Doc. 2, 3-4. These recommendations were issued the same day as National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 194 in FRUS 1961-1963, Vol. XI, Doc 3,4-5.


\(^{89}\) Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Robertson) to the Minister of External Affairs (Green) “Relations with Cuba,” March 8, 1962 (Secret) in Basil Robinson fonds, MG 31, E-83, Vol.5, File 5-19, LAC
not appear to be “knuckling under” to American pressure. He also rejected certain American suggestions as too extreme. Among these were denying landing rights to Cuban aircraft, deploying Canadian warships to the Caribbean to police arms trafficking, and severing diplomatic relations with Havana - the latter suggestion was not being made by Rusk. Robertson agreed that Ottawa could do a better job in communicating its position. In talking with the Americans, Ottawa should specify what constructive activities it might do, such as intelligence sharing, tightening of trade controls and aiding struggling countries in the Caribbean region that might otherwise be drawn to Castroism.

The Diefenbaker Cabinet was anything but unified on the COCOM question. Green and Hees sponsored a submission that circulated on March 8 speculating that if Canada voted against Washington’ request to NATO, the United States might well ask Canada directly to apply COCOM officially to Cuba. In such a scenario, Ottawa would have the dilemma of having to respond to direct US pressure. Aware that the flip side of having a “special relationship” with the United States meant the possibility of being singled out, the Canadian government opted for safety in numbers by working with the alliance. To prevent rumours of a policy change, Robertson recommended that Green reply negatively to a request by Canada’s NATO delegation to survey individual NATO and Latin American countries for their opinions. On April 10, the Cabinet rejected COCOM designation for Cuba on the premise that such an action would set unwanted precedents for both Canada and for NATO as a whole – a position shared by other leading NATO countries. Canada and its allies would still unofficially apply COCOM criteria to Cuba, but without the binding requirements.

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90 Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Robertson) to the Minister of External Affairs (Green) “Relations with Cuba,” March 8, 1962 (Secret) in Basil Robinson fonds, MG 31, E-83, Vol.5, File 5-19, LAC
91 Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Robertson) to the Minister of External Affairs (Green) “Relations with Cuba,” March 8, 1962 (Secret) in Basil Robinson fonds, MG 31, E-83, Vol.5, File 5-19, LAC
92 Memorandum for Cabinet, “Extending COCOM Controls to Cuba,” March 8, 1962 (Secret) in RG 19, Vol. 4200. File 8660/ E19-4, LAC. The original should be in RG 2, Series B-2, Doc. 97-62 but was not found in the file when the author attempted to examine it in the Library and Archives Canada.
93 Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Robertson) to the Minister of External Affairs (Green) “Proposed Action by Members of NATO,” March 30 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5012, File 288-40, pt. 11, LAC
The Canadian government believed its conscience was clean and that it had for the most part already satisfied American goals on Cuba as best possible within the parameters of its own policy. Thus, no substantial policy revisions were made. No comprehensive Canadian-US review meeting on Cuba, as Cabinet Secretary Robert Bryce had suggested in February, was held. Late in March, Trade and Commerce Minister Hees advised Diefenbaker against a major pro-American shift in Canada’s Cuba policy. Arguing that Canada was already ahead of the game by its voluntarily measures, the only concession he recommended was denying export permits for certain items now considered to fall within controlled categories. The Trade and Commerce Minister assured his boss “I feel we can be satisfied that up to now we have steered a good course.” The choice the Diefenbaker government really had was whether it should satisfy real or perceived Canadian public opinion, or its American counterpart. Naturally it gave primary consideration to the former, but in doing so Ottawa committed itself to exercising greater diligence not to transgress the lines and commitments it had set out. The United States’ efforts had made the Canadian government examine its Cuba policy more closely through a Cold war lens, but apart from very minor tweaking, it stayed the course.

By the late spring of 1962, Washington ceased trying to align overall Canadian-Cuban relations with its own policies. When in April Heeney was given a final audience with President Kennedy before returning to Ottawa and ceding his post to Charles S. Ritchie (no relation to his namesake Edgar), the President did not mention Cuba at all. Yet Latin America was clearly on Kennedy’s mind; he told Heeney he lamented that Canada had declined to join the OAS, and was interested in Ottawa’s opinion on British Guiana, a country Kennedy feared might become the next Cuba. The Americans still sought adjustments to Canada’s Cuba trade patterns in particular instances, but now used softer and more subtle approaches. For example, when in June the State Department learned that the Castro regime was crediting its increase in nickel production to its ability to import spare parts from Canada; it responded moderately, only suggesting that Canada was creating a competitor for one of its leading mineral related

95 For Bryce’s suggestion see Memorandum from H. Basil Robinson to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, February 22, 1962 (Confidential) in H. Basil Robinson fonds, MG 31, E83, File 5.18, Box 5, LAC
96 Letter from Minister of Trade and Commerce George Hees to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, March 22, 1962 (No classification marking) in RG 20, Vol. 899, File 6-3-31 (T-6-1), LAC
industries.\textsuperscript{98} Willis Armstrong, still on staff at the Ottawa embassy, reported that little room remained to pressure Canada on Cuba exports. When Green asked Rusk if the United States’ government was now satisfied with Canada’s trade policy on Cuba, the Secretary replied affirmatively.\textsuperscript{99}

The Kennedy administration’s mood on Canada in the Cuban context had brightened considerably over the summer. Late in August, as unease in Washington grew over the expanding Soviet military presence on the island, Rusk came to see Diefenbaker in Ottawa to brief him on the Soviet build-up, among other issues. The Secretary’s briefing memo reflected well where Canadian Cuba policy sat in the minds of the senior levels of the US government. On the one hand, American officials praised Canada’s voluntary adoption of COCOM measures, which went further than other NATO allies.\textsuperscript{100} They were equally elated by the considerable decline in the Canada-Cuba trade volume, which had reached $32 million in 1961 but for 1962 was projected to be only $6-7 million. On the flip side, the United States was still unhappy that Canada was supplying up to half of Cuba’s spare parts and free world industrial equipment.\textsuperscript{101} Rusk nonetheless praised to Diefenbaker Canada’s efforts in keeping out of Cuba strategic and US made goods, but added “the assistance of Canada in developing a more positive attitude within the NATO group would be greatly appreciated by the United States.”\textsuperscript{102} Positive for Rusk naturally meant more pro-American.

In recognition of Canada’s efforts, State Department and White House officials increasingly spoke more favourably of Canada to Congressional critics. For example, in response to a letter from New York Congressman Seymour Halpern that questioned the commitment of Canada, France and Germany as American allies on account of their Cuba trade,

\textsuperscript{98} Letter from Interim Charge D’Affaires in Ottawa (Armstrong) to Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Ed Martin), July 12, 1962 (Secret – Official Informal) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 437.429/7-1262, NARA
\textsuperscript{99} Letter from Interim Charge D’Affaires in Ottawa (Armstrong) to Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Ed Martin), July 12, 1962 (Secret – Official Informal) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, Box 963, File 437.429/7-1262, NARA
\textsuperscript{100} Memorandum from Ed Martin (Inter-American Affairs) to the Secretary of State, “Your Visit to Ottawa August 24 – Cuba,” August 23, 1962 (Secret) in RG 59, Records of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, Entry A1 3165, Box 28, NARA
\textsuperscript{101} Memorandum from Ed Martin (Inter-American Affairs) to the Secretary of State, “Your Visit to Ottawa August 24 – Cuba,” August 23, 1962 (Secret) in RG 59, Records of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, Entry A1 3165, Box 28, NARA
the White House reply described Canada’s policy as being the most stringent in NATO. This was indeed true in the matters of export credits and shipping. Sharing the Americans’ concerns about the Soviet activity, Canadian NATO delegation head George Ignatieff told his American counterpart, Thomas K. Finletter, during the September 18 Council meeting that all Canadian trade with Cuba was on a cash only basis, and that Canada had only a few ships over 1000 tons, none of which were involved in the Cuban trade. While more circumspect regarding smaller ships, Ignatieff stated: “Canada has no reason to believe they [are] involved in Cuban traffic.”

At that time, most of the ships hauling goods between Canada and Cuba were Cuban, and the few Canadian-owned larger ships involved in Cuban deliveries were chartered to the United Kingdom and flew the Union Jack, making them British under international maritime law. Finletter praised Canada as a model for its NATO allies for how “quietly and effectively” it had cooperated with the United States on these issues.

Canada was indeed happy to find itself on a US government list of countries not shipping to Cuba.

Relieved that the Americans had turned down the heat over its relations with Havana, the Canadian government was determined to do what it could to prevent the temperature from rising again. Its officials continued to alert the State Department whenever learning of efforts to circumvent the embargo. In one example, when customs officials discovered a home-bound Cuban diplomat was carrying in his luggage $350 worth of American-made auto parts, items he had purchased at a Toronto retail store, Canada shared this with the Americans, although it made it clear that it was doing so on a voluntary and confidential basis.

At the same time, Ottawa asked Washington for a return favour. Mirroring US concerns about the re-export of US

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103 See Letter from Congressman Seymour Halpern to President Kennedy, May 30, 1962 and the reply from Assistant Secretary Frederick Dutton June 12, 1962 in White House Central Files (WHCF), Box 240, File FO 3-3-1/CO 55, John F. Kennedy Library


105 Telegram from the Canadian NATO Delegation, Paris to the Department of External Affairs, no. 2069, September 5, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 19, Vol. 4200, File 8660/ E19-4, LAC

106 Ibid. See also Telegram from Department of State to Embassy in UK, no. 1205, August 30, 1962 (Secret) in FRUS 1961-1963, Vol. X, Doc. 396, 970.


goods to Cuba, Ottawa requested that the United States require special licences for the re-export of Canadian goods having military uses, such as aircraft parts and small arms, that were destined either for banned countries such as South Africa or to conflict zones, which then included Cuba and nearly all the Caribbean region. The records are somewhat fragmentary, but in August 1963 the US Department of Commerce agreed to comply with Canada’s request.

The Canadian government cooperated with the Americans and treated Cuba in practice as a Soviet bloc country for trade. It would do the same in another important theatre—the use of Canadian territory for pro-Castro and pro-communist activities, a growing obsession of the Kennedy administration. Ottawa closely monitored the activities of Fair Play for Cuba and related pro-Castro groups. More importantly, it updated its policies to control and limit travel by Canadians to Cuba, as well as restrict the number of Cuban consulates and diplomats allowed in Canada.

As the most conservative arms of the Canadian government, the Departments of National Defence and the RCMP had viewed the Cuban revolution in strictly Cold War terms since 1960. That December, Minister of Justice David Fulton forwarded to Howard Green an RCMP report claiming “the growth of Communist influence in the regime of Dr. Fidel Castro will create security problems for us similar to those being experienced in our dealings with the Sino-Soviet bloc.” In this vein, the RCMP sought to influence its colleagues at External Affairs. For the better part of a decade, such hard-line views held considerable sway on security related matters, although certainly not all of the Department’s bureaucrats and diplomats viewed the Cuban situation with the same ideological rigour. The RCMP and intelligence related officials worried especially that Cuban diplomats were spies and that Canadian travellers to

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109 For evidence see draft Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy Washington DC, September 6, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 1953, File 20-27-1, pt. 3, LAC
111 For RCMP monitoring of Fair Play and the so-called New Left in general on Canadian university campuses see also Steve Hewitt, Spying 101: The RCMP’s Secret Activities at Canadian Universities, 1917-1997, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), Ch. 6, as well as Cynthia Wright, “Between Nation and Empire,” in Robert Wright and Lana Wylie ed., Our Place in the Sun, 108-110.
112 For the RCMP’s Cold War outlook and its response to foreign diplomats and “counter subversion see Reg Whitaker, Gregory S. Kealey and Andrew Parnaby, Secret Service: Political Policing in Canada from the Fenians to Fortress America, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), Ch 7 and 8, esp. 230-234, 242-247.}

113 Memorandum from Minister of Justice David Fulton to External Affairs Minister Howard Green, December 12, 1960 (Secret) and attached RCMP report “Security Aspects of Cuban-Canadian Relations” [undated] in RG 25, Vol. 8532, File 11185-F-40, LAC
Cuba were serving the ends of the Castro regime. Commencing in early 1962, External Affairs Defence Liaison (DL2) officials, which handled intelligence matters, informed the Latin American Division that it wanted the names and addresses of all Canadians intending to travel to Cuba.  

This request was forwarded to the Canadian Embassy in Havana, and Ambassador Kidd willingly obliged. Promising to send such a list to Ottawa via diplomatic pouch every month, Kidd included the occupation of the visitors. As well, the Ambassador created an additional list by tabulating data from all the embassy’s visitor cards since the beginning of 1961.

Also starting in July 1962, Canadian travellers to Cuba, whether personal or business, were required to register with External Affairs, a practice previously required only for travel to the Soviet bloc or mainland China.

More delicate for Ottawa was the treatment of Cuban diplomatic missions. In early 1961, the Cuban government requested permission to open new regional consulates in Toronto and Halifax. Havana’s reasoning was that as Canada’s importance to Cuba grew, its existing embassy and Montreal Trade Office were inadequate, especially for speeding up the slow and cumbersome approvals process for import documents across a physically large country. These requests however presented security concerns. The RCMP warned Ottawa about possible liaisons between the Canadian and Cuban Communist parties, and feared that increased contact between Cuban government officials and Canadians made it easier for Havana to conduct subversive activities and to recruit spies. The RCMP and External Affairs were less concerned about Halifax and Toronto, provided the number of staff was limited. Both which were initially approved in principle, although Ottawa afterwards withheld recognition of the

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117 Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa (Armstrong) to Department of State, no. 653, March 8, 1961 (Limited Official Use) in Records of the US Embassy Ottawa, RG 84, Entry UD 2212C, Box 62, Folder “320 – Cuba 1961,” NARA
118 Memorandum from Minister of Justice David Fulton to External Affairs Minister Howard Green, December 12, 1960 (Secret) and attached RCMP report “Security Aspects of Cuban-Canadian Relations” [undated] in RG 25, Vol. 8532, File 11185-F-40, LAC
119 For staffing issue see Memorandum from G.K. Grande, Defense Liaison (2) to Protocol Division “Opening of Cuban Consulates in Toronto and Halifax,” June 2, 1961 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 8532, File 11185-F-40, LAC
Halifax consul after talking with American officials, who expressed concern that Halifax was a more sensitive and strategic location.\(^{120}\)

The Cubans opted to drop Halifax in exchange for Vancouver.\(^{121}\) Ambassador Cruz’s justification was that Cuba wanted to correct its growing trade deficit with Canada by selling more goods to western Canada – a more lucrative market than the Maritimes.\(^{122}\) For the security community, Vancouver was a different case. The Director of Security and Intelligence believed that a Vancouver Cuban consulate would “enable Cubans to carry on activities inimical to Canadian interests.”\(^{123}\) The RCMP admitted it was unable to substantiate “offensive” intelligence efforts by the Cubans in Canada, although it was concerned about links between them and members of the Communist Party of Canada, which had significant influence among British Columbia’s trade unions and even some Vancouver municipal politicians.\(^{124}\)

Under Secretary Robertson weighed the dilemma, wanting to avoid appearing duplicitous at a time Canada was requesting a military attaché at its Havana embassy. He advised Green the consulates made sense as Canada favoured normal trade with Cuba, but understood the security concerns about an expanded Cuban diplomatic presence in Canada, which would be a likely red flag with the United States.\(^{125}\) As in other delicate cases, the government opted for avoidance; it postponed the Vancouver consulate decision until after the June 1962 election, and opted not to proactively raise the matter again with Havana. The Vancouver office issue dropped off for a number of years.\(^{126}\)

\(^{120}\) Memorandum from Paul Lapointe (Protocol) to Henry F. Davis (Protocol), May 18, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8532, File 11185-F-40, LAC

\(^{121}\) Memorandum from Protocol Division to Latin American Division, “Opening of Cuban Consulate in Vancouver,” December 29, 1961 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8532, File 11185-F-40, LAC


\(^{124}\) Memorandum from G.K. Grande, Defense Liaison (2) Latin American Division “Opening of Cuban Consulate in Vancouver,” February 15, 1962 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 5012, File 288-40, pt. 10, LAC. The version in RG 25 Vol. 8532, File 11185-F-40, was redacted almost in entirety by ATIP staff at CSIS direction, where as the other version is fully open. Much of the information deleted in the latter file can be parsed by other documents in that same file that were declassified. There is considerable coverage about the relationship between BC trade unions and the Communist Party in Benjamin Isitt, *Militant Minority: British Columbia Workers and the Rise of a New Left, 1948-1972* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

\(^{125}\) See Memorandum from Under Secretary (Robertson) to Minister of External Affairs (Green), “Opening of Cuban Consulate in Vancouver,” March 30, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8532, File 11185-F-40, LAC

\(^{126}\) See Memorandum to File, Latin American Division “Opening of Cuban Consulate in Vancouver,” June 25, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8532, File 11185-F-40, LAC
The spring of 1962 offered Canada, and Prime Minister Diefenbaker in particular, another opportunity to use its relations with Havana to assist the United States on a matter prominent on President Kennedy’s mind – the fate of the Bay of Pigs prisoners. A year since the fiasco, Kennedy was tormented in knowing that over a thousand members of Brigade 2506 languished in Castro’s prisons, awaiting trial and possible execution. Aside from being an ongoing and tangible reminder of that sorry episode, the President was under considerable pressure from the prisoners’ families of to obtain their release. The issue was a tricky one for Kennedy for three reasons: the aforementioned domestic pressure, the absence of diplomatic relations with Havana, and concerns that Castro was using the prisoners as hostages to gain both political leverage and economic resources from the United States.

Canada was not involved in initial efforts to free the prisoners, which consisted of a proposed swap of agricultural machinery (which Castro badly wanted) in exchange for the brigade members, an initiative the White House intended to carry out at arms length through an ad-hoc group of prominent American citizens known as the Tractors-for-Freedom Committee that included Milton Eisenhower and Eleanor Roosevelt. This initiative fizzled over lack of agreement on the machinery to be shipped, with Cuba insisting on heavier equipment that Americans feared could be used for military construction purposes. Prior to Kennedy’s Ottawa visit, Arthur Schlesinger proposed that the President give the Canadians a US Information Agency report on their captivity conditions, although the record of the Diefenbaker-Kennedy conversations makes no mention of the prisoners. Secretary Rusk hinted to External Affairs Minister Green in May 1961 that Canada might help in Cuba by “arranging a rescue service through the International Red Cross.” In the eyes of the United States government, Canada could be a useful go-between with the Cubans provided the focus stayed limited to the specific issue. Assisting with the release of the Bay of Pigs prisoners became an important test case.

The issue remained dormant for the better part of a year, until Castro announced in mid-March 1962 that the prisoners’ trials would commence at month’s end. Prime Minister Diefenbaker and even Governor General Georges Vanier received appeals from Cuban-Americans asking for Canadian help on the defendants’ behalf - the latter appeal coming directly from Jose Mira Cardona, the ex-Prime Minister who had become leader of the most prominent Cuban exile organization.\textsuperscript{131} Officials in the United States and Canada alike were concerned about judicial fairness, recalling the Cuban leader’s earlier history of intervening in trials to ensure his desired outcome.\textsuperscript{132} In the last week of March, the State Department lobbied Latin American and NATO governments to appeal to Castro for open court proceedings and to refrain from imposing the death penalty.\textsuperscript{133} The US ambassadors in Mexico City and Ottawa were specifically contacted by telephone to encourage their respective host governments to make statements on the prisoners’ behalf.\textsuperscript{134} Diefenbaker did so in the House of Commons on March 26 and 27, expressing concern for the prisoners’ treatment and calling for just trials, although he added that there were limits to what his government could do as none of the prisoners were Canadian citizens.\textsuperscript{135}

To Diefenbaker’s embarrassment, one of the Bay of Pigs prisoners, a gentleman named D.N. Lethbridge, \textit{was} in fact a Canadian citizen, as well as being a Cuban national.\textsuperscript{136} The day after the Prime Minister’s statement, Ambassador Kidd met in Havana with Cuban Foreign

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{131} For examples see Telegram from John G. Diefenbaker to Dr. Lavin, President of Federation of Cuban Professionals, March 24, 1962 in H. Basil Robinson fonds, MG 31, E-83, Vol. 5, File 5.19, LAC and also See Letter from A.G. Chevrier, Assistant Secretary to the Governor General to J.R.B. Chaput, (Latin American Division), March 30, 1962 (No classification marking) in RG 25, Vol. 4183, File 2444-40, pt. 8, LAC (includes a message sent to Vanier from Cuban Revolutionary Council leader Jose Mira Cordona.}\textsuperscript{132} See for example Castro’s interference after the acquittal of 44 acquitted Batista air force officers in March 1959, who were then re-tried, convicted and sentenced to 30 years. This double jeopardy action outraged then Canadian Ambassador Hector Allard. See Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to External Affairs, no. 42, March 9, 1959 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2294, File 7-C6-2, pt. 4, LAC and also Memorandum of Conversation, March 12, 1959 (Confidential) in FRUS 1958-1960, Vol. VI, Doc. 260, 424-425.\textsuperscript{133} Memorandum from Richard N. Goodwin, Dept. of State to National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy, March 29, 1962 (Secret) in National Security Files: Box 56, Country File Cuba: Subjects; Folder “Prisoner Exchange 5/61-9/62”, John F. Kennedy Library On UPA microfilm John F. Kennedy National Security files (NSF), Latin America Supplement 1 Cuba, Reel 15.\textsuperscript{134} Memorandum from State Department Executive Secretary L.D. Battle for Ralph A. Dungan, Assistant to the President, “Clemency Statements for Cuban Prisoners,” March 31, 1962 (Official Use Only) in RG 59, Records of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, Entry A1 3165, Box 29, Folder, “Prisoners – Cuba 1962”, NARA.\textsuperscript{135} US Embassy, Ottawa Airgram A-364, March 30, 1962 (Unclassified) in RG 59, State Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 737.00/3-3062, NARA. On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal Affairs 1960-1963, Reel 19.\textsuperscript{136} Memorandum from Under Secretary Robertson to the Minister of External Affairs (Green), “Trial of Cuban Invasion Prisoners”, March 29, 1962 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 4183, File 2444-40, pt. 8, LAC}
Minister Raul Roa. Roa was ambivalent about Kidd’s request that Western diplomats be allowed to attend the trial proceedings, although he did acknowledge Canada’s humanitarian concerns, promising to take “due account of our interest.” The two men also briefly discussed the Lethbridge case. 137

The State Department learned via Ottawa Deputy Chief of Mission Willis Armstrong that Diefenbaker intended to make a new statement on the prisoners in the House of Commons on Monday April 2, and this information was forwarded to the White House. 138 Kennedy wanted to be sure such public statements called for clemency, as well as procedural fairness, a message Armstrong relayed to Basil Robinson in the Prime Minister’s Office. 139 Diefenbaker sent Kennedy a private message outlining what he intended to say, with a grateful President promptly responding, adding for emphasis, “as I am sure you will understand, I have a great personal interest in the matter.” 140 Sensitive to how the Canadian public would react to any semblance of American interference, Diefenbaker insisted on the absolute confidentiality of these high level communications. 141 His appeal was to be based on Canadian values and concerns.

The trials proceeded and the prisoners were not executed, although they all received harsh prison sentences of up to thirty years. Kidd reported critically on the trial proceedings, from which western diplomats and media representatives were shunned. 142 Still, he credited the statements by Diefenbaker and other governments as influential in the decision not to sentence the prisoners to death. 143 The Ambassador also received a letter from the Committee of Mothers,

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138 See Updated Addendum, March 31, 1962 (No classification marking) in RG 59, Records of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, Entry A1 3165, Box 29, Folder, “Prisoners – Cuba 1962,” NARA.
139 Memorandum from Basil Robinson to the Prime Minister, March 31, 1962 (Confidential) in H Basil Robinson fonds, MG 31, E83, Vol. 5, File 5.19, LAC
140 Telegram from Department of State to US Embassy in Ottawa no. 960 (Confidential), April 1, 1962 in President’s office Files, Folder Canada Security 1962, John F. Kennedy Library. Now available digitally via the Kennedy Library website as Digital Identifier JFKPOF 113-005 at http://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Search-the-Digital-Archives.aspx. Interestingly this document, declassified in 1974 at the Kennedy library, was withdrawn from the State Department Central Decimal Files.
141 Telegram from the US Embassy, Ottawa to the Secretary of State, no. 971, April 1, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, file 737.00/4-162, NARA. On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal Affairs 1960-1963, Reel 19.
142 Canadian Embassy Havana Numbered Letter L-160, April 6, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol.2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 10, LAC
143 Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to External Affairs no. 52 April 8, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol.2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 10, LAC
Wives and Relatives of Prisoners taken at Playa Giron expressing gratitude for Canada’s efforts.\textsuperscript{144} Canada’s actions had for the time being had at least diluted the smouldering resentments towards it from the anti-Castro community. The Americans also gave Diefenbaker some credit for the Cuban leader’s decision to spare the prisoners’ lives, and reported as such in the July 1962 review of the Mongoose program.\textsuperscript{145}

Efforts to free the prisoners continued throughout the summer, with the Miami-based Committee of Families group maintaining ongoing negotiations, officially on their own behalf, with the Castro government. Tractors were now off the table, with Castro instead demanding $62 million in badly need foreign exchange as the price of their release. Kennedy monitored these developments closely and asked for frequent progress updates.\textsuperscript{146} The President concluded that given the embargo, public money could not be used. It also appeared unlikely that the families could privately raise sufficient funds.\textsuperscript{147} New York City lawyer James B. Donovan, hired as the chief negotiator and advocate for the Cuban Families’ Committee, recommended paying off the Cuban government in kind though food and medicine.\textsuperscript{148} As Cuba faced shortages and a sagging economy, its government was open to such suggestions. Roa briefed Kidd about the proposal, especially as Canada was identified as a possible source for the food and medicine to be provided in kind.\textsuperscript{149} Ottawa did not object in principle to the suggestion.\textsuperscript{150}

Basil Robinson, now in a new post at the Canadian embassy in Washington, was instructed by Green to meet promptly with G.H. Summ, the State Department Officer in Charge of Cuban Affairs, to pass on a summary of the Kidd-Roa discussion.\textsuperscript{151} Summ responded that

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\textsuperscript{144} Letter from [deleted] of the Committee of Mothers, Wives and Relatives of Prisoners taken at Playa Giron to the Canadian Ambassador in Havana, April 14, 1962 in RG 20, Vol. 2295, File 7-C6-2, pt. 10, LAC
\textsuperscript{145} Department of State [Review of Mongoose Phase I], July 19, 1962 (Top Secret) in Digital National Security Archive, Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited Collection, Document CU 00291.
\textsuperscript{149} Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to External Affairs no. 162, September 1, 1962 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 4183, File 2444-40, pt. 8, LAC
\textsuperscript{150} Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy Havana, no. E1728, September 5, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4183, File 2444-40, pt. 8, LAC
\textsuperscript{151} Memorandum of Conversation “Canadian Shipment of Food, Medicines and Agricultural Products in Connection with Ransom of April 1961 Invasion Prisoners,” September 3, 1962 (Secret) in National Security Files,
his government was not adverse to Canada as a supplier, and reported that Donovan had recommended that a third country be the supplier (not mentioning Canada specifically), with his boss Robert Hurwitch, adding that Castro favoured Canada as a source. Diefenbaker was nonetheless concerned that the American public would oppose Canada selling goods to the Families Committee for export to Cuba, and wanted no publicity. Concerned about embarrassing misunderstandings and mistrust with the Cubans, Kidd advised Under Secretary Robertson to keep Canadian diplomats out of detailed briefings on the Donovan initiative, and not to forward to Washington everything he learned in Havana on the topic. However, Robertson overrode the Ambassador, concluding that keeping the Americans informed trumped concerns about relations with Cuba. After a discussion in Cabinet on September 6, the government decided that the Families Committee could purchase Canadian food, medicine or agricultural supplies for export to Cuba, provided that the Canadian government played no part in any negotiations for the prisoners – a view Kidd supported. Even though one of the prisoners was a Canadian citizen, Ottawa did not see itself as having a primary interest in this issue.

Kennedy was also undecided. Hoping to close this unhappy chapter, his concern was being labelled a sell-out if a deal with Castro became public, a development that could hurt the Democrats’ prospects in the upcoming Congressional elections. He also disliked the notion of supplying Havana with food and medicine that in turn would free up money for it to buy military hardware or to fund guerrillas. Considering all factors, Kennedy decided to continue
the initiative. Matters then moved along quickly, with Castro agreeing to an all in-kind deal for the requested $62 million, with $8 million of it to be medicine and the remainder foodstuffs. While aiming for secrecy, the Kennedy administration opted to reveal its support for the proposed exchange if reports reached the press. The swap would cost the United States $20 million, with some $7 million privately raised by the Families Committee. The financial institution of choice for transferring monies to the Cuban government was to be none other than the Royal Bank of Canada.  

The intervening Cuban missile crisis put this initiative on hold until December. In keeping with its September decisions, Ottawa stayed out of the negotiations. The Royal Bank was asked to provide a letter of credit for the pharmaceuticals, some being of American origin, which it was reluctant to do on that account. Anxious to proceed, Ivan White, Minister at the US embassy in Ottawa, sent Assistant Under Secretary Edgar Ritchie a memorandum promising non-interference with the goods’ delivery to Havana. Making this message stronger, the White House sent Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach and Donovan to Montreal to hammer out final details and to reassure Royal Bank President Earle McLaughlin. External Affairs was also advised that the communication facilities of the Canadian Embassy in Havana might well be needed.

The deal was finally settled over Christmas. Secretary Rusk sent a circular to all Latin American posts outlining the details of the settlement, with the Cubans agreeing to allow the

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157 Memorandum from Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Frank K. Sloan to Assistant Secretary Ross Gilpatric, “Release of the Cuban Prisoners,” October 8, 1962 (Top Secret) in Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited Collection, Doc. CU 00437


160 See Duncan McDowall, Quick to the Frontier: Canada’s Royal Bank (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993), 362-365. The author attempted unsuccessfully to obtain access to the Royal Bank Corporate Archives, which unfortunately are closed to external researchers due to stringent confidentiality rules pertaining to client account information.

For a Canadian government document mentioning the visit but not naming the US delegation members, see Memorandum from Under Secretary Robertson to the Minister of External Affairs (Green), “Cuban Prisoners”, December 17 1962 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 5049, File 2444-40, pt. 13, LAC.

airlift of the prisoners to Miami after receiving 20% of the promised goods. On December 26, Rusk instructed the Ottawa embassy to ask for Canadian assistance through its Havana embassy to complete the transaction. Rusk directed the newly arrived US Ambassador, Walton Butterworth, to “take occasion to express Department’s appreciation [for the] cooperation [of the] Canadian authorities in assisting Donovan’s successful efforts [to] release prisoners.” A month later, Attorney General Robert Kennedy thanked McLaughlin in writing for the role his bank played in the process. Among the released prisoners was Canada’s Mr. Lethbridge. With this episode now closed, Kennedy remained uninterested in involving Canada in any broader diplomatic initiatives with Havana, and the latter would not be involved in James Donovan’s subsequent backchannel initiatives to free other prisoners. Canada’s helpful role here likely allowed Kennedy to overlook some of its government’s shortcomings in the highly charged environment that last quarter of 1962.

By mid October 1962, Ambassador Charles Ritchie would report from Washington that “we have as you know been relatively clear in recent months of direct criticism from the Admin on Cuba.” As Asa McKercher has pointed out, the United States by the early fall of 1962 interpreted Canada’s behaviour since the spring as evidence of greater support for the United States than earlier on, which he attributes in part to it being the most cooperative NATO member. Indeed this was the case, although Canadian adjustments were in fact quite minor. Apart from the March adjustments tightening the export controls on questionable hardware, Canada’s commitment to cooperate with the Americans was largely the same as it had been since the fall of 1960; only by mid-1962, the United States government had begrudgingly accepted that Canadian policy was going to be what it was, for domestic reasons it did not quite understand. This aside, as a fellow democracy, US officials knew Ottawa could not ignore such

162 Department of State Circular to all ARA posts no.1135, December 22, 1962 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59 Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 737.00/12-2262, NARA. On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal Affairs 1960-1963, Reel 23
163 Telegram from Department of State to US Embassy Ottawa no. 750, December 26, 1962 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59 Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 737.00/12-2662, NARA On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal Affairs 1960-1963, Reel 23
166 Quoted in McKercher, “The Most Serious Problem?, in Cold War History, 12 (1), 2012, 69
167 Ibid, 83.
domestic currents, which flowed in a differing direction from the ones that Washington had to respond to. As the Bay of Pigs prisoners case exemplified, Ottawa could be very helpful to its goals. The upcoming standoff with the Soviet Union posed new challenges, but also revealed even further that Canadian-United States differences over Cuba could work in mutually beneficial ways.
Chapter 6: Refinement through Fire: The Cuban Missile Crisis and the fall of the Diefenbaker Government, October 1962 to April 1963

The most dangerous moment of the Cold War, the Cuban Missile Crisis is now the subject of a vast literature, much of it recent, which provides ample coverage of the details.¹ How the various players related to Cuba, and the Cuban story itself, has been made largely subordinate to the larger narrative concerning the superpowers, and will likely remain so until Havana grants scholars open access to its archives.² What is clear however is that as the crisis took on its own momentum, much to the chagrin of Fidel Castro and his cadres, Cuba’s leaders found themselves sidelined, while the fate of their country, and that of the world, rested on decisions made in Washington and Moscow. For Ottawa, the stand-off made bilateral considerations with Cuba obviously subordinate to relations with the United States. Again, Ottawa cooperated with the Americans to the maximum extent possible within that extremely tense climate, while still holding to its basic policy on relations with Cuba.³

The crisis and its immediate aftermath remain to date the lowest trough in Canada-United States relations, at least at the highest political level. Canada’s relationship with Cuba was surprisingly not a negative factor during this period; to the contrary, it reinforced to the

³ For a recent article emphasizing that that Canada supported the United States see Asa McKercher, “A Half hearted response? Canada and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” International History Review, 33 (2), 2011, 335-352.
United States that Canada’s presence on the island brought advantages. The main culprit was the now very poor relationship between Kennedy and Diefenbaker, a discord that drove the two leaders to expect and confirm their worst suspicions of the other. While Knowlton Nash, Denis Smith, Basil Robinson and others have covered this in detail, it is worth summarizing for context. Diefenbaker believed Kennedy’s decision-making process in imposing a quarantine of Cuba was rash, highly provocative and unilateral in nature, failing to consider how allies would be affected – most especially Canada, as the only other NATO country in range of the Cuba-stationed Soviet missiles. The Prime Minister was especially insulted that Ambassador Merchant had briefed him on the missiles only two hours before Kennedy revealed them to the world, whereas Great Britain, France and West Germany had received several days’ notification. From Diefenbaker’s perspective, Kennedy had broken his promise of a year earlier about consulting with Canada consultation prior to any military action against Cuba.

Kennedy was equally livid at Diefenbaker’s response, viewing it as indecisive, petty, naive and obstructionist at a time of extreme international danger. The President was especially angry that the Prime Minister mused skeptically about US intelligence findings, insinuated that his actions were politically motivated by the US congressional elections, took two full days to officially endorse the quarantine, and finally, for suggesting the issue first go before the United Nations. Diefenbaker’s stumbles and an equally weak television interview with Howard Green led Robert Kennedy to call Diefenbaker’s initial reaction “the only half hearted response” from the United States’ allies, although the Prime Minister later earned some reprieve in the White House after giving an unequivocally supportive speech in the House of Commons, along with authorizing Canadian naval patrols in Caribbean waters. While Asa McKercher is correct that too much has been made of Diefenbaker and Green’s clumsiness in comparison to the positive bilateral cooperation behind the scenes, nonetheless, their public performances added large

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5 On the Merchant briefing see Memorandum of Conversation, “Meeting with Prime Minister Diefenbaker to Deliver a Copy of President Kennedy’s Letter of October 22 on the Cuban Situation,” November 2, 1962 (Secret) in Digital National Security Archive, Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited Collection, Doc CU00983. The original is in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 737.00/2-1162, NARA

dents to their already badly damaged reputations in the White House and Foggy Bottom. When Ambassador Merchant met six weeks later with Basil Robinson, whom he described as an old friend and useful confidante, the former advisor to the Prime Minister acknowledged that Diefenbaker’s initial reaction “had pained and dismayed everyone in the Embassy [in Washington],” but added that he had felt sorry for Diefenbaker for the short notification, which had embarrassed him before the Canadian public. Somewhat misleadingly (on the extent of notification given the British PM), Merchant responded:

I personally didn’t feel a tenth as sorry for the PM as I had for Harold Macmillan who had had comparably short advance notice. I said I didn’t think Canada had earned, by its actions and by certain non-actions, the right to the extreme intimacy of relations which had existed in years past. I also pointed out the dilemma of achieving surprise by secrecy and at the same time consulting well in advance all our friends and allies.

Diefenbaker’s behaviour unmasked his mistrust of the United States and revealed him as a leader obsessed with national sovereignty, multilateralism and legal formalities. Such characteristics made Canada in American eyes unreliable and excessively rigid in a scenario that called for speed and flexibility. In perhaps the key example of the special relationship’s flip side, the United States expected its fellow North American ally to appreciate its position more than its other allies. As such, Washington believed Ottawa needed to set aside idealistic and nationalistic impulses and from the outset to publicly embrace the hard power realism of the American position. Canada’s seemingly tepid response generated a new barrage of press criticism in the United States, as well as in Latin America. As Basil Robinson recalled in his memoirs: “despite the considerable range of practical assistance rendered the United States by the Canadian government, its embassy in Havana and the Canadian armed forces, Ottawa’s response in the crisis had appeared to be grudging and Canada’s stock in Washington was low.”

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8 Memorandum from Livingston T. Merchant to Secretary of State Rusk and the Under Secretary of State (Ball), [undated but ca. December 10, 1962], (Confidential) in FRUS 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, Doc. 441, 1190-1191
9 For US press criticism see Canadian Embassy Washington DC Numbered Letter no. 1645, October 31, 1962 (Confidential), in RG 24 Vol. Vol. 21809, File 2438:1, pt. 3, LAC. For an example of Latin American press criticism, see for example Canadian Embassy San Jose Numbered Letter no. 549, October 30, 1962 (Confidential), in the same file (there are others as well).
10 Robinson, *Diefenbaker’s World*, 292.
The Canadian public was actively engaged during the missile stand-off. To Washington’s glee, most had backed Kennedy’s action, some quite strongly and vocally. Such support reaffirmed what Merchant had suspected early in the year: that in a crunch, Canadians would support the United States. At the same time, some noisy dissent existed, especially among pacifists and the more vocal members on the political left. New Democratic Party leader Tommy Douglas accused President Kennedy of “shooting craps with the destiny of mankind.” In major cities, particularly Vancouver, there were anti-US demonstrations organized by university professors and by the very active local chapter of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. Protesters carried placards with slogans such as “Try Kennedy for War Crimes.” Even the Communist Party managed to place an advertisement in the Vancouver Sun opposing Kennedy’s blockade. The Canadian mainstream felt differently. There were significant pro-Kennedy demonstrations and press editorials - the latter were also largely critical of Diefenbaker. Chargé d’Affaires Ivan D. White, who had been serving as interim at the Ottawa embassy following Livingston Merchant’s departure in May, reported how “the basic Canadian goodwill towards the US, which becomes articulate only in [a] time of crisis, began to express itself in many different ways.” Jerome Gaspard at the Montreal Consulate expressed considerable surprise that even the French Canadians appeared to strongly support the United

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11 For US perspective on how Canadians reacted to Kennedy actions see Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 621, November 2, 1962 (Confidential) in National Security Files, Box 41, Country File: Cuba: Cables 11/2/62, John F. Kennedy Library (JFKL). On UPA microfilm John F. Kennedy National Security files (NSF), Latin America Supplement 1 Cuba, Reel 4


13 Telegram from Hayden Raynor, US Consul General Vancouver to Department of State, no. 4, October 31, 1962 (Unclassified) in RG 84 United States Vancouver Consulate General Records, Entry UD 2239, Box 24, Folder “350 Cuba 1962,” NARA.


States. He was delighted at how the crisis had shifted the mood from mid-September, a month that had seen “hands off Cuba” demonstrations, anti-US press criticism, and the presence of a number of Latin American leftist sympathizers in the city.\textsuperscript{16} Gaspard contrasted the 700 “well dressed students” supporting Kennedy on Montreal’s streets October 23 and 24 with the 75 “unwashed, unshorn” pacifists, a tiny fraction of the anticipated 1000 anti-US demonstrators that the Consul had been told to expect.\textsuperscript{17} The American diplomats did not interpret this wave of pro-US sentiment as a shift in favour of US policy on Cuba. Rather, such expressions of support revealed that when the Soviet Union made dangerous and reckless moves threatening Canada’s security, the majority of its citizens still clearly preferred the western camp over the communist bloc, and would stand with the United States. As the State Department’s Intelligence and Research Bureau pointed out:

\begin{quote}
Canadian public opinion, which strongly backs US, was a major factor in forcing the government to go on the record with an unequivocal expression of support for the US after its earlier fuzziness.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

Neither the crisis climate nor public criticism drove the Canadian government to change its basic Cuba policy, although it made some very minor adjustments during the stand off’s most acute phase. The day after Kennedy’s famous televised address announcing the missiles’ discovery and the quarantine, the Cabinet decided that it would not suspend Canada’s diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba, correctly concluding that keeping open its Havana embassy could prove to be advantageous in these dangerous circumstances. Recognizing the government’s vulnerability to American criticism on account of this decision, Trade and Commerce Minister Hees informed the Cabinet that for the time being, Canada’s trade with Cuba would be restricted to food and medicine.\textsuperscript{19} While angry at Kennedy and skeptical about the legality of the US quarantine (which was in reality a blockade and thus technically an act of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[18] Memorandum from Department of State Intelligence and Research Bureau (Roger Hilsman) to Secretary of State, “Western European reactions to the Cuban Situation (through October 27, 1962), October 28, 1962 (Secret) in Digital National Security Archive, Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited Collection, Doc. CU 00855.
\end{footnotes}
war), Diefenbaker knew that a refusal to cooperate with the United States would spell the end of any Canadian influence in Washington. Canadian cooperation with the United States during the crisis exceeded that of its other NATO partners. Without waiting for Diefenbaker’s approval, the staunchly pro-American National Defence Minister Douglas Harkness placed Canada’s military on heightened alert and ordered Canadian ships into the Caribbean to assist the Americans – a direct military contribution made by no other NATO member.\(^{20}\) While these contributions were the most public, and as such have received the greatest coverage in the available literature, it would be Canadian initiatives done out of the public eye that earned Ottawa favour in Washington, although mostly. The most significant and valued of these concerned diplomatic contingencies, the provision of intelligence, and actions to control and monitor civil aviation traffic at its Gander airfield. Canadian efforts in these theatres rose to special prominence in the critical last weekend of the crisis, when the superpowers were close to war, as well as in the step down period of November and December.

Civil air transportation provided Canada with its first major opportunity to gain American favour that tense October week, and in an early American assessment of Canada’s performance, only its actions in that theatre received Washington’s praise.\(^{21}\) On October 22, just hours before Kennedy’s address, American officials requested that Canada, as well as the United Kingdom, suspend landing rights for all Soviet, East bloc and Cuban aircraft.\(^{22}\) Between January and October 1962, Canada had permitted five Soviet aircraft carrying agricultural, economic and medical advisors en route to Cuba to overfly Canadian territory.\(^{23}\) Concerned about Soviet aerial espionage of its defence installations, Ottawa insisted that RCAF crews accompany the flights on their Prestwick-Gander-Havana leg to ensure that they did not deviate from the approved flight path.\(^{24}\) Over the course of the summer, concerns mounted in Ottawa that Moscow was making more frequent requests for such overflight permissions right as

\(^{20}\) Canada’s most obvious cooperative contribution was its naval support, undertaken at the initiative of Defence Minister Harkness. For an overview see Haydon, *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis: Canadian Involvement Reconsidered* and also Nash, 192-197. A detailed discussion of this has been omitted here as it pertains more to Canada as a NATO ally and does not specifically concern Cuba as a Canadian-US relations issue.

\(^{21}\) Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) Memorandum “Western European Reactions to the Cuban Situation (through October 27, 1962),” October 28, 1962 (Secret) in Digital National Security Archive, Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited Collection, Doc. CU00855.

\(^{22}\) See various telegrams in RG 25, Vol. 4986, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 6, LAC

\(^{23}\) Memorandum from Secretary of State for External Affairs (Green) to the Prime Minister, “Cuba-Soviet Overflights” October 17, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4986, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 6, LAC

concerns in Ottawa and Washington mounted over its rapid militarization of Cuba. These concerns were a warning sign of the military standoff to come.

A week before learning about the Soviet missiles in Cuba, Green advised the Prime Minister to terminate all Soviet overflight rights, an action Canada could easily justify as the Soviet Union was not then a signatory to the International Civilian Aviation Organization, meaning that Canada had no treaty obligations in this regard. Green’s view had been reinforced after a discussion with White, who had requested these restrictions even though it meant the loss to the United States of some valuable intelligence Canada had been collecting from the RCAF personnel and passing on to Washington. Edgar Ritchie, attending the NATO Political Advisory meeting in Paris, spelled out in some detail during the sessions Ottawa’s decision on the Soviet flights, an action US delegate Thomas Finletter cabled back to Rusk as “particularly helpful.”

Upon receipt of the October 22 request, the Cabinet immediately prohibited all Soviet aircraft en route to Cuba from landing at Gander. However, it did not ban all East Bloc-Cuba air traffic from Canadian soil. Czechoslovakia continued its flights to Cuba, and vice versa. As ICAO members, Ottawa would not deny either country permission for technical landings. However, to mitigate American security concerns in the current climate, the Cabinet ordered as a temporary measure that all westbound Czech and Cuban aircraft be boarded and searched, to ensure their cargos did not include prohibited weapons—an action the government could justify both under Canadian law and under ICAO Section 35, which prohibits the transport of munitions without the host country’s permission. Ever sensitive to the Canadian tradition of rule of law and the importance of treaty obligations, the Diefenbaker government was again

25 Ibid
28 Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Robertson) to the Minister (Green), “Soviet Overflights to Cuba,” October 23, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4986, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 6, LAC
adept at using legal and technical rationales to justify its policies, even though its real goal was to be helpful to the United States. A few External Affairs officials thought that these actions put Canada on questionable ground ethically, if not legally, leaving Canadian aircraft vulnerable to similar treatment by other states. However, given the severe international climate, the highest levels of the government deemed the risks acceptable and concluded that “a failure to cooperate would affect Canada’s ability to have any moderating influence on the United States in the present dangerous situation.” The Americans were simultaneously amused and annoyed by Ottawa’s approach, which White coined a “typical Canadian compromise between disinclination to violate what it considers its legal obligations under ICAO and desire not to run counter to US objectives.” With nuclear war hanging in the balance, the United States government had little patience for niceties or legal formalities.

The Cabinet’s decision on landing rights was publicly announced in the House of Commons on October 23. Immediately, one Cubana aircraft en route from Prague to Havana was detained at Goose Bay, Newfoundland for 24 hours until it had been thoroughly searched. While no weapons were found, on board were several East German missile engineers, as well as Cubans. Lacking legal recourse, government officials did not pull anyone off the plane, and it was permitted to fly on to Cuba. Along with the Goose Bay flight, two Czech airlines flights were boarded and searched at Gander that week. American intelligence officials stationed at Goose Bay asked for a copy of the passenger list as well as the timetable for such flights. The Cabinet approved sharing with the Americans details regarding the cargoes of these aircraft and the search techniques used; however, it opted against passing on the flight manifests to any foreign government. Presumably, this latter decision stemmed from concerns about precedents and retaliation by the affected parties, although this is unclear from the records. Certainly

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30 For a log of such flights through Gander and Halifax airports see “Cubana and Czechoslovak Airline Movements October 1962,” in RG 25, Vol. 4986, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 6, LAC
34 Memorandum from Under Secretary Norman Robertson to the Minister (Green) “Soviet Bloc Aircraft Flights to Cuba,” October 24, 1962, (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4986, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 6, LAC
Ottawa had no intention of publicly disclosing what it was sharing with the United States. In the interests of effective ongoing cooperation, Ottawa and Washington would seek to keep such details secret.

However, details about the Cubana landing at Goose Bay, complete with references to the presence of East German engineers on the aircraft, found their way onto Associated Press wires and subsequently into American newspapers such as the Detroit News. The motivation and source for the leak are unknown. Quite possibly it was a Canadian official involved in the inspections, perhaps one who favoured Defence Minister Harkness’ overt support for the quarantine. Publicizing the fact that Canada had granted territorial access to Cuban and Soviet bloc aircraft in such a climate was fodder for critics wanting to portray Diefenbaker’s support for Kennedy as being less than unequivocal. Canada’s Consul and Trade Commissioner in Boston reported that local press gave much more coverage to Diefenbaker’s delayed response and to the Goose Bay flight rather than the Prime Minister’s strongly pro-American speech of October 25. Ambassador Charles Ritchie complained to Rusk and Hurwitch on October 27 that “the American press had not rpt not appreciated the scope of Canada’s efforts,” even though he knew well that much of the latter could not then be publicly disclosed. Some praise would however be quietly forthcoming. When presented with the Gander search findings, Gordon Knox, the Deputy Director of British Commonwealth and Northern Affairs, told Ambassador Ritchie that the thoroughness of Canada’s efforts made them exemplary. Ivan White wrote Howard Green the previous day expressing the same appreciation, although adding he hoped Canada would search Cuba-bound aircraft from other East bloc countries, namely Poland (also an ICAO member), if and when such air services began.

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37 See Memorandum from Canadian Consul and Trade Commissioner, Boston to Chief of US Division, International Trade Relations Branch November 8, 1962 and attached clipping from Boston Traveller, October 24, 1962 in RG 20, Vol. 2863, File 810-C6-2, pt. 11.1, LAC
38 Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington DC to Ottawa, no 3166, October 27, 1962 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 4184, File 2444-40, pt. 11, LAC. Also available online Digital National Security Archive Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited Collection, Doc CU 00793
40 Letter from US Charge d’Affaires Ivan D White to Secretary of State for External Affairs Howard Green, October 26, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4986, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 6, LAC
In a separate occurrence that same week, and also to placate the Americans, Ottawa abandoned its normal process concerning cargo flights to Cuba. The Montreal-based World Wide Airways received a Cuban request to transport a routine shipment of non-prohibited goods to Cuba, including some industrial chemicals, children’s toys, hatching eggs, spark plugs for Cubana Britannia’s and 12 Cuban diplomats. World Wide had been conducting weekly charters since early in the year on contract to Cubana. While licenced by the Air Transport Board for charters anywhere without discrimination, Robertson did not believe a special permission was needed, but he was cognizant that as the airline was contracted to Cubana, he wanted the government’s opinion given the international situation. The Under Secretary argued a favourable response was consistent with Canada’s policy of maintaining normal non-strategic trade with Cuba, and that while Ottawa could not prohibit the flight for political reasons, it might find a technical reason. In his memo, Robertson did not comment on the Cabinet decision to restrict trade to food and medicine, a decision of evidently short duration. However, Green scribbled that he wanted the flight discouraged, anticipating that it would spark a harsh reaction in the American media, one that would be further compounded by aircraft’s need to overfly United States’ airspace. Edgar Ritchie relayed his Department’s advice to the airline, emphasizing such an action “would be misunderstood by anxious people in Canada and the United States” and “the reputation of Canada and the company would be involved.”

The airline agreed to postpone the flight, although on October 29, immediately after Khrushchev’s withdrawal announcement, World Wide Airways again approached Ottawa about transporting to Cuba the same cargo; Green had responded favourably after Robertson pointed out that Cuba would interpret a second refusal as “an unfriendly act.” Robertson did not believe the Americans would oppose this flight. Indeed this was the case, although the Secretary

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42 Memorandum from Under Secretary Norman Robertson to the Minister (Green) “Proposed Charter Flight to Cuba by Canadian Aircraft,” October 25, 1962, (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4986, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 6, LAC. There is some confusion regarding Robertson’s position on approvals. Other documents such as Memorandum, “Civil Air Traffic between Canada and Cuba, October 24, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4987, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 8. LAC clearly indicate that while licenced by the ATB, every World Wide flight required Board approval, even if largely a formality. Ottawa would later be very concerned about there being too many flights
43 Memorandum from Under Secretary Norman Robertson to the Minister (Green) “World Wide Airways Flight to Cuba,” October 26, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4986, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 6, LAC
44 Memorandum from Under Secretary Norman Robertson to the Minister (Green) “Proposed Charter Flight to Cuba by Canadian Aircraft,” October 29, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4986, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 6, LAC
of State requested that the aircraft be subject to rigorous inspection, with External Affairs promising that this would be done. ⁴⁵

Canada’s decisions favouring American interests naturally made its relations with Cuba difficult. Once again, it was clear to Havana that whenever Canada had to make a clear choice, it would choose the United States. Américo Cruz both resented and accepted this reality. During the missile crisis, the Cuban Ambassador had three tense and highly charged meetings with External Affairs officials, including Howard Green. In all probability, Cruz had been left in the dark regarding his leader’s decision to accept Soviet missiles – he even told a press conference that he would not have known there were nuclear weapons in Cuba as “he was not the commander in chief.” ⁴⁶ Even though his position became less and less defensible as the week progressed, the seasoned Cuban diplomat staunchly defended his government’s actions. ⁴⁷

On October 23, Latin America Division Head Alfred J. Pick called in Cruz to explain Canada’s actions, particularly the aircraft search policy. After accepting Canada’s reasoning, Cruz sharply denounced Kennedy’s claims about the missiles as “completely false,” going as far as to suggest that the CIA had doctored the aerial photographic evidence presented to Diefenbaker. ⁴⁸ After Cruz applauded Diefenbaker’s initial skepticism of the US reports, Pick corrected what he saw as a misrepresentation of the Prime Minister’s views. When Cruz insisted it would not be in Cuba’s interest to provoke further US aggression by such an action, Pick responded that the situation was now out of Cuban hands, a statement that greatly incensed the Cuban Ambassador, who like his leader was extremely sensitive to any suggestion that Cuba had abandoned its hard fought sovereignty. ⁴⁹ Meeting with Green two days later, Cruz no longer denied the presence of the missiles, but he insisted their purpose was to protect Cuba from American aggression; he promised that his country would “fight to the death” if invaded. The External Affairs Minister retorted that Cuba had risked its complete destruction by permitting

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⁴⁵ Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 615, November 2, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 937.7249/11-262, NARA. On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal Affairs 1960-1963, Reel 38
⁴⁶ See Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State. No. 561, October 26, 1962 (Unclassified) in National Security Files, Folder: Cuba: Cables, 10/26/62, Part 1, Box 41, John F. Kennedy Library (JFKL). On UPA microfilm John F. Kennedy National Security files (NSF), Latin America Supplement 1 Cuba, Reel 3
⁴⁷ For more on Canadian perceptions of Ambassador Cruz during the crisis see Caralee Daigle Hau, “Time to Grow Up? Canadian Understandings of Revolutionary Cuba to the Missile Crisis of 1962,” American Review of Canadian Studies, 44 (1) March 2014, 82-83.
⁴⁸ Memorandum from AJ Pick Latin American Division to Under Secretary Robertson, October 23, 1962 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 4184, File 2444-40, pt. 9, LAC
⁴⁹ Ibid.
the Soviet missiles.\textsuperscript{50} That same day, Cruz gave a speech describing Canada as still a good friend of Cuba.\textsuperscript{51} Despite its embrace of a reckless Soviet endeavour for its defense, and Canada being a close American ally, the Cuban government did not wish to throw away a relationship with Canada it had come to value. In turn, Ottawa did not wish to completely close the door on Havana, although it remained firm that the Soviet missiles were a separate and distinct problem, and their removal was essential.

The Cuban Ambassador met again with Green on October 30, after the superpowers began the de-escalation process and had decreed that a United Nations inspection mission to Cuba to monitor the removal of the missiles was necessary. With its strong commitment to multilateralism, and to the UN in particular, Ottawa was keen to participate in such an effort, and Green even offered the use of a Canadian aircrew for the inspections.\textsuperscript{52} Even as the External Affairs Minister stressed the very high importance Canada placed on ending the stand-off and avoiding war, Cruz faithfully represented his government’s position. Castro was vehemently opposed to having UN inspectors on Cuban soil, viewing it as an infringement of his country’s sovereignty. In a brief sidebar discussion on improved Cuban-US relations, Green replied that any number of developments were possible once the missile stand-off ended, but failure to cooperate, especially with the UN, increased the likelihood of US military action.\textsuperscript{53} Neither Howard Green nor even Anastas Mikoyan of the Soviet Politburo could persuade Castro to grant UN inspectors entry into Cuba.\textsuperscript{54} As a consequence, Kennedy kept military contingencies ready,

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{52} Memorandum from G. Matthieu, Liaison Services to J. McCardle “The Cuban Situation”, October 31, 1962 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 4184, File 2444-40, pt. 11, LAC
\bibitem{54} For an overview on Soviet-Cuban relations immediately after the crisis, including transcripts of the very tense meetings between Mikoyan, Castro and Che Guevara see James G. Blight and Philip Brenner, \textit{Sad and Luminous Days: Cuba’s Struggle with the Superpowers after the Missile Crisis}, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).
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and soon approved invasive overflights of Cuba, prompting several threats by Castro to shoot them down before having second thoughts, likely under Soviet influence.\(^{55}\)

Canada had little influence on the Castro regime in this period of severe strain. Fragmentary evidence does suggest that at discrete, unguarded moments, the Castro government acknowledged that it was paying a high price for its pro-Soviet policies, and occasionally hinted it might welcome improved relations with the United States. Havana apparently considered that Canada might play a useful diplomatic role in this regard. In early October, Adlai Stevenson, Washington’s ambassador at the UN, cabled Rusk about a conversation he had with his counterpart from Ghana, in which the Ghanaian diplomat recalled conversations in Havana with Cuban Foreign Minister Roa. Roa had asked him whether “Ghana or perhaps Canada would be willing to act as a go-between in [an] attempt to re-establish better relations between Cuba and the US.”\(^{56}\) Stevenson’s reply offered Washington’s standard line about hemispheric security. A Canadian report based on contact with the same Ghanaian ambassador made no mention of Cuba’s indirect attempt to recruit Canada as a mediator with the United States, although it commented that Havana’s leaders appeared to be lamenting the loss of autonomy that accompanied its alignment with the Soviet Union.\(^{57}\)

After having been twice rebuffed under two successive Presidents, the Diefenbaker government had no intention of revisiting the role of mediator between Cuba and the United States. Green reported being “distressed” to learn that Cruz had misinterpreted and relayed to Havana his comments about post-crisis possibilities to mean Canada might again consider a mediation role.\(^{58}\) Yet as with the Bay of Pigs prisoners, within carefully limited parameters Canada did again find itself in the role of conduit, although not mediator, between the Cuban government and the United States. On October 26, with the US-Soviet impasse nearing its climax, Secretary Rusk met with Ambassador Charles Ritchie, warning him that time was

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56 Telegram from US Delegation at the United Nations to Secretary of State, no. 1101, October 5, 1962, (Confidential) in Digital National Security Archive, Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited Collection, Document CU 00430.
58 Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy Havana, no M-102, October 31, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4184, File 2444-40, pt. 11, LAC
running out and the United States would soon have to act against the missiles. However, he hoped that Canada’s diplomatic mission in Cuba could help settle the standoff. Rusk suggested that Ambassador Kidd be asked to privately sound out Castro, to tell him “he was on a losing wicket and that the real questions [sic] was the elimination of the missile bases.” Convinced that the United States had firmly made up its mind, and that little room existed for genuine negotiation, Ritchie doubted such a Canadian approach to Castro as an informal American conduit would yield any fruitful results.

Kidd never got a direct audience with Castro during the crisis, and the documentary record gives no indication that he even attempted to do so in that climate. However, he did meet with Roa on October 30. The Foreign Minister hinted that by its invitation to UN Secretary General U Thant, Cuba had an interest in cooperating with the UN and even working through differences with the United States. Nonetheless, he drew a line at the imposition of UN inspectors onto Cuban soil. Roa even went so far as to criticize the Soviet Union for infringing on Cuban sovereignty by unilaterally pulling the missiles out without consulting Havana, bitterly commenting that “the Russians did not rpt did not run this country.” For the remainder of the conversation, the Cuban Foreign Minister denounced American imperialism and aggression, reaffirmed that the missiles were intended to deter such an attack and, hinting at Canada, added they “would never be used against a friendly country.” Kidd reported that Roa seemed “almost oblivious of the fact Canadians might be concerned about Soviet missile installations here.”

Rusk’s request for on-the-ground reporting from Cuba gave Kidd plenty to keep him busy in the days ahead. Canada’s role in the debacle’s aftermath ended up being more significant and more valued in Washington than anything during the precarious “thirteen days.”

The Americans knew that Castro would have to be either convinced or coerced into allowing the UN inspectors into Cuba. One high-level US document hints that American officials privately considered Canada as second string alternative channel to reach Havana if a
proposal to go through Cuba’s UN representative Carlos Lechuga (a moderate in the regime) failed. Again no evidence confirms that this idea remained anything more than a Plan B consideration in the minds of the State Department. Its officials were well aware of the hard line posturing that Cuba’s Foreign Minister and Ambassador in Ottawa were giving Canadian officials regarding the inspectors, messages the Cubans assumed would be forwarded on to the United States.

Even if the Kennedy administration did not find a direct diplomatic role for Canada, there was always still the ongoing intelligence sharing relationship, and the aftermath of the missile crisis served as the high water mark in that regard. It is unclear as to whether Canada was singled out as providing the most valuable intelligence and analysis from Cuba in comparison to other NATO member states. In the two months after the crisis, the State Department assembled regular summaries of reports from allied embassies in Cuba. Canadian reports were referenced in these summaries, although they were cited less frequently than those from the British or French missions in Havana. Unlike its European counterparts, Ritchie was not invited to join his European colleagues in Washington for a quadripartite ambassadorial meeting held November 8 to discuss Cuban developments. The documentation examined here does not confirm whether or not Canada was officially snubbed in this regard, although it was indicative of the lower ranking it received in Washington among NATO members.

On October 31, Rusk sent a circular telegram to NATO members and other key non-communist states, outlining the seriousness of Castro’s refusal to grant the UN inspectors entry, even though the Soviet Union had accepted this proposal as a key requirement for avoiding hostilities. Castro was committed to showing the international community that Cuba would have

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62 State Department memorandum, Robert Hurwitch to Edwin Martin “Approach through Carlos Lechuga” November 8, 1962 (Top Secret) in Digital National Security Archive, Cuban Missile Crisis revisited Collection, Document CU 01120
63 Memorandum from Department of State Intelligence and Research Bureau (Roger Hilsman) to Secretary of State, “Western European reactions to the Cuban Situation (through October 27, 1962), October 28, 1962 (Secret) in Digital National Security Archive, Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited Collection, Doc. CU 00855 and a similar report for October 31, 1962 DNSA Cuban Missile Crisis Collection Doc. CC 01822. For the reports of various embassies in Havana see also various documents entitled “Washington Embassy Reports Re Events in Cuba” for November and December 1962 in RG 59, Subject Files of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter American Affairs 1961-1963, Entry A1 3149, Box 8, Folder “Cuba – Daily Report,” NARA
64 Memorandum from Jeffery Kitchen to U. Alexis Johnson, “Quadripartite Ambassadorial Meeting”, November 8, 1962 (Secret) in Records of the Policy Planning Council, Miscellaneous Records 1959-1972, RG 59, Entry A1 5025, Box 293, Folder “Cuba Correspondence,” NARA
its own say and would direct what happened on its territory. Wanting to exert maximum pressure on Cuba to comply, Rusk instructed US diplomats in each NATO country to meet with the respective foreign minister, urging them to strongly protest Cuba’s obstructionism and as a trump card, to threaten Havana with a break in diplomatic relations. With Green and Robertson unavailable, Ivan White met with Assistant Under Secretary Ross Campbell and relayed the circular’s instructions. White’s suggestion to Campbell however was a soft one, recognizing Ottawa’s disinclination to close its embassy in Cuba, and that pressuring it to do so would backfire; he likely also had in mind the intelligence value of Canada’s Havana embassy. White recommended to Campbell that Canada warn Cuba’s leadership that obstructing the de-escalation would make it difficult for the continuation of normal relations. He did not call for Canada to sever relations with Cuba outright.

White correctly predicted to Rusk that Ottawa favoured the strong protest, but not the outright severance of diplomatic relations. Robertson had already privately written Green that threatening Havana with a threat to break in diplomatic relations would be “self defeating” for Canada. White also advocated that Canada communicate to the Cubans on the UN inspection issue through George Kidd in Havana, believing Américo Cruz in Ottawa to be “unreliable.”

By that time, Kidd had already received his unequivocally negative response from Roa. White

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66 Circular Telegram from the Secretary of State to various US posts, no. 807, October 31, 1962 (Confidential) in Digital National Security Archive, Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited Collection, Doc. CU 00934. The original is in RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1960-1963, File 737.56351/10-3162, NARA
67 Memorandum from Under Secretary Robertson to the Minister of External Affairs (Green), “Cuba” [Conversation between Assistant Under Secretary Ross Campbell and US Charge D’Affaires Ivan D. White] , November 1, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.4184, File 2444-40, pt. 12, LAC. See also See Memorandum from H. Basil Robinson to the Ambassador (Charles Ritchie), November 1, 1962 (Confidential) in Basil Robinson fonds, MG 31, E83, Vol. 6, Folder 6-11 “Cuban Missile Crisis 1962”, LAC
69 Memorandum from Under Secretary Robertson to the Minister of External Affairs (Green), “Cuba” [Conversation between Assistant Under Secretary Ross Campbell and US Charge D’Affaires Ivan D. White] , November 1, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.4184, File 2444-40, pt. 12, LAC
70 Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 604, October 31, 1962 (Confidential) in National Security Files, Box 41, Country File: Cuba: Cables 10/31/62, John F. Kennedy Library (JFKL). On UPA microfilm John F. Kennedy National Security files (NSF), Latin America Supplement 1 Cuba, Reel 4
reported to Rusk that Kidd had delivered a “foreign minister to foreign minister” message that identified as essential “adequate inspections by the UN or other international body”.\footnote{Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 618, November 2, 1962 (Confidential) in Executive Secretariat, Records Relating to the Cuban Missile Crisis, RG 59, Entry A1, 3053, Box 9, Folder “Volume V Chronology,” NARA. For another report of this discussion with External Affairs input see Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 624, November 5, 1962 (Confidential) in National Security Files, Box 42, Country File: Cuba: Cables 11/5/62, John F. Kennedy Library (JFKL). On UPA microfilm John F. Kennedy National Security files (NSF), Latin America Supplement 1 Cuba, Reel 4} The only Canadian who publicly called for Ottawa to sever its diplomatic relations with Cuba was Progressive Conservative Party Vice President George Hogan, who made the suggestion in a November 8 speech criticizing his own party leader’s performance as lacklustre and overly influenced by anti-American sentiment.\footnote{Smith, \textit{Rogue Tory}, 463.} The United States noted Hogan’s unabashedly pro-US perspective, but recognized it could hardly use intra-party criticism to sway the mercurial Prime Minister, especially as Hogan’s viewpoint represented that of a right wing minority, rather than the mainstream of either the party or the country. The question of the United States pressuring Canada to break diplomatic relations essentially ended there. Nothing in the available record suggests that the United States government ever again suggested such a course of action to Canada. In fact, on November 20, the same day President Kennedy lifted the quarantine against Cuba, Dean Rusk made it clear to the US embassy staff in Ottawa that as Canadian reports from Havana had proved valuable to the United States (and not just during the crisis). Washington would not pressure Ottawa to sever its diplomatic ties with Cuba.\footnote{Telegram from Dept. of State to US Embassy Ottawa no. 631 (Confidential) November 20, 1962 in RG 59, Entry A1 3053, Executive Secretariat Files relating to the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962-1963, Box 14 Vol. XXXII. Also see Digital National Security Archive (DNSA) Cuban Missile Crisis Collection Doc CC 02478.} McGeorge Bundy repeated the same points to Ambassador Ritchie on December 5, pointing out that while the United States would urge OAS members to break such diplomatic and trade relations, which would happen in 1964, it would not do so for NATO countries. Instead, the latter were again asked to follow the COCOM guidelines regarding the sale of strategic goods, and to ensure that their Havana missions maintained “a discreet watchfulness.” Bundy’s recommendations for both groups were not lost on the Diefenbaker government. They reaffirmed both its decision to stay out of the OAS, as well the effectiveness that its cooperation in key theatres had with the Americans.\footnote{Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington DC to Dept. of External Affairs, no 3563, December 6, 1962 (Secret), in RG 24, Vol. 21809, File CSC: 2438:1, pt. 3, LAC}
Ambassador Kidd’s efforts to provide Ottawa, and subsequently Washington, with on the ground intelligence in Cuba was of primary importance for Canada in cushioning the impact of its early stage gaffes. The day after Kennedy’s October 22 address, the State Department requested Kidd’s report on the Cuban reaction, adding for good measure that Washington welcomed regular provision of such intelligence.75 Kidd commenced regularly forwarding information concerning two key categories of special interest in Washington - the Soviets’ troop strength and weaponry on the island, and internal political developments inside the Cuban government. In both these categories, such reports flowed regularly between the Canadian embassy in Havana and Washington well into the mid-1960s, possibly later. On both accounts, Kidd cooperated also with his British colleagues. For example on October 27, the most dangerous day of the crisis, Kidd passed on from his British colleagues observations that suggested that the Soviets were accelerating their effort to get the missiles operational. 76 This information found its way into daily CIA reports assessing the situation in Cuba. 77 In another assessment, CIA analysts quoted the Canadian as believing that Cuba had found itself “caught up in a situation beyond its control.”78 This view was corroborated in a report Kidd relayed directly to the Canadian embassy in Washington two days after Khrushchev’s announced the missiles would be withdrawn, a moment of international relief but also of considerable humiliation in Havana, as the Castro regime once again saw their country’s fate decided by others.79 The Soviet withdrawal, made without consulting Castro, served as what Blight and Brenner called “the first deep cut” in the Cuban-Soviet relationship, one that would take six years to repair.80

The United States was also intensely interested in the physical and mental health of the Cuban leadership, a subject both Kidd and his successor Léon Mayrand reported on regularly

76 Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to JIR, no 211, October 27, 1962 (Secret), in RG 24, Vol. 21809, File 2438:1, pt. 2, LAC. In the same file see also Telegram 214, in which Kidd reports his own observations on the state of militarization on the island
77 See CIA Memorandum, The Crisis USSR/Cuba, November 1, 1962 (Top Secret), Digital National Security Archive (DNSA) Cuban Missile Crisis Collection Doc CC 01802
80 Quote is from Blight and Brenner, 73-75, although it is the theme for the entire Chapter 3.
for a number of years. In his confidential reports, Kidd was often very frank in his dislike of both Castro’s personality and leadership style. He described the Cuban leader as egotistical, highly emotional and yet also “capable of acting intelligently even on his own paranoic [sic] premises.”

Kidd also saw the Maximum Leader as ruthless, having “no compunction about killing those opposed to him and [that he] might be prepared without concern to contemplate without concern the slaughter inherent in a thermo-nuclear war.” With the release of the so-called “Armageddon Letters” at the end of the Cold War, documents revealing that Castro urged Khrushchev to remain firm even at the risk of nuclear war, and at one point had even suggested that the Soviet leader consider a first strike against the United States, the Canadian Ambassador’s assessment of Castro’s behaviour in the fall of 1962 was not wide of the mark.

Also as Rusk had requested, Kidd watched carefully for any detectable fissures between Havana and Moscow and internally, between Castro and more traditional communists. Keeping his ear close to the ground as the Cuban leadership met with Mikoyan, whom Khrushchev sent to Havana to mend fences with an enraged Castro. Kidd reported that “both sides are determined to avoid a breakdown in their talks and will make every effort to keep disagreements in the family.” He also accurately concluded that Moscow “was more likely to have been horrified than impressed by the apparent Cuban willingness to fight it out with the USA.”

On the internal politics, after rumours emerged about a violent ideological disagreement among key members of the Cuban government, the State Department asked Ambassador Charles Ritchie “on an urgent basis” to confirm as such. In particular, Washington wanted to know how the Sino-Soviet split was affecting the Castro regime, whether Havana was likely to resume active

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82 Ibid
83 See Fursenko and Naftali, One Hell of a Gamble, 272-273.
84 Central Intelligence Agency, “The Crisis USSR/Cuba”, November 10, 1962 (Top Secret) in National Security Files, Box 46, Cuba: Subjects Folder CIA Memoranda 11/8/62-11/12/62, John F. Kennedy Library (JFKL). On UPA microfilm John F. Kennedy National Security files (NSF), Latin America Supplement 1 Cuba, Reel 9. The sections attributed to Ambassador Kidd, as well as other allied embassies, are all redacted in the versions of this report on the CIA website, even though the latter were declassified more recently. For an overview on Soviet-Cuban relations immediately after the crisis, see Blight and Brenner, Sad and Luminous Days. English language translations of Russian and Cuban transcript.s of the very tense meetings between Mikoyan and Castro and Guevara are in the Woodrow Wilson Center’s Cold War International History Project Bulletin, no. 5 (1995), 93-109, 159; no. 8/9 (1996), 320, 339-343 and also no. 17/18 (2012), 331-348. All are accessible online at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication-series/cwihp-bulletin
support for external revolutionaries, and the likelihood of an internal coup.\textsuperscript{85} Kidd could not confirm the disagreement, but he correctly noted Cuba’s leaders were mostly disillusioned with the Soviet Union, and that some, such as Che Guevara, now leaned towards Beijing. Kidd predicted Castro would take the middle course of pursuing “as Chinese a policy as is compatible with Cuba’s need for Russian economic assistance.”\textsuperscript{86} Castro’s personal views were closer to Guevara’s revolutionary romanticism, but he was more of a pragmatist and recognized his country’s dependence on the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{87} This tension would be prevalent in Cuban foreign policy for the next six years. John Crimmins, soon to become the State Department’s Coordinator for Cuban Affairs, spoke in “the warmest and most complimentary terms” on Kidd’s reports, praising them for their “balanced and informative quality.”\textsuperscript{88} He hoped for many more such reports, both on Castro’s political position but also on living conditions and morale in the country. Ambassador Ritchie was especially keen to please the Americans in this regard, cabling Ottawa anxiously on November 20 after there had been a brief hiatus in Kidd’s reports.\textsuperscript{89} To his relief, the flow of reports from Havana soon recommenced.

Civil aviation remained a focal point in Canadian-American relations concerning Cuba in the post-crisis period. Even after Kennedy lifted the blockade on November 20, the United States asked Canada to continue searching Cuba bound aircraft at Gander and to keep Soviet flights out of Canadian airspace.\textsuperscript{90} Norman Robertson was concerned that continuing the searches would strain relations with other ICAO members, although he believed Canada had a better legal position in this regard than did the United States over the quarantine of Cuba. In no mood for further problems with the Kennedy administration, Green overruled his Under Secretary’s advice and decided both the inspections and the ban on Soviet overflights would

\textsuperscript{85} For the request see Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington DC to Dept. of External Affairs, no 3653, December 17, 1962 (Secret), in RG 24, Vol. 21809, File CSC: 2438:1, pt. 3, LAC.
\textsuperscript{86} Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to Dept. of External Affairs, no. 304, December 22, 1962 (Secret), in RG 24 Vol. 21309, File CSC: 2438:1, pt. 3, LAC.
\textsuperscript{87} See Blight and Brenner, 82-83. This is also in essence the thesis of Simon Reid-Henry’s study of the Castro-Guevara relationship concluding that while they had different styles they were really two sides of the same coin, being personally close and having a shared objective. See Simon Reid-Henry Fidel and Che: A Revolutionary Friendship (London UK: Scept.re/Hodder & Stoughton, 2009).
\textsuperscript{88} Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington DC to Dept. of External Affairs, no. 3502, November 29, 1962 (Confidential), in RG 24, Vol. 21809, File CSC: 2438:1, pt. 3, LAC.
\textsuperscript{89} Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington DC to Dept. of External Affairs, no 3398, November 20, 1962 (Confidential), in H. Basil Robinson fonds, MG 31, E-83, File 6-11 “Cuban Missile Crisis 1962”, Box 6, LAC.
\textsuperscript{90} Memorandum from Assistant Under Secretary (A.E. Ritchie) to Economic Division, “Overflights and Landings en Route to Cuba,” November 22, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25 Vol. 4986, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 6, LAC
In this same vein, the Cabinet decided on December 8 to allow the forwarding to Washington of passenger manifests obtained during the inspections, using as a technical argument that its earlier refusal to do so had not bound it in future cases. CIA records indicate that such lists were indeed forwarded. As well, the State Department was receiving monthly flight logs documenting all technical stops in Canada by Cubana and Czech airlines. In early 1963, the State Department praised Canada for performing at Gander “[a] valuable intelligence and harassment service.”

In a related aviation matter, the United States asked Canada, as well as several NATO countries, to refuse overflight and landing rights for three Soviet made Ilyushin IL-18 aircraft on delivery to Cuba. Havana had asked for Ottawa’s permission, insisting that the IL-18s had now been procured and registered by Cuba and were thus covered under ICAO regulations. As the delivery crews were Russian, Ottawa intended to block delivery by denying them Canadian visas. External Affairs kept the US embassy informed of these developments. In the meantime, Rusk issued a circular to all posts, stressing that the United States did not wish to see Cubana expand its service to the East bloc, and at minimum, wanted friendly countries to insist on proper ownership, insurance and airworthiness documentation before granting the IL-18s landing rights.

Robertson believed that recent events notwithstanding, Canada should meet its ICAO obligations and follow Great Britain’s lead by granting the aircraft passage. The cynical White, after being briefed by Edgar Ritchie that Canada was considering allowing for a one-

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91 Memorandum from Under Secretary Norman Robertson to the Minister (Green) “Flight to Cuba by Soviet Bloc Aircraft” November 21, 1962, (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4986, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 6, LAC
93 CIA Despatch from Station Chief Ottawa to Chief Special Affairs Staff “Passengers on Cubana Airlines Charter Flights between Canada and Cuba,” November 22, 1963 (Secret) [for flights documented are October 23 and October 30, 1963] JFK Assassination Records Collection, Doc 104-10307-10004, NARA. Also accessible online via Mary Ferrell Organization www.maryferrell.org
95 Telegram from Secretary of State to US Embassies in Dublin and Reykjavik no. 930 (Confidential) November 17, 1962 in RG 59, Entry A1 3053, Executive Secretariat Files relating to the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962-1963, Box 14, File “Vol. XXXI Misc. Tels Nov 11-19”, NARA
96 Circular Telegram from Secretary of State no. 930 (Confidential) November 17, 1962 in RG 59, Entry A1 3053, Executive Secretariat Files relating to the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962-1963, Box 14, File “Vol. XXXI Misc. Tels Nov 11-19,” NARA
time passage, reported to Rusk that Canada was “waffling.” 97 As a stalling tactic, Green deferred the issue to Cabinet, resulting in a second American request to delay replying to the Cubans.98 Washington’s tactics worked, and a frustrated Cuban government, treated similarly by Ireland and Iceland, opted instead to take delivery of its first IL-18 via a much longer route through Conakry, Guinea.99 This issue would reappear the following spring.

Air travel to Cuba was linked to another key American preoccupation – so-called subversion, one that featured prominently in US Cuba policy through much of the decade. Even in the early 1960s, Cuba had become a popular and symbolic destination for those on the far left, and Castro was all too keen to promote his brand of revolutionary Marxism, something Kennedy wished to curtail.100 Canada was perhaps more willing to cooperate with the United States on this issue than any other, as both Diefenbaker and his successor personally shared Kennedy’s objectives. Diefenbaker told British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in May 1962 that he thought up to five Latin American countries were seriously vulnerable to Castro’s revolutionary influence.101 Canada had its own Fair Play for Cuba and other sympathetic groups.102 Controlling travel to Cuba provided an easy opportunity for Canada to demonstrate ideological solidarity with its neighbour, despite having differences in policy and practice. Yet in this regard, Canada was no different than in other spheres - it still held tightly to its principles and boundaries. While the Canadian government monitored travellers to Cuba and had special registration requirements, travel to Cuba in itself by Canadians remained perfectly legal, even if suspect. Within limits, Ottawa would find other technical means to stonewall what it saw as

97 Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Department of State no. 685 (Confidential) November 20, 1962 in RG 59, Entry A1 3053, Executive Secretariat Files relating to the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962-1963, Box 14, File “Vol. XXXI I Misc. Tels Nov 20-28,” NARA
99 Telegram from Department of State to US Embassy, Bonn no. 1779, February 1, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Files 1963, Box 3879, File POL 31-1-CUBA, NARA
101 Record of Conversation between Prime Minister Diefenbaker and Prime Minister Macmillan, May 1, 1962 (Secret) in H. Basil Robinson fonds, MG 31, E-83, Box 6, File 6-1, LAC
undesirable group tours to the island. However, it had no compunction about denying the use of Canadian territory for Americans trying to reach Cuba, as such travel was illegal in the United States except in (rare) instances where an individual had specially approved travel documents. For political and ethical reasons, especially the former, the Diefenbaker government, already on thin ice with the Kennedy administration, was not about to risk further American ire by helping its citizens subvert their own law.

In December 1962, the Castro government formally invited a group of American students to spend Christmas in Cuba. This tour had been months in organization, and several Canadians also intended to participate. When Havana offered to send a Cubana aircraft to Canada to pick the students up, Ottawa declined it landing rights, following Washington’s direction. This time, Robertson advised Green against allowing the pick-up, describing it as “a backdoor evasion of US law.” Seeking a good official excuse to tell the Cubans other than political realities, Ottawa’s official reasoning was that it did not normally permit charter flights “for the primary purpose of carrying traffic originating in another country,” and that Canada was not a natural stop geographically between the United States and Cuba. As a side, the Under Secretary commented privately to Green that the students were all considered as affiliates of a “Young Communist Organization.” Canada’s refusal to allow the Cuban charter forced the students to postpone their travels until the next summer. Washington appreciated Canada’s efforts.

The long and intense year of 1962 finally drew to a close. By the year’s end, the two neighbours had moved closer together in specific theatres regarding Cuba, with Canada largely proving itself to the United States as a willing and effective collaborator, even though it did not substantially change its policy. White wrote Rusk with satisfaction that Canadian exports to Cuba were only $8 million between January to September, a very substantial decline from the comparable 1961 figure of $21 million. None of the exported goods were strategic, and few

104 Memorandum from Under Secretary Norman Robertson to the Minister of External Affairs (Green) “Application for Charter Flight to Carry United States and Canadian Students to Cuba over Christmas”, December 21, 1962 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4986, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 6, LAC
105 Ibid.
were industrial in nature. In pragmatic terms, the United States had brought Canada as close to its policy as possible within the confines of Canadian foreign policy principles and domestic politics.

Canada gained as well. Its actions behind the scenes during and after the missile crisis cushioned it from greater fallout after Diefenbaker’s initial stumbling. He and Kennedy would have one last meeting in the Bahamas in December, when the Canadian Prime Minister accepted Harold Macmillan’s invitation to join himself and President Kennedy for a luncheon meeting. The President did not want at all to see the Canadian Prime Minister, and when he reluctantly conceded to a three way conversation, he likened the gathering to “three whores at a christening.”

Cuba was perhaps the one bright spot in President Kennedy’s otherwise testy conversation with Diefenbaker. When the Prime Minister asked for Kennedy’s views on Canada’s Cuba trade, the President replied that “there was no US objection to trade in the items Canada was selling to Cuba” and then went on to praise the role of the Canadian embassy in Havana had been during the crisis. What is especially noteworthy is that none of Kennedy’s compliments were for the now thoroughly detested Prime Minister, nor his External Affairs Minister. Diefenbaker overlooked these omissions when he reported the President’s praise of Canada to the Cabinet on January 3, 1963.

Within a month, the Diefenbaker government collapsed, following another row with the United States over nuclear weapons commitments, an event that sparked first a Cabinet revolt, followed by defeat in the House of Commons which in turn triggered a federal election in April. Diefenbaker would lose to Liberal leader Lester B. Pearson, although the latter won only a minority government. Kennedy was exhilarated at this outcome, and for years afterwards Diefenbaker complained that the CIA had interfered in the 1963 campaign on the Liberals’

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106 Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Department of State no. 705 (Confidential) November 23, 1962 in RG 59, Entry A1 3053, Executive Secretariat Files relating to the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962-1963, Box 14, File “Vol. XXXI I Misc. Tels Nov 20-28”, NARA


behalf.\textsuperscript{110} At the highest levels, relations would soon improve considerably, although key disagreements remained, one of them being relations with Fidel Castro’s Cuba.

\textsuperscript{110} See Airgram from US Embassy in Ottawa to Department of State, no A-895, March 2, 1967 (Unclassified) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric files 1967-1969, Box 1947, File POL 23-6-CAN, NARA. This allegation has never been proven, and is unlikely ever to be.
Chapter 7: Normalizing Cooperation and Containing Subversion: Canada, the United States and Cuba in the Pearson Years. Part 1 April-November 1963

The spring of 1963 brought with it a sense of relief, that indeed it was springtime both for Canada and the United States, but also for international relations as whole. The previous two years had been most tumultuous. In the bigger picture were the Cold War’s two most dangerous superpower confrontations, over Berlin and Cuba, where as North America had endured the most noxious relationship to date between a Canadian Prime Minister and a United States President. The Liberal election victory and the arrival of Lester B. Pearson as Canada’s fourteenth Prime Minister was greatly welcomed in Washington. Senior officials hoped that perhaps Canada and the United States might resurrect the good rapport that had existed under the last Liberal government of Louis St. Laurent, the so-called “golden age” of bilateral relations. This expectation was heightened by the fact that the chief architect of Canadian foreign policy during those years was now at the helm. Despite the general optimism that the worst of the mistrust, cynicism and personal acrimony of the Diefenbaker years would soon dissipate, American policymakers and diplomats remained skeptical that all their differences would now be easily resolved. Notwithstanding Pearson’s commitment to better relations with the United States, as exemplified by his decision to allow US nuclear weapons on Canadian soil, Washington’s officials correctly detected that Canadian nationalist and anti-American currents had not disappeared. Most telling in that regard was the appointment of the ardent nationalist Walter Gordon as Minister of Finance. Most Canadians still did not share the Americans’ anti-communist zeal, and certain vocal sectors continued to question and challenge the United States’ Cold War presumptions.¹

At the highest levels, Canadian-American relations were for the most part better under the Pearson Liberals, despite some highly fractious moments between Pearson and President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965 over the Vietnam conflict. Even with that notorious episode, personal relations between the Prime Minister and President never sank as low as with Kennedy and Diefenbaker in 1962. Canadian-American squabbles during Pearson’s tenure mostly centred on Canadian economic nationalism, rather than national security and cold war policies – a noted difference from the Diefenbaker period. However, ongoing differences between Canadian and

¹ For a comprehensive look at the counterculture, radicalism and nationalism in Canada see Bryan Palmer, Canada’s 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).
American foreign policy perceptions, assessments, priorities and practices remained, all having the potential to spark trouble. Along with more obvious differences over Vietnam and on who should represent China in the United Nations. Yet another that still festered was how best to deal with Fidel Castro.²

In contrast to the wide coverage Cuba gets in memoirs and scholarly assessments of the Diefenbaker period, Cuba gets sparse mention, if any at all, in the literature on Pearson’s foreign policy, either in historical monographs or in the memoirs or biographies of key participants.³ The only exception is John Kirk and Peter McKenna’s monograph on Canadian-Cuban relations, a work that does not examine Cuba’s impact on Canadian-American relations in any great detail.⁴ In their memoirs, Pearson himself and External Affairs Minister Paul Martin⁵ both make only a brief mention of Cuba in recounting the Prime Minister’s January 1964 meeting in Washington with President Johnson.⁶ Biographies or memoirs of the leading members of the Pearson Cabinet, such as Mitchell Sharp and Walter Gordon, do not mention Cuba at all for this period, even though the issue at times was a prominent one for their respective ministerial portfolios, particularly the impact of Washington’s ever tightening embargo.

This paucity of coverage on Cuba is mirrored in works either by or about leading American figures of the time, such as President Johnson, Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, all of whom pay little attention to the island post-1962. This is largely explained by the fact that Fidel Castro’s Cuba generated no major international crises or scandals in the following years. There was neither a second Bay of Pigs nor another missile crisis. Kennedy and Johnson both closely monitored the Soviet Union’s withdrawal of the missiles, and kept military contingency plans in place should Moscow reintroduce offensive

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⁴ See John M. Kirk and Peter McKenna: Canada-Cuba Relations: The Other Good Neighbour Policy. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1997).
⁵ Paul Martin Sr., Secretary of State for External Affairs from 1963-1968 and father of Prime Minister Paul Martin Jr. (2003-2006). For the purposes of this study, all references to Paul Martin are to the senior Paul Martin.
weapons on the island. Both men also readied themselves to use US military force if need be to prevent a second Cuba in the hemisphere, with President Johnson actually doing so in April 1965 in the Dominican Republic. As well, CIA support for Cuban exiles continued until mid-decade, although at a lower intensity and eventually shelved as a failure. Castro’s regime endured, and remained very much still a thorn in the United States’ side, and Washington and Havana continued to be poles apart in nearly every aspect of international relations.

The American public for the most part welcomed the decompression that followed Khrushchev’s decision to pull his nuclear missiles from Cuba, and did not favour an invasion. At the same time, Americans still perceived a communist regime ninety miles from its shores as a significant threat, and were thus in no mood for accommodation with it. President Kennedy regularly monitored US public opinion on Cuba throughout the first part of 1963, and by March the data indicated that Americans had grown less satisfied with the administration’s policy. For Kennedy such a climate made it, as aptly put by Lawrence Freedman, “a difficult time to extend the hand of friendship” to Cuba. Some historians, such as Kennedy biographer Robert Dallek, suggest that had the President lived and been re-elected, he would have finally repaired the breach. In 1963 and 1964, both Kennedy and Johnson explored informal backchannel approaches to Castro, using private citizens as conduits (particularly journalists but also lawyer James Donovan). These were ultimately unsuccessful. Much of that discourse remains in the realm of the counterfactual, but the substantial body of evidence available to historians suggests

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8 On prevention of another Cuba, Stephen Rabe argues that Kennedy was clearly prepared to use US military force to prevent such a development if need be. See Stephen Rabe, The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), Ch. 2. Johnson clearly did so in the Dominican Republic in 1965.

9 For decent coverage of these activities from 1963 onward see Lars Schoultz, That Infernal Little Republic, Chapter 8 and also Don Bohning, The Castro Obsession, Ch. 9.

10 Memorandum “Wednesday’s Gallup Poll Shows Majority Continue to Oppose Invasion of Cuba”, February 26, 1963 (Limited Use Only) in Digital National Security Archive, Cuban Missile Crisis Collection, Doc CC 002966

11 See Memorandum “Diminishing Public Confidence in Administration’s Handling of Cuba Problem,” March 21, 1963 (Limited Official Use) in Digital National Security Archive, Cuban Missile Crisis Collection, Doc CC 003011


that a rapprochement in the mid-1960s was highly unlikely, as neither Washington nor Havana could agree to the actual terms of the compromise, only agreeing that they did not want war.

Castro had little incentive to talk to the United States as long as its embargo remained firmly in place and the CIA continued to covertly support opposition efforts to replace him. The basic American position on Cuba, as laid out by Kennedy on November 20, 1962 as he lifted the quarantine, was that no prospect for improved US-Cuban relations existed so long as a Soviet military presence remained on the island and Havana continued to support revolutionary activities abroad. Every successive President during the Cold War held to this position. In the end, the United States neither succeeded at toppling Castro nor agreed to live with him. By 1965, United States-Cuban relations had settled down for a long winter; while never as tempestuous as the early 1960s, the apparent permafrost continued.

While Cuba occupied a lower profile beginning in 1963, it did not cease to be an important foreign policy issue for the United States, especially its support for revolution in the hemisphere. Throughout the 1960s, it generated a substantial volume of official papers, even though as the decade went on much more attention was given to Vietnam and the Middle East. The disproportional energy devoted to Cuba in the United States meant inevitably that Castro’s regime would also occupy a disproportional amount of time and energy in Canada. While still a contentious matter, during the Pearson years Cuba became a more routine irritant in Canadian-United States relations rather than a serious flashpoint, and was for the most part relegated for handling by diplomatic and bureaucratic professionals. Yet it still occasionally reached the upper echelons, especially during Pearson’s first mandate, but as a lower tiered agenda item. After Pearson’s August 1966 meeting with Johnson at Campobello, the records do not record any further Prime Ministerial-Presidential discussions on Cuba until Pierre Trudeau’s meeting with Jimmy Carter in February 1977.

The fundamental differences in approach between Canada and the United States over Cuba remained entrenched, thus leaving the potential for the occasional flare-up. The question of how to relate to Fidel Castro was still intricately connected to emotionally charged identity issues for each country, such as sovereignty and national security, which remained dear to their

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15 Freedman, 233-235.
governments and publics alike. Asserting Canada’s right to trade with Cuba in non-strategic goods remained as non-negotiable for Pearson’s Liberals as Diefenbaker’s Conservatives, as well as the Canadian public. At the same time, the Pearson years represent the period when the government and External Affairs bureaucracy were most sympathetic to the United States on Cuba. Canada kept its relations with Cuba as Kirk and McKenna aptly describe it, in a “coldly correct” posture; apart from trade, Ottawa did the bare minimum to keep its relationship with Cuba civil, and with little enthusiasm.\footnote{See John M. Kirk and Peter McKenna: \textit{Canada-Cuba Relations: The Other Good Neighbour Policy}, Ch.3.} The Canadian government believed Castro had been reckless in allowing the near catastrophe of October 1962, and it shared the United States’ concerns about Cuba as a Soviet beachhead and locus for communist revolution in the western hemisphere. While the same points of contention with the Americans continued over trade, embargo enforcement, civil aviation and extraterritoriality, the cooperation patterns sown during the Diefenbaker period in these same theatres, as well as intelligence sharing and efforts to contain so-called Cuban subversion from Canadian territory, blossomed under Pearson. The new Prime Minister was determined to remove Cuba as a top level agenda item with the United States, and to carve greater space for more pressing bilateral issues. For the most part, his government succeeded.

Upon taking the reins in Ottawa in mid April 1963, the new Liberal government made repairing relations with the United States its highest foreign policy priority. As External Affairs Minister during the Cold War’s first decade, Pearson was already well-known and respected in Washington. A seasoned veteran in dealing with the Americans, the Prime Minister understood their global responsibilities and foreign policy perspectives, many of which he and his government shared. In his memoirs, Pearson emphasized his sympathy for the international role the United States had to play in the postwar years, and recalled how he thought Canada needed to avoid the moral superiority of “you are bigger but we are better.”\footnote{Lester B. Pearson, \textit{Mike: The Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. Lester B. Pearson} Vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 115.} At the same time, on principle and because of the insistence of the Canadian public, Pearson was not shy about asserting Canada’s autonomy when its interests differed from the United States. Unlike his predecessor, Pearson was considerably more skilled in minimizing the fallout of differences with its neighbour, and with the noted exception of his spat with President Johnson over Vietnam, he mostly averted the personal contempt in Washington that Diefenbaker had reaped.
While the adjustment to the Liberals was a mostly happy one in Washington, Ottawa’s more challenging adjustment was with the new US Ambassador, Walton Butterworth. The veteran diplomat arrived in Ottawa in December 1962, just in time to observe the fall of the Diefenbaker government. Having served in Ottawa near the beginning of his State Department career in the 1930s, Butterworth believed he knew Canada well. He got the chance to know it better, and became to date the longest serving US Ambassador to Canada. Remaining in that post until September 1968, Butterworth’s time in Ottawa spanned the entirety of Lester Pearson’s tenure as Prime Minister, as well as all but the final four months of the Johnson presidency.18 As evident in his frequently caustic and cynical annual reviews of Canadian domestic and foreign affairs, Butterworth doubted the post-Diefenbaker reconciliation process would be a smooth one. In his view, the Canadian-US differences that had spouted in the Diefenbaker years were not altogether new, and went beyond matters of style. In a memo that poured cold water on the optimism following Pearson’s first (and only) meeting with Kennedy, Butterworth quipped:

I am concerned that our recent difficulties with Canada not be viewed as a superficial lapse of customary cordiality now restored by a smile and a handshake. You note that on fundamentals they have always been with us. They were – ten years ago. The important thing to grasp is that our recent differences were over fundamentals.19

For Butterworth, undoubtedly among such fundamentals were western alliance defence commitments, but in his opinion, as well as that of Walt Rostow and Dean Rusk, Cuba and Southeast Asia ranked as near fundamental in importance. Such a view was certainly not shared by Canada, nor even by a good number of officials in Washington, who thought the Canadian position on those issues was not unreasonable. Meeting with the Ambassador just days after taking office, Pearson sought to convince him that a position that was pro-Canadian was not necessarily anti-American.20 Butterworth did not see it that way, and during his tenure he consistently expressed his opinion that Canada’s economic and military dependence on the United States limited its right to challenge Washington. As he expressed to Rusk in 1965:

18 Donaghy, 38.
20 Telegram from US Embassy in Ottawa to Department of State, No. 1342, April 17, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 59 Subject Numeric Files 1963, Box 3853, File POL-CAN-US, NARA
Canada understandably wants to call a tune occasionally, but it is rarely able to pay the piper more than a fraction of the fee. It does want to contribute to the fee, however and this sense of responsibility is one upon which we should properly try to capitalize. 21

Throughout the mid 1960s, the United States saw Cuba as one such area, and Ottawa was for the most part willing to pay, save for ending commercial and diplomatic relations or accepting the validity in Canada of US laws. It still saw the American approach to Castro’s regime (and to China and Vietnam) as excessively ideological, if not outright hysterical, and ineffective. Ottawa also resented Washington’s intermittent efforts to corral its support. In an October 1964 position paper written for a special bilateral study group on Canadian-US relations chaired by former ambassadors Arnold Heeney and Livingston Merchant, A.E. Ritchie attributed the discord over Cuba primarily to differences in assessment of the situation, as well as disagreement on the most effective response. 22 This perceptual difference was apparent to Butterworth early on. The ambassador and External Affairs Minister Paul Martin locked horns somewhat in their first conversation regarding Cuba in July 1963. After Butterworth suggested the Pearson government “weigh Canada’s long range interest”, on the issue, implying a closer alignment with the American position, an irritated Martin retorted that “Canada was doing more than was formally required” to cooperate with the Americans. 23 Their encounter did not conclude with a meeting of minds, and Butterworth lamented to Rusk afterwards that the Canadians “by no means saw the Castro regime as clearly communist as we do.” 24 As will be shown, these differences in diagnosis and prescription did not keep the Canadian government from cooperating with its neighbour, even to the point of risking domestic criticism and some awkward moments in its relations with Cuba.

The United States government’s efforts to manage its ongoing differences with Canada on Cuba in some ways mirrored that of its northern neighbour. It wanted to avoid any major quarrels with Ottawa, save any encroachments on the two core parameters laid down by President Kennedy after the missile crisis. The litmus test would be whether any of Canada’s policies shored up the Soviet position in Cuba, or facilitated Castro’s Marxist missionary efforts

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23 Ibid.

24 Telegram from US Embassy in Ottawa to Department of State, No. 128, July 25, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 59 Subject Numeric Files 1963, Box 3853, File POL-CAN-US, NARA
in the hemisphere. With the exception of Canada’s Havana embassy, now clearly seen as a valuable intelligence asset, Washington otherwise viewed all of Canada’s ties to Cuba as potentially furthering these two goals. Trade reinforced the Cuban economy, which in turn strengthened the revolution’s durability and also provided Havana more financial resources to procure Soviet bloc goods or to fund foreign guerrilla and propaganda efforts. Knowing that Canada and other NATO allies would not cease such trade, the United States focussed on those Canadian activities it believed that was most directly assisting Cuba in this regard. Canada’s only vulnerable point regarding Cuba’s Sovietization was in granting access to its territory for Cuba-Soviet bloc air travel. Yet even in this context, Canadian officials provided the Americans with valued intelligence that did much to mute criticism.

On the subversion question, the Canadian-Cuban relationship placed Canada in a more vulnerable position. Many different facets of this relationship could be viewed as indirectly facilitating Havana’s external subversion. Canadian trade and civil aviation policy certainly qualified as possibly enabling Cuban revolutionary objectives. Yet there were also other factors. Cuba’s expanding diplomatic presence in Canada, and organized travel to Cuba by Canadians, usually politically motivated, were viewed warily in Washington and by the RCMP and certain other officials at home. In these contexts, Ottawa had to tread carefully. It wanted to avoid accusations by Cuba of hypocrisy and rudeness, and it did not wish to impede freedom of expression or legally permissible travel. For the most part, Canada walked this tightrope successfully, and no lasting problems emerged. In fact, its efforts aligned closely with a number of short directives that President Kennedy had issued to his national security team in early 1963. In these documents, he requested reports from friendly embassies in Havana, especially regarding the Soviets’ missile withdrawal. He also wanted updates on free world shipping to Cuba, and on travel there by students and political activists.²⁵ Attuned to Kennedy’s concerns, and within certain limits, Canada’s government was more than willing to help its neighbour.

²⁵ These memos are all in the Kennedy Library National Security files Cuba Country file. For the 3rd party intelligence request see Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to Director of Central Intelligence McCon, January 18, 1963 (Secret) in FRUS 1961-1963; Vol. XI, Doc. 268. For the directive on monitoring students and subversion see Clifton to CIA Cable CAP63053 January 15, 1963 (Secret) in National Security Files. Box 51,Country File Cuba: Subjects, "Intelligence Materials, 1/63", , John F. Kennedy Library. On UPA microfilm John F. Kennedy National Security files (NSF), Latin America Supplement 1, Cuba Reel 11. For more on Kennedy’s reputation for short memos on issues that most concerned him see Edward B. Claffin , ed. JFK Wants to Know: Memos from the President’s Office 1961-1963 (New York, Morrow, 1991), 11-13.
John F. Kennedy could barely contain his exuberance over the electoral defeat of the cantankerous John Diefenbaker by the affable and experienced diplomat. His jubilation was also shared by Canadian Ambassador Charles Ritchie, who in his diary privately called for “prayers of thanksgiving”– even as he clarified that that he was not a Liberal!\(^{26}\) The State Department remained more circumspect. It was very encouraged by what it saw as a shift by the Canadian public towards the United States, marked not only the Liberal victory but also by the re-election of pro-American Conservative Cabinet ministers such as former National Defence Minister Douglas Harkness, and the defeat of Howard Green.\(^{27}\) Yet its officials also cautioned that “we should not expect automatic solutions to our problems with Canada simply because the Liberals are in power.”\(^{28}\) The latter had not won a majority government (nor would they do so in the next election of November 1965) and nationalist sentiments remained, and even grew as the decade progressed. Kennedy was advised to go somewhat slow with the new Canadian government, on the premise that embracing Pearson too quickly might kindle a nationalist backlash in Canada, which in turn might push the new Prime Minister towards a cooler posture. In following such advice, Kennedy opted to invite Pearson to the family retreat in Hynannisport, rather than the White House, for informal discussions. This gesture well suited the new Prime Minister, in that he would have an opportunity to mend fences with the United States while not appearing to be too anxious to do so.\(^{29}\)

With the date and location set, Kennedy did much to prepare for the meeting. The opportunities presented by Canada’s change of government were a major foreign policy focus in the White House that April. A National Security Action memorandum approved by Kennedy on April 18 outlined how:

> the advent of a new government in Canada has naturally stirred nearly all branches of the government to new hope that progress can be made in effective negotiations with this most important neighbor on all sorts of problems.\(^{30}\)

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\(^{28}\) Ibid.

\(^{29}\) Ibid., 17-18, and 4n, 183.

Delegating the details regarding the Canada file with the State Department’s European Affairs Bureau, Kennedy made it clear he intended to oversee all developments on US-Canadian relations himself. Topping the agenda was the nuclear weapons issue that had precipitated the collapse of Diefenbaker’s government. On May 2, the President held a special Cabinet room discussion focussing exclusively on this facet of Canada-United States relations. Pearson proved good on his word and honoured his earlier public pronouncements favouring Canada’s deployment of US nuclear weapons on its soil, although as Greg Donaghy has pointed out, the Prime Minister made this decision with great reluctance, and in fact it was a reversal of his earlier stated positions. Along with his own personal misgivings on the issue, Pearson knew well that this action could again stir up disarmament advocates and critics of Canada’s support for US Cold War policies. For the time being, he concluded that the prospect of better relations with the Kennedy administration made it worth the risk, and felt he could easily justify his decision under the auspices of NATO and NORAD obligations.

Cuba was also included on the agenda of the upcoming Kennedy-Pearson meeting. A briefing memo prepared for the President indicated: “we prefer a stronger Canadian attitude, although there has been some important cooperation with US policy.” The document’s State Department authors applauded Canada for drastically reducing its exports to Cuba, with the 1962 figure of $10.2 million only a third of the 1961 value of $31.3 million; it also commended the searches by Canadian authorities at Gander of all westbound flights from Prague to Havana, pointing out for good measure that they had found no weapons or strategic goods.

Pearson and Kennedy finally met in Hyannisport on May 11, 1963, where they had a largely affable eight hours of conversation, characterized by Greg Donaghy as being full of “easy banter and casual laughter.” The President was impressed by the Prime Minister’s knowledge of both international relations and baseball statistics. The Prime Minister reciprocated his admiration in praising Kennedy’s “quick mind, great capacity and forward

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32 Donaghy, 19-20. For more on the jovial mood see also Charles Ritchie, Undiplomatic Diaries, 471.


34 Ibid

35 Donaghy, 18.
looking attitude.” Pearson told his Cabinet that Cuba and Latin America had been discussed “at considerable length” in the conversations. Kennedy raised with Pearson his concern over Cuba’s efforts to replicate its revolution in Latin America, identifying Venezuela and British Guiana as its most likely targets. He was unequivocal that the United States could not allow a second communist regime in the hemisphere. The Prime Minister told Kennedy he supported Washington’s policy of “economic pressure on Cuba without provocation.” Letting the President down easy after reiterating that his government would not change Canada’s policies, Pearson reassured him that Ottawa would not make “statements implying approval of the Cuban regime.” Afterwards, Kennedy complimented Pearson on the cooperation his government had received from Canadian officials, noting “in the field of intelligence, in limitations of communist bloc air traffic to Cuba, the Canadian authorities had been very helpful.” This last point appears only in the Canadian record of the meeting.

For Ottawa, the most contentious issue concerning Cuba continued to be the extraterritorial reach of the embargo to Canadian subsidiaries of American multinationals. No sooner had the joviality of the Hyannisport meeting faded when this very issue, already having generated significant sparks over previous two years, returned with a vengeance. On July 8, 1963, at the direction of Kennedy and Rusk, the Treasury Department finally imposed its long threatened Blocking Controls against Cuba under the Trading with the Enemy Act. As Lars Schoultz describes it, with these measures, Kennedy had completed the embargo and officially ensured that Cuba received the same treatment in Washington as did Communist China and North Korea. Still in force as of this writing, they became known as the Cuban Assets Controls.

In making this decision, Kennedy was implementing the recommendations of a special working group on Cuban subversion that he had set in motion back in February to counter

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38 Ibid.
39 Telegram from Hyannis Port to Department of State, May 11, 1963 (Secret) in FRUS 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, Doc. 449, 1205-1206 [essentially a detailed summary of the Kennedy-Pearson meeting]
40 Memorandum “Meeting between the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the United States, Hyannisport, Mass May 10-11, 1963 (Secret) in H, Basil Robinson fonds, MG 31, E-83, Box 12, File 12-14, LAC.
Castro’s efforts to foster revolution in Latin America and the Caribbean – a near obsession for the President in his final year. Chaired by Marine Corps General Victor Krulak, (later sent to Vietnam), the Sub-Committee on Castro Communist Subversion examined the spread of pro-Castro propaganda, along with Cuba bound travel, armament shipments and the flow of money. Regarding finances, the Sub-Committee concluded that as the Cuban peso was not convertible abroad, Castro needed foreign exchange from the west to support his external activities. The only way Havana could get US dollars into the hands of leftist groups was by accessing its dollar holdings in foreign banks. To limit such access, Krulak’s report recommended invoking Section 5b of the Trading with the Enemy Act, an action that would prohibit all transactions with Cuba by individuals and institutions under American jurisdiction. Such measures would also affect foreign banks. Any attempts made by the latter to move US dollars on behalf of Cuba through American banks would result in the blocking of that bank’s US accounts. The Krulak report recommended that British and Canadian banks be approached, both to prohibit remittances in their currencies to Cuba and to provide Washington with intelligence on financial transactions with Havana.42

Washington’s official public justification for imposing blocking controls in the summer of 1963 was to support an OAS Council resolution that called for efforts to thwart Castro’s support for revolutionaries.43 Gordon Chase, the National Security Council’s Cuba expert, wrote Bundy in June that Washington’s key financial objectives regarding Cuba could be met through Section 5b, which among other things would keep Havana from obtaining private dollar remittances, as well as blocking money it was seeking through litigation.44 Anticipating that Canada and other allies would protest the extraterritorial aspects of these new controls, Chase recommended that general licence exemptions be granted for all subsidiaries except banks and maritime shipping companies.45 For the Kennedy administration, the timing of these new

43Department of State. American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1963, 277-278.
45Ibid.
measures was more politically advantageous than before. In finally implementing the tough actions that leading figures in Congress, as well as the Treasury Department had long been advocating, the White House could reassure the American public that it had not relaxed its resolve against Castro, something Kennedy knew would be important to voters in Florida and in the south in the upcoming 1964 Presidential election. While not explicit in the documentation, Kennedy was likely counting on a more restrained response from Lester Pearson than from John Diefenbaker. The State Department was instructed to give Canada a mere 24 hours notice before the measures were publicly announced, and thus the Canadian embassy in Washington was informed of the coming announcement on July 7.46

Needless to say, the Canadian government did not receive this news gladly, especially having fought hard against the blocking controls for nearly three years, and until this point successfully. Canadian-American relations were then in the midst of another unexpected storm – the United States’ sharp reaction against Finance Minister Gordon’s June budget. Interpreted as nationalist and anti-American in tone, Gordon’s fiscal plan imposed new taxes on foreign investment, which Washington believed had singled it out, as it was by far the largest source of foreign investment in Canada. From the American perspective, the new Liberal government, despite all its friendlier campaign rhetoric, was showing itself little different than its predecessor. The new Finance Minister had for some years been making pronouncements about excessive American influence on the Canadian economy. In short succession, Kennedy responded with a new tax on capital raised abroad, an action Pearson considered as retaliatory.

No overt linkage between the Cuban Assets Controls’ unveiling and the Gordon budget is apparent in the record. Nonetheless, the latter did little to foster sympathy in Washington towards Canadian complaints about extraterritoriality and related issues. As Ambassador Ritchie confided to his diary, the Americans were “intensely irritated” by Gordon’s budget, adding “things were never the same between us and the Americans” in its aftermath.47 While at the time the noise over taxes and investments drowned out the Cuban Assets Control measures, over the

long term the latter were a more tenacious bilateral irritant than any official in either country could have predicted. By mid-summer, the Hyannisport honeymoon was clearly over.48

In a July 8 briefing from State’s Deputy Coordinator for Cuban Affairs Robert Hurwitch, Denis Harvey, Canada’s Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce, was told that Canada would not be affected by the new measures as no US banks in Canada had dealings with Cuba, and Canada did not have ships in the Cuba trade. 49 These facts were indeed correct, but the problem lay with Cuba-connected US dollar holdings in Canadian banks, along with insurance companies that also operated in the United States.50 After the Royal Bank had complied with a Treasury Department request to provide the value of its Cuban-linked US dollar deposits, the latter subsequently blocked a similar quantity of dollars in so-called cover accounts in the Royal’s New York branch.51 After learning that the New York branch had received a memo ordering even the Royal Bank’s Head Office (then in Montreal) to block US dollar accounts attributed to Cuba, the Bank’s Associate General Manager protested vehemently to US Consul General Jerome Gaspard that the “US government had no jurisdiction over what a Canadian bank does outside the United States,” adding for good measure that Head Office had in fact already ordered its American branches to cease US dollar transactions for Cuban accounts. 52 The position of Treasury’s Foreign Assets Control section was that these measures covered US dollar accounts connected to Cuba at the Canadian Head Office.

Treasury Secretary Douglas Dillon admitted to the NSC Standing Group on Cuba on July 16 that “they [the Canadians] were most unhappy about this limitation on their sovereignty,” and recommended the practice be dropped, a position seconded by Attorney General Robert Kennedy. 53 The Treasury Department’s legal office opposed granting Canada an exception. Rejecting the special relationship notion, the Department’s lawyers insisted that

49 Memorandum of Conversation “Imposition of Blocking Controls on Cuba,” July 8, 1963 (Limited Official Use), RG 59, Central Files 1963, Box 3635, Folder STR 9-1 CUBA, NARA
50 See Kirk and McKenna Canada-Cuba Relations, Ch 1. For the history of the Royal Bank in Cuba see Duncan McDowall, Quick to the Frontier: Canada’s Royal Bank (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993). This history does not discuss the Cuban Assets Control issue and the Bank’s response at all
52 Letter from US Consul General in Montreal (Jerome Gaspard) to Ivan B. White US Embassy Ottawa, July 10, 1963 (Unclassified) in RG 84 United States Montreal Consulate General Records, Entry UD 2211, Box 5, Folder “STR Strategic Trade Control”, NARA
53 Summary Record of the NSC Standing Group Meeting, 10/63, July 16, 1963 (Secret). Obtained online from the Declassified Documents Reference System (DDRS) Doc. CK3100487081
Canada was being treated like every other country, and that banks in Switzerland were being similarly asked about Cuba related dollar accounts. The Treasury lawyers argued that granting exemptions would encourage foreign owned banks to transfer US money out of the country at will, without concern for exchange and other controls.\(^{54}\) The General Counsel of the Treasury explained to Harvey on July 25 his belief that Canada had misunderstand the measures, and noted other countries had for years accepted similar US controls regarding the People’s Republic of China.\(^{55}\) Harvey responded that Washington was freezing Canadian, not Cuban, bank assets. Not only did he find this offensive in principle, as he had written Norman Robertson a week earlier, but also pointed out that if Canadian banks complied with Treasury’s requests to disclose specific details on Cuban related accounts, they would be violating Canadian law protecting the absolute confidentiality of such information.\(^{56}\)

Dillon’s suggestion of an exemption at the July 16 NSC meeting was not in the end offered to the Canadian government, likely on the advice of government counsels. Describing the two neighbours as far apart on this issue, External Affairs Minister Martin suggested the Cuban Assets Controls be included on the agenda of the next joint economic meetings scheduled for September in Washington.\(^{57}\) In the meantime, on July 31 Dillon gave A.F Plumptre, then the Assistant Deputy Minister of Finance, a mixed message. On the one hand, the Treasury Secretary highlighted the importance the United States government placed on obtaining compliance with these measures. Yet at the same time, Dillon hinted to Plumptre that Canadian non-compliance would represent an important break from this pattern – in other words he left

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56 For letter to Robertson see Letter from the Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce (Harvey) to the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs (Robertson), Re: Cuban Assets Control, July 16, 1963 in RG 20, Vol. 746, File 7-637-3, LAC  Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington DC to Dept. of External Affairs, no 2398 July 26, 1963, (Confidential), in RG 20, Vol.746, File 7-637-3, pt. 1, LAC

Canada a loophole to resist, an action that might ultimately set new precedents. As on previous occasions, Washington faced an internal clash of interests: on the one hand, it wanted to maximize Castro’s economic difficulties. Yet at the same time, it hoped to avoid problems with Canada and other allies. Treasury’s lawyers told National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy: “if they [the Canadians] choose to make something important of it, it contains the ammunition for a major political attack on us by Mr. Gordon et al.”

This diplomatic storm soon fizzled. When Gordon went to Washington in August for a testy meeting on the budget with Under Secretary of State George Ball, the conversation focussed on broader differences, without mention of the Cuban measures. The Finance Minister stated that while difficulties existed, he sought to reassure Ball that “Canada would always be found on the same side and backing the USA ‘when the chips were down’.” Ball responded, according to his note taker, with “unusual warmth” on how Canadian-American relations were “amongst the most difficult,” as each party “made life difficult for the other.”

When the annual economic meetings were finally held in September, the Cuban Assets Controls were also absent from the major discussions, with the Americans deciding the issue had better be put aside pending a committee review. In a speech on broader international issues, Secretary Rusk mentioned Cuba only in passing, repeating Kennedy’s two core objectives. He did not mention Canadian policy at all. Canadian officials took the view that “relations between our two countries are of such overriding importance to both of us that we

60 Memorandum of Conversation, “Discussions between Mr. Walter Gordon and Mr. George Ball on Canada-US Economic Relationship,” August 2, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 6057, File 50316-8-40, pt. 1.1, LAC. For the US version see Memorandum of Conversation, “Meeting between Under Secretary Ball and Canadian Finance Minister Walter Gordon”, August 2, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 59, The Secretary and Under Secretary’s Memoranda of Conversation [filed chronologically], Entry 1566, Box 27, NARA
61 Ibid.
should do our best to keep our Cuban policies from impairing these relations.” 64 One way to do so was to identify areas where Canada could still cooperate, such as offering the Americans reports from its Havana mission, and keeping them informed about developments of interest in trade and civil aviation.65 Cuba in general, and extraterritoriality in particular, were among the contentious issues assigned for review by a new bilateral study group that was set up to develop principles for the more effective management of Canadian-American differences. Chaired jointly by former ambassadors Arnold Heeney and Livingston Merchant, their report would be issued in July 1965.66

Cuba’s absence from the agenda of the Joint Economic meetings did not mean the subject was absent from the minds of Kennedy and Rusk. The same week as the conference, the Pearson Cabinet approved a deal to sell surplus wheat to the Soviet Union, an action the United States was itself considering.67 Washington’s concern was that the Soviet Union then intended to sell back a portion of this grain to Cuba. 68 A CIA assessment highlighted that Canada had segregated the Cuban portion from the general wheat deal, and refused to grant the Soviets credit for this portion of the sale; it insisted that Moscow pay Canada in cash for the portion it intended to send on to Havana.69 This arrangement satisfied Kennedy. While his preference was that no Canadian wheat would reach Cuba, at least Ottawa was doing so in a way that cost the Castro government some foreign exchange. The following January, when President Lyndon Johnson prepared to receive Pearson in Washington, the State Department encouraged the new President to thank the Prime Minister for “the distinction made by Canada in requiring 100% cash for wheat to Cuba included in its sale to the USSR.”70

Into the fall of 1963, Treasury requests for detailed Canadian bank information regarding Cuba related accounts remained a loose end. The Canadian embassy in Washington

64 US Canada Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs; Review of the International Situation” [undated but September 1963] (No classification marking), RG 25, Vol. 6057, File 50316-8-40, pt. 1.3, LAC
66 The origins of this initiative are discussed in Donaghy, 32-33.
68 Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington to Ottawa, no. 2967, September 17, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 6057, File 50316-8-40, pt. 1.2, LAC
left a note with the State Department at the September Joint Economic meeting, requesting that the matter of Canadian bank accounts be discussed at a government to government level, rather than having the Treasury Department directly approaching the banks. The issue remained unresolved after a brief mid level follow up meeting in October, with both sides attesting that “important points of principle” were at stake. Ambassador Ritchie sought to show the Americans that Canada was not alone in its non-compliance with their requests by sharing banking industry reports showing that the Swiss and other governments had also not replied to similar American requests. Griffith Johnson, an Assistant Deputy Secretary of State, rather sheepishly admitted his Department had primarily relegated the matter to Treasury. Hoping the issue would now fade, Ritchie advised Martin and Robertson not to push the Americans further, and Martin, Gordon and the Governor of the Bank of Canada all agreed “to let sleeping dogs lie.” Temporarily quieting down, with Ottawa’s blessing, the Royal Bank continued refusing to provide the Americans with details on its holdings in Canada of its Cuba linked US dollar accounts.

However, the issue did not go away, but resurfaced in the summer of 1964. In June, a representative of the New York Federal Reserve Bank inquired of the New York offices of the Royal Bank as to whether its Head Office in Montreal had forwarded documentation about US dollar holdings in Canada connected to Cuban interests. Again, the Bank of Canada replied that the issue was a government-to-government matter, which should be referred to the State Department. With the Royal Bank being given a July 10 deadline for compliance, Ottawa made an urgent appeal to the State Department. In response, the latter rescinded the deadline, and moved the issue back to diplomatic channels. In the meantime, hearings were held in

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72 Memorandum of Conversation “Cover Accounts and Other United States Canadian Economic Problems,” October 14, 1963 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59, Central Files 1963, Box 3635, Folder STR 9-1 CUBA, NARA
76 Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington to the Department of External Affairs to, no. 2500, July 10, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 13837, File 36-18-2-CUBA pt. 1, LAC
Washington on the Cuban Assets Control, resulting in a requirement that the Treasury Department obtain a census of all Cuban linked assets in the United States. After Canadian and US diplomats worked out a proposal for handling the census, the Canadian Inspector General of Banks advised the Royal Bank, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce and the Bank of Nova Scotia to respond to US Department of Treasury requests by attaching a letter to their requested form, declaring all assets in their New York agencies to be “the sole and exclusive property” of the banks. Technically, the banks responded to the census, but neither they nor the Canadian government would budge on the sanctity of bank account holder confidentiality.

The banks issue finally faded in late 1964, but the core disagreement over extraterritoriality continued for some time. State Department officials agreed to explore how to avoid Cuban Assets Controls’ “side effects” in Canada. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs Philip H. Tresize confirmed that divisions existed in Washington over the issue, with the hawks being the Treasury Department and the State Department’s Coordinator of Cuban Affairs office, both of which sought “every possible step to harass the Cubans.” The doves on the other hand were in the State Department’s European section, which handled relations with Canada and other NATO countries that had been angered by the outside reach of the US controls – these officials supported exemptions. Neither faction was completely happy with the compromise reached in the 1965 Heeney-Merchant report, which advocated the routine granting of licences to Canadian subsidiaries for sales to Cuba, but failed to resolve the more fundamental problem.

While the Cuban Assets Controls remained Ottawa’s number one irritant with the United States on Cuba, the equivalent for the United States was Canadian trade in machinery and spare parts. Although the low export volumes of such goods minimized this problem for 1963, Canada’s trade volume with Cuba did increase that year, with exports rising from the 1962 figure of $10.9 million to $16.4 million, and imports rising much more dramatically, from $2.8 million to $13.0 million. The export increase was largely on account of Havana’s buyback of Canadian wheat from the Soviet Union, while Canada’s imports from Cuba mostly consisted of

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sugar, fish products and tobacco, the former of which Havana was especially eager to sell Canada. Still, on the whole the Cuban portion of Canada’s total trade remained small, with the net balance still favouring Canada. American officials acknowledged that Canadian trade with communist countries, including Cuba, amounted to less than two per cent of its total. In the six months between Hyannisport and Kennedy’s assassination, details on Canada’s Cuba trade appear infrequently in both Canadian and US records. This did not mean the issue was completely ignored. At a high-level meeting on Cuba early in November, the CIA’s Desmond Fitzgerald, who had recently become the main overseer of its anti-Castro operations, commented “the economic denial program would be more effective if the Canadians were willing to cooperate. Up to now they have not gone along with U.S. efforts, and they are supplying many items essential to Cuban economy.” Not singling out Canada alone, Fitzgerald added that Great Britain and Spain had acted similarly. While adding that the overall value of western exports to Cuba had declined somewhat, the CIA official believed that still too many free world commodities were reaching the island.

On the other hot-button aspect of Canada’s Cuba trade – the trans-shipment of US origin goods to Cuba, there was also little new activity to report. Canadian practices and controls were by then well established, and the United States government was generally satisfied at Ottawa’s diligence in preventing such occurrences. In early June, the Pearson Cabinet reaffirmed the Diefenbaker prohibitions on exports to Cuba, with the exception of US goods that Washington might agree to licence – essentially nil in 1963. Ottawa would make no adjustments on this policy for more than a decade. American officials still watched for breaches. When a few US goods did get through to Cuba because of a customs mishap in October, some in the White House speculated on whether or not they should view this incident as indicative of an impending

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79 Data taken from multi-year statistical tables on Canadian Cuban Trade from the Department of Trade and Commerce and listed in Memorandum from Acting Director, Latin America Division to Regional Manager, Regina, April 7, 1970, in RG 20, Vol. 1691, File 810-C6-1, pt. 10, LAC
80 See Memorandum from Intelligence and Research Bureau (George C. Denney) to Acting Secretary of State, “Canadian Trade Patterns,” Research Memorandum REU-67, November 22, 1963 (Unclassified) in Records of the Policy Planning Council, Subject Files 1963-1973, RG 59, Entry A1 5041, Box 10, File “Canada,” NARA
Canadian policy change, - a speculation quickly confirmed as negative. Canada would arouse little American attention and irritation in that regard until the end of the year, when President Johnson decided it was time to turn up the heat on free-world trade with Cuba.

Canada was also fortunate not to be in the sights of another issue monitored closely by President Kennedy - free world shipping to Cuba. Already the focus of much attention on Capitol Hill and the White House in the weeks immediately before the missile crisis, concern about such shipping continued apace in 1963 and 1964, with New York Republican Senator Kenneth Keating leading the charge. An influential Senator who claimed to have known about the Soviet missiles before their October 1962 discovery, Keating had the President’s attention. What the Senator wanted was an airtight embargo of Cuba by all NATO countries in trade, air links and maritime shipping – the latter being Havana’s primary means of obtaining Soviet weapons and heavy machinery. Keating wanted United States’ ports closed to all ships and shipping lines that traded with Cuba. In response to this pressure, Kennedy signed NSAM 220 on February 5. While less extreme than Keating’s proposal, this directive nonetheless authorized the blacklisting and barring from American ports of any ship that had visited Cuba since late 1962.

Even before this measure, the evidence indicated that American pressure in reducing maritime traffic to the island, especially from the so-called Free World, had been highly effective. The CIA reported that as of mid-January 1963, 60 percent of ships arriving at Cuban ports flew the Soviet flag, twice as many as before the missile crisis. As for vessels originating from non-communist countries, 75 per cent of those sailing to Cuba had been already chartered to the Soviet bloc, and thus were not flying their native flags. The four predominant non-bloc

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83 Memorandum from Alexis Johnson to McGeorge Bundy “Canadian Cooperation in Control of Shipments of US Origin Commodities to Cuba”, November 18, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 59 Subject Numeric Files 1963, Box 3635, File STR 10 CUBA 1/11/1963, NARA
85 Position Paper handed to Director of Central Intelligence from Senator Kenneth Keating, “Position Paper on Cuba”, February 9, 1963 (no classification marking) in CIA Crest Database, Document CIA-RDP80B01676R002900270016-7, NARA. Now also accessible online through the “Best of CREST” search engine on the CIA FOIA website http://www.foia.ucia.gov/search_archive.asp
countries concerned were the United Kingdom, Greece, Lebanon and Sweden. Kennedy requested to see monthly statistical reports on shipping to Cuba, complete with the name and country of flag of all ships docking in its ports. While not specifically identified, it is most probable that the Canadian embassy in Havana was one of the sources of this information. None of the ships flew the Canadian flag, and Canada’s absence in this regard was noted and appreciated by the White House, and almost certainly gained it some favour.

Canada’s intelligence output from its diplomats in Havana continued to draw praise and appreciation from the Kennedy administration, especially as it largely supported both of his two core objectives on Cuba. Canadian data, as well as that from other NATO allies, was used in in the progress reports that the President had demanded concerning the Soviet missile withdrawal, and it offered valuable details on Soviet personnel still on the island, and on incoming cargoes from East bloc ships. Some CIA information cables from early 1963 explicitly identify “Ottawa” as a source for certain reports. Others, more cryptically attributed to “western diplomats”, almost certainly include Canadians among their number. The content of these reports are largely dry facts, such as the names of Soviet ships debarking at Cuban ports, physical descriptions of the cargo crates (indicative of their contents), and the number of persons present. As an example, an “Ottawa” sourced cable from March 1963 reported that the Soviet ship “Mikhail Kalinin” had left Havana with up to 500 Soviets of military age, but also reported that Soviet trucks were still seen moving around on the island. A month later, a similar report confirmed that the vessel had returned to transport more goods from the island, as well as to bring home personnel stationed at the Soviet military camp at Canimar near Matanzas. Similar intelligence cables are found in the Johnson administration’s records, such

89 Interview September 30, 2009 with John Graham, one time Consul at Canada’s embassy in Havana 1962 and formerly head of DEA’s Latin American division.
as a February 1964 report observing the unloading of crates from a Soviet ship that appeared to contain parts for MIG aircraft destined for the Cuban air force.\textsuperscript{92} A CIA aggregate assessment covering the second quarter of 1963 reported that “the British and Canadian embassies in Havana have provided extremely useful information on a number of aspects of the political, economic and military situations.”\textsuperscript{93}

George Kidd’s reporting on the internal dynamics of the Cuban regime was of especially high interest in the White House, and received direct Presidential attention. Kidd and other western diplomats were finally gaining regular access to Fidel Castro that summer.\textsuperscript{94} Following one such meeting in July, American officials asked the Canadian whether or not he saw any potential for genuine dialogue between Washington and Havana. The Cuban leader, likely expecting his comments to be forwarded in some fashion to the White House, had told Kidd that he had “no antipathy” for the President, but doubted any meaningful dialogue could occur before the 1964 presidential elections. Kidd reported that Castro believed time was on his side for better relations with the United States.\textsuperscript{95} Whether Kennedy factored in this opinion in commencing secret backchannel diplomacy with Cuba that fall is uncertain. What is clear is that officials in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations regularly sought Canadian assessments on Castro’s health and mood, as well as the state his country’s internal politics, and likely used such information in evaluating next steps.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{92} CIA Information Report TDCS 3/659 796, February 27 1964 (Secret) in National Security Files, Box 32, Country Files: Cuba: TDCSs [CIA Intelligence Information Cable], vol. 1, 11/63-6/64, Lyndon B. Johnson Library


\textsuperscript{96} As examples - for queries Castro’s health see Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington DC to Dept. of External Affairs no. 1762, June 14, 1966 (Secret) in RG 25 Vol. 8943, File 20-CUBA-1-4, pt. 3 LAC. For discussion of Cuban intentions towards US see Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington DC to the Department of External Affairs no. 3254, September 10, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25 Vol. 10044, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 3. LAC
At least some intelligence information also flowed in the other direction. US intelligence assessments on Cuba, especially from the State Department’s Intelligence and Research Bureau, appear regularly in External Affairs and National Defence files on Cuba from the 1963-1965 period. US intelligence officials occasionally sought Canadian input on finished assessments, with the Canadian conclusions not always squaring precisely with those made in Washington. For example, Canadian officials were invited to review a National Intelligence Estimate assessing the impact on the Cuban regime of the October 1963 Hurricane Flora disaster. Canada was more skeptical than the Americans that Castro’s control had been significantly weakened. In a 1966 policy paper, External Affairs Latin American chief A.J. Pick wrote explicitly that American intelligence assessments on Cuba were based largely on information supplied by Canada’s Havana mission. Both countries also exchanged substantial information with the British, judging by the quantity of British Foreign Office reports and Embassy despatches found within the files of this time period. Canadian reports on Cuban economic and cultural developments also appear frequently in the British files, suggesting that London relied on Canadian diplomats for their own assessments in this regard.

Along with the Havana embassy reports, the CIA also received RCMP intelligence reports on Cuba-bound air traffic at Gander, with the Royal Canadian Navy providing US Naval Intelligence with similar data on Canada-Cuba maritime traffic. Cuban defectors landing in Canada were prized as intelligence sources, with such individuals being first debriefed by the RCMP, then by the CIA. In a single night in November 1964, 45 Cubans defected from a

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97 For examples see US Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research: Research Memorandum “Castro’s Second Visit to Moscow: History Repeats Itself” January 24, 1964 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 8849, File 20-CUBA-1-3, pt. 2, LAC.
98 See Memorandum from Defence Liaison (2) Division (J.J. McCardle) to Secretary of Joint Intelligence Committee (A. Malyshheff, RCN) “US SNIE 85-3-63 dated Nov 15, 1963: The Effects of Hurricane Flora on Cuba,” January 13, 1964 (Secret) in RG 24, Vol. 21309, File CSC 2438:1, pt. 5, LAC
100 A general comment based on the frequent occurrences of British despatches and telegrams in External Affairs and State Department files. For examples where Canadian reports appear frequently in British Foreign Office files see FO 371/ 162322 on Foreign Office Files for Cuba pt. 3, Cuban Missile Crisis, Adam Matthews Publications, Reel 25 and FO 371/ 162439, ibid, Reel 28. (Originals in UK National Archives)
101 Memorandum from Alexis Johnson to McGeorge Bundy “Canadian Cooperation in Control of Shipments of US Origin Commodities to Cuba”, November 18, 1963 (Confidential) RG 59 Subject Numeric Files 1963, File STR 10 CUBA 1/11/1963, Box 3635, NARA
Czechoslovak airlines flight during made a technical stop at the airport.\textsuperscript{102} Former CIA analyst Brian Latell indicates that one of the most important defectors and sources on Cuban intelligence fled Cuba via Gander, before eventually moving to the United States and becoming a crucial CIA asset.\textsuperscript{103} Another defector, a Cubana pilot who took refuge at Gander in early 1963, apparently provided the Americans with important details on Cuba’s shipping of East bloc arms to Venezuelan leftists.\textsuperscript{104} As the next chapter will show, this connection sparked a key international incident late in the year.

Cuba related civil aviation matters still occupied the considerable attention of both Canadian and American officials during this period, as the movement of aircraft, persons and cargo to and from Cuba remained of special interest to the United States. The latter’s concerns pertained to frequency, routes taken, and the nature of the cargos transported. Aviation was linked to both of Kennedy’s primary concerns of Cuban Sovietization and subversion. On the former, Canadian airports were vital intermediate points on the long air routes between the island and its Soviet and East Bloc sponsors. In 1963, the State Department observed that such traffic was increasing. Airport flight logs forwarded by Ottawa to the United States government recorded that on its Prague-Havana route, the Czechoslovak airline made seventeen landings at Gander during May 1963, nearly doubling the April figure; the number would rise to twenty five by September.\textsuperscript{105} ICAO commitments limited Ottawa and Washington’s capacity to stop such traffic, although Canadian officials regularly heard from their American counterparts that fewer flights would be better.

The Kennedy administration was facing domestic pressure on the routing of such flights, especially from the more vocal opponents of Castro in Congress, such as Florida’s Republican Congressman William C. Cramer and his conservative Democratic Party colleague, Paul G. Rodgers. Both men zeroed in on the expanding Canada-Cuba flight traffic and in particular,

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\textsuperscript{105} US Embassy Ottawa Airgram no. A-11, July 3, 1963 (Unclassified) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1963, Box 3343, File AV 9 CUBA-CZECH, NARA. For the August and September reports, see US Embassy Ottawa Airgram no. A-392, October 31, 1963 (Unclassified) in the same folder.
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overflights of United States territory. Periodic Cubana and World Wide Airways charter flights continued, and despite being infrequent, they served as a reminder to the Americans of Canada’s non-participation in the embargo. Speaking in the House in May 1963, Cramer lambasted his own government, as well as that of Canada, for undermining the isolation of Cuba by permitting Cubana and other such flights to traverse United States territory.\textsuperscript{106} Although Cramer erred in his understanding of aviation rules, his complaints provided an impetus for Washington to discourage such flights. At the same time, the White House and State Department realized that barring all Cuban registered civil aircraft from American airspace left the government open to charges of hypocrisy. Not only would such a ban be contrary to ICAO regulations, but American commercial jetliners had regularly been overflying Cuba en route to destinations further south. After a brief hiatus because of the missile crisis, in June 1963 Washington reasserted its right in principle to fly into Cuban airspace, although alternative routes were now increasingly preferred.\textsuperscript{107} The United States was fully in its jurisdiction to tightly restrict the access corridor for Cuba connected flights, and it could require any non-scheduled flights to land at a designated US airport (primarily New York’s Idlewild) to undergo a search for prohibited goods. The US embassy in Ottawa informed External Affairs officials that the United States sought “to harass Cuba’s air communications as much as possible.”\textsuperscript{108} Washington was mindful that the Canadian Cabinet had not rescinded the inspection of all Cuba bound aircraft at Gander, and the State Department privately acknowledged that these efforts served as a “valuable intelligence and harassment service.”\textsuperscript{109} Yet the secrecy of such efforts prevented Kennedy and Rusk from using them as examples to silence the likes of Cramer, Rodgers, Keating and other critics on Capitol Hill.

Also that spring, the United States redoubled its efforts to obstruct Havana’s efforts to take delivery of its Soviet made Ilyushin IL-18 aircraft. Canada and other western countries had already helped make this delivery difficult, and by April only one out of the three such aircraft

\textsuperscript{107} Memorandum from the Economic Division (O.G. Stoner) to the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs (Robertson), June 7, 1963 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 5049, File 2444-40, pt. 14. LAC
\textsuperscript{108} Memorandum from the Economic Division (O.G. Stoner) to the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs (Robertson), June 7, 1963 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 5049, File 2444-40, pt. 14. LAC.
\textsuperscript{109} Telegram from US Embassy in Reykjavik to Department of State, no. 296, April 1, 1963 (Confidential) in National Security Files, Box 43, Country Files: Cuba: Cables, March 15-April 19, 1963, Folder 3, John F. Kennedy Library (JFKL). On UPA microfilm John F. Kennedy National Security files (NSF), Latin America Supplement 1 Cuba, Reel 6.
Cuba had procured from Moscow had successfully arrived. Havana resumed its efforts to bring home the other two airplanes.\footnote{110} For the United States, preventing Havana from readily obtaining such replacement craft was another means of undermining its economy, as well as curtailing its Sovietization and frustrating its objectives abroad. Washington was well aware that the spare parts shortages resulting from its embargo had made it increasingly difficult for Cubana airlines to keep aloft its aging Britannia turboprops. For the Cuban government, the acquisition of Soviet made alternatives was therefore all the more urgent.\footnote{111} The IL-18s made the agenda of NATO’s May 1963 meetings, and Washington’s goal, according to Dean Rusk was:

[to] harass Cubana to maximum extent and thereby limit Cuba’s means of providing travel access to Latin America for subversives, agents and agitators. US desires [to] prevent use of Cuban IL-18 aircraft on international services and thus force Cuban [to] rely on still inadequately maintained Britannias.\footnote{112}

It would ask NATO member states either to prohibit or delay such developments.\footnote{113}

Along with Iceland, Portugal and Mexico, Cuba approached Ottawa in March for permission to land the IL-18s in Canada on their delivery voyages, as well to subsequently allow an “experimental” Havana-Montreal run using the Soviet made craft, so that the latter could be included on the roster of aircraft used in cargo charter flights. For the Canadian government, technical landings by IL-18s on the Havana-Prague route was one thing, but their use on Canadian-Cuban flights was another.\footnote{114} Citing “foreign policy implications” (the United States reaction), Under Secretary Robertson advised the Air Transport Board to reject this request

\footnote{110} Memorandum from the Director of Intelligence and Research (Roger Hilsman) to Secretary of State Rusk, “Civil Air and Shipping into Cuba” January 25, 1963 (Secret) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1963, File POL 31-1 CUBA-US, NARA. On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal and Foreign Affairs 1963-1966, Reel 6 and also Telegram from Department of State to US Embassy, Bonn no. 1779, February 1, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1963, Box 3879, File POL 31-1-CUBA, NARA.

\footnote{111} Telegram from Canadian NATO Delegation Paris to External Affairs, no. 1214, May 29, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5049, File 2444-40, pt. 14, LAC.


\footnote{113} Telegram from Canadian NATO Delegation Paris to External Affairs, no. 1214, May 29, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5049, File 2444-40, pt. 14, LAC.

\footnote{114} Telegram from the Department of External Affairs to the Canadian Delegation, NATO, no. E-924, May 31, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 4987, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 7, LAC.
pending more information. This approach aligned well with advice the Americans gave Canada during the NATO meetings. Knowing of its neighbour’s propensity for sticking as close as possible to the letter of its international agreements, American officials suggested that Canada’s Transportation Department insist on obtaining airworthiness certification for the IL-18s before approving their use at Canadian airports. In fact, Ottawa told the Americans it had already made the certification matter known to the Cubans back in March, and had presented them with a very detailed list of technical specifics that required review to ensure conformity to Canadian safety standards—details it suspected Havana would have difficulty obtaining. Such a review was in fact standard practice in Canada for new aircraft not previously so certified.

The United States so valued the Canadian approach that Rusk asked Ottawa’s permission to use it as a template for other countries such as Mexico to follow. In September, using the standard ICAO arguments, the Pearson government informed Washington it would in principle allow IL-18s technical landing rights, but not their use in bilateral charter flights. Transport Canada sent Cubana two letters in May on the specification requirements; by late 1964, it had yet to receive the data from Havana, and External Affairs officials doubted they would see it in the immediate future. Once again, the Canadian government was able to firmly hold to its treaty principles and standards, while simultaneously using them effectively as a convenient cover to placate the United States. The realities behind Ottawa’s actions were neither lost on American nor Cuban officials.

One aspect regarding its civil air links to Cuba in which Canada was unequivocally on the side of the United States, and all too willing to cooperate, concerned any connections

115 Letter from Under Secretary of State for External Affairs (N.A. Robertson) to Chairman of Air Transportation Board (P.Y. Davoud), March 22, 1963 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 4987, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 7, LAC
117 Telegram from the US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 1579, May 29, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1963, Box 3343, File AV 6 CUBA, NARA
118 Telegram from the US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 1703, June 21, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1963, Box 3343, File AV 6 CUBA, NARA
119 Telegram from Secretary of State to US Embassy, Ottawa, No. 1314, June 17, 1963 (Confidential) RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1963, Box, 3343, File AV 6 CUBA, NARA
120 Memorandum of Conversation between John R. Sharpe, First Secretary of Canadian Embassy, Washington DC and Michael H. Styles, “Cubana IL-18 Flights to Canada”, September 23, 1963 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59 Subject-Numeric Files 1963, Box 3343, Folder AV 6 CUBA, NARA
between air travel and revolutionary propaganda and activities. In late October 1963, Canadian officials promptly informed the State Department upon learning from the Havana Embassy that a Cubana flight landing at Gander contained “volunteers” bound for Algeria, a country Cuba was then supporting in a border conflict with neighbouring Morocco. Denouncing such a flight as “deplorable,” Ottawa requested from Havana a full explanation, highly annoyed that it would exploit its landing rights at Gander for military and subversive purposes under the cover of a “non-scheduled” civil flight. Formal military or “state aircraft” did not fall under the ICAO convention, and either overflights or landings required specific permissions from the host government. Keen to show good faith in Washington, Under Secretary Robertson requested the advice of the State Department, as well as the British Foreign Office, on this matter. The Americans concluded that any aircraft carrying military personnel made it a state, rather than civilian flight, although the British were less conclusive, in no small part as they also ferried soldiers overseas in civilian aircraft, although in such circumstances they did request the appropriate permissions. Canadian officials informed the Americans that in the future, they would treat all such flights as state aircraft.

The Algeria flight incident reinforced Ottawa’s commitment to inspecting Cuba-linked flights at Gander, and it was decided that eastbound Havana-Prague flights would now also be inspected, citing Cuba’s “improper” use of its civilian airline. Ambassador Cruz, who had spent several weeks back home, took nearly three months to reply to Ottawa’s queries about the incident. He denied Cuban involvement in North Africa, and reported that Foreign Minister Roa also knew nothing about this flight. The State Department, after receiving an External Affairs

123 Memorandum from Economic Division to Under Secretary “Cuban Flights to Algeria,” October 25, 1963 (Secret) in RG 25 Vol. 10044, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 1, NAC
126 Memorandum of Conversation “Landing of Cuban Aircraft at Gander carrying “Military Volunteers” December 3, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 59, Central Files 1963, Box 3343, File AV 6 CUBA, NARA
127 Letter from the Under Secretary of External Affairs (Robertson) to the Deputy Minister of Customs and Excise, Department of National Revenue (D. Sim), November 20, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10453, File 42-8-1-2-CUBA, pt. 1, LAC
128 Memorandum from Economic Division to Under Secretary “Cuban Flights to Algeria – October 1963,” January 17, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25 Vol. 10044, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 2, NAC
briefing on Cruz’s report, doubted the official Cuban response. Both Ottawa and Washington saw this incident as indicative that the Cuban government would at times push the envelope regarding its privileges in Canada. Similar concerns would reappear in the mid 1970s regarding Angola.

Also on the theme of containing subversion, Canada assisted the United States by monitoring and controlling efforts by students and political activists to reach the island. Kennedy was especially concerned about such travel, seeing Cuba as a center for revolutionary Marxist indoctrination and guerilla training. In February 1963, he directed his national security team bring to his attention reports on so-called subversive travel to Cuba, an initiative he assigned to General Krulak’s Sub Committee. In particular, Kennedy wanted to control such travel by Latin American radicals, believing that they would be especially susceptible to Castroism. The CIA reported that over 6000 from the region travelled to Cuba in 1962, with potentially 2000 being indoctrinated and perhaps trained in guerilla warfare. The President approved a multifaceted program on March 8 to frustrate and limit politically motivated travel to Cuba. Critical to its success was cooperation between American and foreign intelligence and law enforcement agencies. Among its objectives were to:

1. Intensify U.S. intelligence efforts in each country to identify persons who have travelled, or intend to travel, to Cuba, and report selected information promptly to the host government, as consistent with our own intelligence program, and the requirement to protect our sources.

2. Intensify our action in making available to each country selected intelligence concerning the extent, nature and implications of Cuban subversive activities, as consistent with the requirement to protect our own intelligence program.

While principally aimed at other Latin American countries, the program also called for foreign cooperation regarding “administrative impediments and harassment” on Cuba-bound

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129 Memorandum of Conversation “Cuban ‘Military’ Flights through Gander”, January 27, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 2072, File POL 17 4 CUBA CAN, NARA
travelers and aircraft. If possible, they were encouraged to pass laws prohibiting travel to Cuba. To accomplish this, US agencies sought passenger manifests for flights to and from Cuba, especially from Mexico, then still the most accessible transit point by air for North American travelers. Mexican officials were asked to photograph and fingerprint all travelers to and from Cuba.\textsuperscript{133} The CIA kept monthly statistics on the number of travelers to the island from Latin American countries, with their lists categorizing separately so-called subversives from diplomats or other individuals having legitimate reasons for such travel.\textsuperscript{134} The Agency noted in October 1963 that Mexican compliance with US requests was having the desired effect, as the number of visitors to Cuba was then roughly half the figure for the same time period in 1962.\textsuperscript{135}

Canada’s lack of a direct passenger air service to Cuba shielded it from some of this more intrusive American pressure. However, Canadians were not untouched by Kennedy’s program. Vacation travel to Cuba was largely non-existent during this period, and those Canadians who did venture to Cuba did so out of commercial, journalistic, or political motives, often as part of organized tours. With the vast majority of interested travelers being well on the political left, and good portion thereof having pro-communist outlooks, Canadian and American authorities alike saw them as pliable to the influence of Havana’s propaganda and potential subversives. Virtually any Canadian travelling by air to Cuba had to go by way of Mexico City, where local officials almost certainly collected personal data on them and shared as such with American intelligence. Some Canadians suspected that this was happening as well. British Columbia MLA Cedric Cox, on the far left of the provincial NDP and still then very active in Vancouver’s Fair Play for Cuba Committee, complained to Howard Green late in January 1963 that Mexican authorities had confiscated his passport and photographed him while in transit

\begin{footnotes}
\item[133] Ibid.
\item[134] Memorandum from CIA William Wheeler Jr. to Chairman, Sub Committee on Cuban Subversion in Latin America “Air Travel of Latin Americans to Cuba in 1963” October 21, 1963 (Secret) in RG 59, Records of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, Entry A1 3165, Box 33, Folder, CSM – Communism – Subversion Travel (Subversive), NARA. For the distinction in categorizing “subversive travel” see Memorandum from R.M. Barta to Ward P. Allen, “Travel by Hemisphere Nationals to Cuba” March 5, 1963 (Secret) in the same folder. Note that Canada was not included in the list of hemispheric countries.
\item[135] Memorandum from CIA William Wheeler Jr. to Chairman, Sub Committee on Cuban Subversion in Latin America “Air Travel of Latin Americans to Cuba in 1963,” October 21, 1963 (Secret) in RG 59, Records of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, Entry A1 3165, Box 33, Folder, CSM – Communism – Subversion Travel (Subversive), NARA
\end{footnotes}
back from Cuba. The Canadian Embassy in Mexico City reported that while the Mexicans’ actions “may or may not have been legally justified”, they were tightly controlling non-diplomatic travel to Cuba to curtail the activities of “undesirable elements.”

Ottawa still refused to prohibit Canadian citizens from travelling to Cuba, but was at the same time sensitive that its more liberal travel policy might be misconstrued in the United States as passively enabling Havana’s revolutionary objectives. External Affairs and the RCMP asked the Havana embassy to report on Canadian visitors, especially those known to be on the left. As an example, in January 1963 representatives of several Canadian women’s groups, including the Voice of Women, the Congress of Canadian Women, and the United Jewish Peoples’ Order travelled to Havana for an international meeting. Ottawa definitely considered the latter two groups as either communist controlled or fellow travellers. Still smarting over American criticism for its performance during the missile crisis, Ottawa monitored carefully the words and movements of the delegates, lest it be further embarrassed and draw more bad press south of the border. The government had more leeway in March in refusing to allow Cubana airlines to pick up an all-Canadian tour group sponsored by the Canadian Friends of Latin America, also considered to be a communist front. It did not outright deny the group the right to travel to Cuba, but in refusing the Cubana flight, Ottawa in effect blocked the tour. The Department of External Affairs used the election campaign then underway as a justification for its refusal; however, more candid was its Latin American expert A.J. Pick, who argued that avoiding embarrassment in the United States outweighed restricting travel privileges for “this particular brand of Canadians” – offering unmistakeable evidence that senior External Affairs officials had

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137 Telegram from Canadian Embassy Mexico City to Department of External Affairs, no. 28, February 8, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5077, File 4568-40, pt. 11, LAC

138 See Memorandum from RCMP Assistant Commissioner for Security and Intelligence (J.R.W. Bordeleau) to Defence Liaison (2), January 10, 1963 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 8557, File 12351-M-40, pt. 1.1, LAC and Memorandum from RCMP Assistant Commissioner for Security and Intelligence (J.R.W. Bordeleau) to Defence Liaison (2), February 1, 1963 (Secret) in the same file.

little regard for pro-Castro activists. His boss Norman Robertson concurred, and Howard Green, in one of his last acts as Minister, rejected the flight.

Of greater concern in Ottawa than travel to Cuba by domestic radicals were ongoing efforts by like-minded Americans, who saw Canada as a potentially easy transit point. The same tour that the Diefenbaker government had thwarted by refusing an air charter attempted again to get to Cuba in June 1963. Learning of this effort, Robertson’s Assistant Edgar Ritchie reassured Ambassador Butterworth that Ottawa had received no new Cuban requests to dispatch a charter flight for the students. He promised to inform the US embassy should such a request be forthcoming, and like its predecessor, the Liberal government would not allow Canadian airports to facilitate third country travel. When in August Havana requested permission to ferry returning students to Montreal, External Affairs officials promptly alerted the State Department, and Paul Martin readily supported Washington in refusing such a request. Suspecting that some returning students might enter Canada on flights from third countries, Under Secretary George Ball instructed Butterworth to encourage Canada to adopt strict criteria before admitting them to Canada. The Department of Citizenship and Immigration instructed officials at Gander not to allow CSA or Cubana passengers to exit the aircraft, except in “overriding humanitarian considerations.”

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141 Memorandum from Under Secretary of External Affairs (Robertson) to the Minister (Green), “Charter Flight to Cuba”, March 18, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 5077, File 4568-40, pt. 12, LAC and Memorandum from Under Secretary of External Affairs (Robertson) to Chairman of Transportation Board (P.Y. Davoud), March 19, 1963 (Confidential) in the same file.
143 Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 168, August 1, 1963 (Confidential) in National Security Files, Box 45, Country Files: Cuba: Subjects: Americans Traveling to Cuba, American Students 8/63, John F. Kennedy Library (JFKL). On UPA microfilm John F. Kennedy National Security files (NSF), Latin America Supplement 1 Cuba, Reel 7. See also Memorandum from Gordon Chase to McGeorge Bundy, “American Students in Cuba,” August 8, 1963 (Confidential) in the same folder and on the same reel.
145 Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs to Acting Director of Immigration, Dept. Of Citizenship and Immigration “American Students in Cuba” August 23, 1963 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol 4987, File 72-AGS-40, pt. 8, LAC and also Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 280, August 23, 1963 (Confidential) in National Security Files, Box 45, Country Files: Cuba: Subjects, Americans Traveling to
The American students took a circuitous trans-Atlantic route from New York to Western Europe, Prague and finally Havana, although one was reported to have boarded a Europe-bound Trans Canada Airlines flight in Montreal.\textsuperscript{146} Canadian officials obtained the passenger manifest of the June 29 Prague to Havana flight during its refuelling in Gander, and forwarded it to State Department officials ten days later. Listing the names and citizenship of the passengers, the majority were American, although among their number were Germans, Poles, Cubans, one Romanian and one Argentine – none were Canadian.\textsuperscript{147} According to the CIA, the American visitors received “red carpet treatment and [were] lionized by Castro’s press and radio.”\textsuperscript{148} Ambassador Kidd cynically described the whole event as a propaganda exercise for naive students. Given the highly controlled and sanitized tour of Cuba that the students received, Kidd added despite their purported objectivity, the students would be disinclined to “bite the hands of their hosts,” especially after enjoying such a lavish reception.\textsuperscript{149}

President Kennedy was highly irked by this student trip. As none of the students had passports approved for travel to Cuba, their action amounted to a flagrant disregard for the United States’ travel policy.\textsuperscript{150} Determined to take a hard line by shaming the ringleaders, the United States government still hoped to gain useful intelligence from inside informants, as well as insight through a debriefing of so-called “babes in the woods” and “innocent goodies.”\textsuperscript{151} Upon return, the students’ passports were revoked, and several leaders were later indicted. The

\textsuperscript{146} Addendum to Memorandum of Sept., 3, 1963 Re Permanent Student Committee for Travel to Cuba: evidence to establish Violations of 8 USC 11859b) and 18 USC 371” in National Security Files, Box 45, Country Files: Cuba: Subjects: Americans Travelling to Cuba: American Students September 1963, John F. Kennedy Library (JFKL). On UPA microfilm John F. Kennedy National Security files (NSF), Latin America Supplement 1 Cuba, Reel 7
\textsuperscript{147} US Embassy Ottawa Airgram A-23, July 9, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1963, Box 3636, File STR 10 CUBA, NARA
\textsuperscript{148} CIA Current Intelligence Memorandum OCI 2211/63, “US Students in Cuba”, July 5, 1963 (Confidential) in National Security Files, Box 45, Country Files: Cuba: Subjects: Americans Traveling to Cuba, American Students 7/63, Box 45 John F. Kennedy Library (JFKL). On UPA microfilm John F. Kennedy National Security files (NSF), Latin America Supplement 1 Cuba, Reel 7
case dragged on for several years before finally being dismissed. This incident would not be the last of its kind.

In the final two weeks of his presidency, relations with Canada and with Cuba were both on John F. Kennedy’s mind. On Cuba itself, the President was following a two track approach, probing the Cuban government about reaching a possible understanding, while simultaneously allowing the CIA to carry on with covert actions aimed at harassing the regime and even assassinating Castro.\textsuperscript{152} This futile and contradictory scenario reveals much about how Kennedy was pulled in opposing directions within his own government, as well as by US public opinion on how to solve the Cuba problem. Concerning Canada, bilateral relations were finally settling after the Gordon budget. Hoping to set continental relations on a more even keel, the President created a new White House Coordinator of Canadian Affairs, with William H. Brubeck as the first incumbent. Kennedy’s goal was to ensure consistency in addressing Canadian issues, free from the internal divisions that the Cuban Assets Controls had exemplified. Bundy articulated in his instructions that “all aspects of Canadian-American relations were of intense interest and concern to the President himself.”\textsuperscript{153} Specifically on Canada’s Cuba policy, the President had apparently asked Bundy if Canada had changed its policy regarding trans-shipments, following reports regarding the customs error that had allowed some US made goods to find their way to Cuba.\textsuperscript{154} Satisfied that this was a one-time occurrence, Canada’s praises continued to be sung in the White House over the intelligence gleaned from its Havana embassy and the aircraft inspections. The great unknown is whether the Cuba problem in Canadian-American relations would have been eliminated had Kennedy lived. His rapport with Pearson, his appreciation of Canadian cooperation in key theatres, and his desire to remove Cuba from the highest echelons of US foreign policy concerns suggests that on this issue, calmer seas lay ahead. However, the White House suddenly had a new occupant, who would make for new waves with Canada and Cuba alike.

On November 22, John F. Kennedy succumbed to two rifle bullets that struck him while en route to deliver a speech in downtown Dallas. Canadians shared the Americans’ grief and

\textsuperscript{152} See Freedman, 238-245 and Dallek. 659-664. There was an CIA assassination plot under way the very day of Kennedy’s own assassination on November 22.

\textsuperscript{153} Memorandum from McGeorge Bundy to Cabinet members and Agency heads, November 11, 1963 (Confidential) in DDRS Doc. CK3100439714.

\textsuperscript{154} Memorandum from Alexis Johnson to McGeorge Bundy “Canadian Cooperation in Control of Shipments of US Origin Commodities to Cuba”, November 18, 1963 (Confidential) RG 59 Subject Numeric Files 1963, Box 3635, File STR 10 CUBA 1/11/1963, NARA
outrage at the young President’s tragic murder. Prime Minister Pearson attended the state funeral in Washington, and a well-attended memorial mass was also held in Ottawa a few days later. Lawrence Freedman correctly points out that surrounding the President’s death was the shadow of United States’ Cuba policy.\textsuperscript{155} The assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, himself murdered just two days after shooting Kennedy, was a self proclaimed Marxist who had briefly lived in the Soviet Union, and was active in the US Fair Play for Cuba Committee. Fearing a backlash over such an association, Canada’s Fair Play organization issued a press release on November 23 expressing shock and offering condolences to his family, while also denouncing accusations that its American counterpart was complicit in Kennedy’s death.\textsuperscript{156} Oswald’s affiliation did much to kill the American organization, although Fair Play remained active in Canada for a number of years still to come.\textsuperscript{157}

More interesting than the response of Canada’s Fair Play organization to the Kennedy assassination was that of its favourite guest, Cuban Ambassador Américo Cruz.\textsuperscript{158} Reluctantly, Cruz obeyed his government’s instructions and attended the memorial mass. However, according to US intelligence records released decades later, the Ambassador, bitter over American policy towards his country, initially responded with “happy delight” at the news of Kennedy’s death - a response apparently shared by several Cuban embassy staff.\textsuperscript{159} Cruz’s jubilation was tempered only upon learning of Oswald’s association with the Fair Play movement. Whether the Americans shared such a report with Canadian officials is unknown and perhaps unknowable. Certainly, such knowledge would foster a cool posture towards Havana, especially given Pearson’s admiration for the late President and his appreciation for Kennedy’s personal interest in Canada. Pearson had lost his greatest asset for achieving smoother Canadian-US relations – his warm relationship with the President. The contrasts with Lyndon Johnson could scarcely be sharper.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[155] Freedman, 244.
\item[156] See Fair Play for Cuba Committee Press Release, dated November 23, 1963, found in RG 146, File “Fair Play for Cuba Committee, Canada Vol. 7, LAC ATIP A200900103, Stack 8
\item[157] See Cynthia Wright, “Between Nation and Empire” in Wright and Wylie, Our Place in the Sun, 114.
\item[158] Cruz was a frequently sponsored FPCC speaker and the RCMP considered the group an arm of the Cuban government in Canada. See RCMP Memorandum (to and from names and positions redacted) “Assessment for ‘A’ Branch at their Request” April 11, 1968 (Secret) in RG 146, File “Fair Play for Cuba Committee, Vancouver BC, Vol. 9, LAC ATIP A200900185, Stack 2
\item[159] CIA Message Cable from Ottawa Station Chief to Director of Central Intelligence, no. 1277, November 27, 1963 (Secret) in CIA, Lee Harvey Oswald File 201-289248, Volume 7, JFK Assassination Records Collection, Doc. 104-10015-10423, NARA. Accessible online via Mary Ferrell Organization www.maryferrell.org
\end{footnotes}
Chapter 8: Normalizing Cooperation and Containing Subversion: Canada, the United States and Cuba in the Pearson Years. Part 2 November 1963 to April 1968

Lester Pearson was one of many world leaders that Lyndon Johnson met with on the day of John F. Kennedy’s funeral. In their initial 15 minute conversation, the new President indicated that he hoped for “close and harmonious relations with Canada,” and that he intended to visit the country. Pearson agreed that relations between the two neighbours were mostly sound, but as he had learned, “there were more bilateral problems that were generally supposed” and that “Canadian sensitivities were not always understood” in Washington. Still, the Prime Minister promised to be candid, and to support the United States “on the big issues.”

The unexpected change in the White House added for Pearson one more significant complication in relations with the United States, which he had found to be trickier than expected in his government’s first half year. While smoothing out Canadian-American relations had been a relatively high priority for the late President Kennedy, who had a genuine interest in Canadian affairs and who related well to Lester Pearson, the same could not be said for Lyndon Johnson. A Texan of humble beginnings, Johnson rose to high office from the grass roots through his mastery of politics, which included persistence, manipulation and coercion. His crass and domineering personality, and willingness to resort to direct pressure tactics to further the United States’ agenda, varied considerably from the style of the Oxford educated clergyman’s son and professional diplomat who was Canada’s Prime Minister. Despite major contrasts in style and at times opinion, which came to a head over Vietnam in April 1965, the two men nonetheless sought to keep bilateral relations on a positive, even keel, and were determined not to revert to the causticity of the Kennedy-Diefenbaker era. Apart from the conflict in Southeast Asia, economic issues dominated the Canadian-American agenda during the Pearson-Johnson period.

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The basic concerns of the United States at the outset of the Johnson presidency closely resembled those from earlier times. In a mid December 1963 review of the Canada file, Secretary of State Rusk zeroed in on the prevalence of nationalist tendencies in Canada, especially on economic policy. He wrote the President:

The Pearson Government is, in spirit, friendly to us and, in principle, much more sympathetic with US objectives [than Diefenbaker]. But it, too, has felt compelled to take a series of measures that have kept our relations on the edge of tension – measures that can, if carried too far, result in serious economic and political problems between our two countries.  

Washington’s ongoing sensitivity about Cuba, especially Johnson himself, ensured that Canada’s policy towards that country remained on those edges. Nonetheless, it was during the Johnson presidency that Canada and the United States cooperated on Cuba-related issues in the broadest range of spheres, and created as much space between that edge as was possible and feasible.

Neither Cuba nor any other international issues came up in Pearson’s short conversation with Johnson after the Kennedy funeral. Nor did it appear on Dean Rusk’s agenda for Paul Martin when the External Affairs Minister visited Washington a week later. Such omissions by no means suggest that Fidel Castro was not still a major concern in during the Johnson administration’s early days. Its foreign policy team was comprised of Kennedy holdovers who had created and implemented the previous administration’s Cuba policy. As well, the pro-Castro activism of Lee Harvey Oswald, coupled with suspicions that the Maximum Leader might have put him up to the task of assassinating Kennedy in retaliation for the CIA’s activities, meant that Cuba was very much on Lyndon Johnson’s mind from his first day in office.

Preserving the overall foreign policy goals set by his predecessor, the new President made some changes in priority and certainly in style regarding Cuba. After some initial

163 Memorandum from William Tyler of European Division to Secretary of State Rusk “Your Meeting with Canadian Foreign Minister”, December 3, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 59 Subject Numeric Files 1963, Box 3852, File POL 15-1 CAN, NARA
enthusiasm, Johnson gradually turned away from covert efforts to overthrow Castro, which he quickly came to believe had failed and were perhaps needlessly provocative. Johnson also briefly allowed Kennedy’s exploratory dialogue with Havana to continue, although he did so skeptically and half heartedly, and by mid-1964 had abandoned the effort. The linchpin of Johnson’s Cuba policy was economic denial, which he believed to be the best means of keeping the heat on Castro. Kennedy had already reinvigorated the economic warfare strategy in July 1963 with the Cuban Assets Controls.\(^{165}\) Presiding over an important senior level discussion on Cuba held December 19, Johnson wanted more aggressive efforts to reduce free world trade with Havana. Following a CIA report outlining how “equipment vitally needed in Cuba, some of U.S. origin, reaches the island via Canada and Great Britain,” Johnson approved a new policy aimed at reducing the West’s trade with Cuba.\(^{166}\) Issued as National Security Action Memorandum 274, the directive outlined the President’s “deep concern with the extent of Free World trade with Cuba” and called for a detailed review regarding economically critical goods that Cuba was still receiving from outside the communist bloc.\(^{167}\) Johnson’s special attention was on countries that extended Cuba credit or sold it vehicles, spare parts, factory machinery and other capital goods. In wanting to up the pressure on allies, the new President requested a review of “steps we have taken with foreign governments and private companies to stop trade with Cuba, including the responses of such governments and companies to our pressures.”\(^{168}\)

Eager to make his mark as a tough and decisive leader in an election year, Johnson’s personal views and political instincts both favoured a hard-line position against Castro, even at the risk of ruffling some allied feathers.

Thankfully for the Pearson government, Great Britain, not Canada, was Johnson’s number one target in this effort. Unlike Canada, the British extended credit to Cuba, and had the most ships in the Cuba trade of any non-communist country (followed by Greece and Lebanon). Canada’s exports were cash only, and it had no ships hauling goods to and from the island until

\(^{165}\) For evidence that the Kennedy administration was preparing to strengthen the economic denial program shortly before his death see Draft National Security Action memorandum, “Cuban Economic Denial Program”, October 3, 1963 (Secret) in National Security Files, Box 55, Country Files Cuba: “Policy 9/63-11/63”, John F. Kennedy Library. On UPA microfilm John F. Kennedy National Security files (NSF), Latin America Supplement 1 Cuba, Reel 15


\(^{168}\) Ibid.
early 1965, when a small shipping company, Carib Lines, began refrigerated shipments of foodstuffs between Havana and Saint John, New Brunswick - goods of lesser concern to Washington.\(^{169}\) Johnson was especially incensed that Prime Minister Alec Douglas-Home had proceeded with a credit sale of 450 British Leyland buses, a decision the British Cabinet approved while Kennedy was still President.\(^{170}\) The CIA labelled this procurement as “an important political and psychological triumph for Castro,” and Douglas-Home was granted the verbal “Johnson treatment” over the telephone in early January. Cuba became a major agenda item when the British Prime Minister visited Washington and Ottawa a month later.\(^{171}\) Along with the British, France sold Cuba locomotives and Spain sold it aircraft.\(^{172}\) George Ball identified British cooperation over Cuba as the most important, but advocated pressuring all US allies to curb credit sales, which freed up cash for the Cuban leader to make mischief abroad.\(^{173}\) The Johnson administration hardly welcomed intelligence reports that the Cuban economy was growing and that an increasingly confident Havana believed it had “broken the back of the US economic blockade,” in part due to ongoing commercial transactions with the west.\(^{174}\) Ball reminded the President that for his pressure policy to work, relations with allies might have to suffer.\(^{175}\) Evidence suggests Washington would only go so far in this regard, but it certainly intended to make its displeasure concerning these developments known.


\(^{170}\) For details on the sale see UK Cabinet Paper, “Buses for Cuba”, September 20, 1963 (Confidential), CAB 129/114 Doc 63(162) UK National Archives (UKNA). For the decision, see Cabinet Conclusions, September 24, 1963 (Secret) in CAB 128/37, CC 57(63) UKNA. Both are available online at http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/


\(^{172}\) See Lars Schoultz, That Infernal Little Republic, 232-234.


\(^{174}\) CIA Information Cable Incoming 16561, February 11, 1964 (Classification excised) in National Security Files, Cuba Country File, Folder “Cuba, Intelligence Vol. 1, 11/63-11/64”, Box 24, Lyndon B. Johnson Library. On UPA microfilm Lyndon B. Johnson National Security files (NSF), Latin America Supplement 1, Reel 6

\(^{175}\) For Ball’s advice to Johnson see “Free World Economic Ties with Cuba,” Annex to FRUS 1964-1968, Vol. XXXII, Doc. 227, 564. See also Schoultz, That Infernal Little Republic, 232-234
The United States government saw Canada’s transgressions as of lesser significance than those of its European allies, but it would not let its neighbour off the hook. Fresh from the economic denial meeting, on December 20 State Department officials met with Trade and Commerce Minister Mitchell Sharp. Satisfied that Canadian exports to Cuba were still lower than in 1961, the Americans outlined their ongoing unhappiness over Canada’s sale of industrial spare parts and its repairs of Cubana aircraft.176 Defending Canada’s record of considering American concerns, Sharp repeated Ottawa’s standard policy and reinforced the special cash-only arrangement for the Cuban portion of grain sold to the Soviet Union.177 Assistant Under Secretary Edgar Ritchie recommended that Ottawa reject American pressure to cease the aircraft maintenance and spare parts sales to Cuba, and to remind Washington of the intelligence benefits from its flight inspections at Gander.178

As Pearson prepared for his first official visit to Washington in late January 1964, Cuba was a prominent review item. Canadian embassy officials were warned by the State Department that the President intended to talk about Cuba, and wanted to see fewer spare parts getting there from Canada.179 Officials in both countries busily prepared detailed briefings on the subject, and A.J. Pick warned the Prime Minister that Johnson would be tougher on Cuba than his predecessor, especially with the upcoming presidential election.180 Pearson was advised to reassure the President that Canada had no sympathy for the Castro government, and that it was disturbed by recent discoveries of Cuban meddling in Venezuela. At the same time, External Affairs’ leading Latin American hand encouraged Pearson to resolutely oppose a Canadian embargo.181

When the two men met on January 21-22, Cuba was not the top official agenda item, but the topic was discussed in a private conversation. Johnson told Pearson that he was “very angry”

176 Memorandum of Conversation “Discussion with Canadian Minister of Trade and Commerce on Trade with Cuba” December 20, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 59, Records of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, Entry A1 3165, Box 34, Folder ” FT Foreign Trade – Canada,” NARA
177 Ibid
180 Memorandum from AJ Pick Latin American Division to USA Division “Papers for Meeting between Prime Minister Pearson and President Johnson,” January 13, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.10004, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 2, LAC
about the recent British sale of Leyland buses to Cuba.\textsuperscript{182} Aware of his concerns about Cuban subversion, Pearson promised the President not to permit “the movement of Cuban agents” through Canada. He managed to coax a Presidential nod of recognition that by preserving its diplomatic relations with Cuba, Canada provided the United States with valuable intelligence.\textsuperscript{183} The President expressed similar appreciation for Canadian reports from Havana when the two leaders met at Campobello in August 1966, the only other of their seven face to face meetings in which Cuba was discussed.\textsuperscript{184} Interestingly, the American records of both the 1964 and 1966 conversations, as well as that of the Kennedy-Pearson meeting in 1963, omit mention of the intelligence cooperation.

Trade was not the only issue connecting Canada to Cuba that was receiving Washington’s attention at this time. In early November 1963, a cache of arms traceable to Cuba, along with its delivery vessel, were discovered on a Venezuelan beach.\textsuperscript{185} Fidel Castro had long harboured a vendetta against Venezuelan President Rómulo Betancourt, a liberal democrat, for withdrawing his initial support for the Cuban revolution, and retaliated by supporting a small pro-Cuban insurgency against the government in Caracas. Kennedy had viewed Betancourt as a beacon of hope for Latin American democracy. Especially committed to countering Cuban subversion in Venezuela, throughout 1963 the President regularly asked to see CIA updates on the situation.\textsuperscript{186} When CIA Deputy Director Richard Helms briefed Kennedy on the discovery of the arms cache only days before his assassination, the President believed he had his conclusive

\textsuperscript{182} Tentative Draft: Meeting between the Prime Minister and the President: Cuba, January 23, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10044, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 3, LAC. Also see Pearson, Mike, Vol. 3, 122-123.

\textsuperscript{183} Tentative Draft: Meeting between the Prime Minister and the President: Cuba, January 23, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10044, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 3, LAC

\textsuperscript{184} For the 1966 entry see Telegram from the Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs no.G-175, August 22, 1966 (Secret/Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 8906, 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 3, LAC. In addition to the Kennedy funeral and these two meetings, Johnson and Pearson also met in September 1964, January 1965, April 1965, and May 1967.

\textsuperscript{185} For details on the cache discovering see documents in US Department of State Subject-Numeric file 1963, DEF 12 CUBA on UPA microfilm Cuba 1963-1966 Reel 1 – particularly Memorandum from Secretary Rusk to the President (Lyndon Johnson), November 27, 1963 (Confidential). Original at NARA

\textsuperscript{186} See Stephen Rabe, \textit{The Most Dangerous Area of the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America}. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 106-108. See also Freedman, \textit{Kennedy's Wars}, 229-230. For an example of the monitoring see President Kennedy to CIA Director McCone, February 9, 1963 (no classification marking) and also Memorandum from CIA Director McCone to the President, February 13, 1963 (Secret), Both documents are found in President’s Office Files, Box 72, Folder “CIA 1963,’’ John F. Kennedy Library. Also online as file JFKPOF-72-06 in the JFKL Digital archives. http://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Search-the-Digital-Archives.aspx
proof of Castro’s external meddling, and responded with “I think we may have him now.” 187 What the late President actually meant by this statement remains unknown.

The State Department publicized the discovery just days after Kennedy’s death. Castro naturally portrayed the entire episode as a CIA set up, a not implausible suggestion given what is now known about the Agency’s anti-Castro programs.188 Washington was certainly seeking a pretext to get all OAS members to end their commercial and diplomatic relations with Havana. A May 1963 NSC Standing Group paper described how proof of “Cuban interference and violence in the life of another country” would provide the United States with the necessary cover.189 Speculations aside, the documentary evidence, an important part of which was tied to Canada, provides a much simpler explanation. A Johnson outboard motor attached to the boat that had delivered the arms from Cuba was traced by serial number to a Peterborough, Ontario manufacturer. The motor was indeed sold to Cuba by a Montreal boating firm in late September.190 At least some of the weapons were determined to be of American and Belgian origin, traceable to arms cargoes sent to Batista’s military in the mid 1950s and subsequently appropriated by Cuba’s revolutionary army.191

While a mere outboard motor, the Pearson government had no desire to have Canada publicly connected in any way to Cuban sponsored revolutionary activity, and was greatly concerned about embarrassment and bad press. Once the motor’s provenance was verified by the RCMP, Ottawa quickly acknowledged as such to the United States and to the OAS. Pearson was relieved that the motor was not of US origin, and that no export controls had been

188 See Freedman, Kennedy’s Wars, 244. For a Canadian report on Castro’s statements see Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to External affairs no 348, December 9, 1963 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8849, File 20-CUBA-1-3, pt. 1, LAC. In an interview, State Department Cuba veteran Wayne S. Smith thought there was no clear evidence that the cache was a plant, although he noted that the timing of the discovery served US interests well. Interview with Wayne S. Smith, Washington DC, July 15, 2009.
190 For details see Memorandum from W.H. Kelly, Assistant Director for Security and Intelligence, Attention J.J. McCardle, January 3, 1964 (Secret) in the RCMP file on the case, RG 146, File “Johnson Outboard Motor found on Venezuelan Coast,” ATIP Release A2009-00333, LAC
violated. In exchange for Canadian cooperation, the Prime Minister asked both the Americans and the OAS for strict confidence about the Canadian connection. The United States and OAS in turn were anxious to refute Castro’s charge that the arms cache was a CIA plant, and were thus delighted to have evidence turning the tables against the Cuban leader. The Johnson administration was all too glad to have the requisite ammunition (literally) to convict Havana of subversion in the eyes of OAS members and to convince skeptical Latin American governments that the Cuban subversive threat was real. A State Department report assessed the motor’s importance as follows:

this piece of evidence has major significance, particularly as it was shipped from Canada only one month before its discovery in Venezuela. It not only demonstrates the Cuban origin of the arms but also, and more importantly, it effectively meets the argument that the arms might have been planted by the US or Venezuela.

Just days before its findings were publicly released, the OAS investigating committee acknowledged that “the cooperation of the Canadian government and its authorities has been of great assistance and is deeply appreciated.” Canada, even though accidentally, aided in the United States efforts to isolate Cuba. While this incident spurred on Johnson’s get tough policy, Canada’s help perhaps influenced Johnson to go more softly with Pearson than with Douglas-Home. At least on Cuba, Pearson would be spared the famous “Johnson treatment.”

At a NATO meeting in late March, following a George Ball presentation to drum up alliance support for US Cuba policy, Canada’s representative George Ignatieff defended the Canadian record on Cuba. Specifically, he cited Canada’s forthcoming approach regarding the Venezuelan cache incident as evidence of its commitment to countering Cuban subversion in Latin America. Ignatieff’s defence proved successful. In the days following the meetings, even the normally cynical Walton Butterworth sent the State Department a telegram

192 Memorandum from Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce to Deputy Minister of Excise and Revenue (D. Sim), January 27, 1964 in RG 146, File “Johnson Outboard Motor found on Venezuelan Coast,” ATIP Release A2009-00333, LAC. NOTE: Several motors impounded in Montreal were American made but had not yet reached Cuba.


194 Department of State Memorandum to McGeorge Bundy, “Status Report on OAS Action in the Venezuelan Arms Cache,” February 13, 1964 (Confidential) in DDRS, Doc. CK3100270418


196 Department of State Telegram from NATO Delegation Paris to Under Secretary George Ball, POLTO 1338, March 23, 1964 (Secret) in RG 59, Subject Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 2073, File POL 1- CUBA-US, NARA
commending Canada’s cooperation with the United States on embargo enforcement and civil air traffic to Cuba. Also mentioning the arms cache, Butterworth gratefully reported that he had now had Canadian permission to use the Venezuelan arms cache in presentations across Canada as proof that Castro’s regime was indeed a destabilizing force in the western hemisphere. The final outcome also worked in Washington’s favour. After several months delay, a Venezuelan sponsored OAS resolution was passed in July calling on all member states to sever both economic and diplomatic ties with Cuba, with Mexico being the only Latin American country to refuse. Canada suffered no significant fallout on this issue, although it did confirm for Ottawa the wisdom of not being an OAS member.

The same could not be said regarding Canada’s trade with Cuba, as American irritation festered and flared up in 1964. Pearson had told Johnson in January that he did not expect Canada’s Cuba trade to grow that year. However, statistics soon told a different story: Canada exported $22.3 million worth of goods to the island in the first four months of 1964, already topping the $16.4 million figure for all of 1963. By year-end, Canada’s exports to Cuba would reach a whopping $60.9 million, although its imports shrank from the 1963 figure of $11.3 million down to $2.9 million. The large export increase was due in part to the 1963 Soviet wheat deal, which accounted for $27.9 million; yet leaving this figure aside, exports to Cuba had fully doubled in a year. The 1965 figure would only be only a slightly smaller $52.6 million.

In early August, the US embassy in Ottawa forwarded to Department of External Affairs a

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197 Telegram Embassy in Ottawa to Department of State, No 1256, March 26, 1964 (Secret) in National Security Files, Box 16, Country Files Cuba: Cables Vol. 2, 3/64-5/64, Lyndon B. Johnson Library. On UPA microfilm Lyndon B. Johnson National Security files (NSF), Latin America Supplement 1, Reel 4. Also in DDRS Doc CK3100145895


199 Memorandum of Conversation, “Panama and Cuba” January 22, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 59 Conference Files, Entry 3051B, Box 337, Folder: Visit of Canadian Prime Minister Pearson, Jan 21-22, 1964, NARA. In the version found in the Lyndon Johnson Library National Security Files, Country Canada Pearson Visit files, the Prime Minister’s comments remain sanitized.

200 Ibid

memorandum outlining the United States concern about its expanding Cuba trade, especially in fertilizer.  

Canada’s new Ambassador in Havana, Léon Mayrand, who replaced George Kidd in early 1964 and stayed at the post for a record six years, argued that Canada could respond in two ways to American pressure. It could “accept the primacy of the United States interest in regard to Cuba” and keep relations with Cuba at a low level, or it could seek to use its leverage with Havana to steer it in a more moderate course. Mayrand’s sympathies were with the second path, although he readily acknowledged that Ottawa had to tread carefully, given its economic dependence on the United States. A.J. Pick described Mayrand as being less cynical about Castro than George Kidd, and was more likely to attribute genuine credence to the Cuban leader’s statements. Mayrand harboured dreams of acting as a broker between Cuba and the United States, which led him at times to step close to the boundary line. A furious Marcel Cadieux, Norman Robertson’s resolutely anti-communist successor, reprimanded Mayrand and almost recalled him in 1965 for suggesting a study exploring how Canada might help end the Cuba-United States impasse. Despite being aware of Mayrand’s more idealistic and understanding approach to Havana, Washington still welcomed the Ambassador’s reports from Havana.

In September, Dean Rusk held a series of meetings with leading NATO and Latin American officials on their countries’ Cuba trade, encounters that NSC Cuba expert Gordon Chase characterized as “scoldings.” The impetus was recent intelligence reporting that free

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202 Fertilizer was seen as boosting agriculture and therefore foreign exchange revenue for Cuba. See Canadian Embassy Havana Despatch “Canadian Trade Policy towards Cuba,” no. 545, August 5, 1964 (Secret / Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 10044, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 3, LAC.

203 Ibid

204 Memorandum Latin American Division (A.J. Pick) to Deputy Under Secretary “Cuba and the United States,” September 11, 1964 (Confidential) RG 25, Vol. 8906, 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 2 LAC. For Mayrand’s belief in Castro’s good faith see Canadian Embassy, Havana Numbered Letter no. 584, August 19, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8906, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 2 LAC; for the Department’s caution see Memorandum from Latin American Division (AJ Pick) to Under Secretary (Cadieux) “Cuba and the United States,” September 11, 1964 (Confidential) in same file


world trade with Cuba had risen by 80 percent in the past year, even with all of Washington’s efforts to retard this process. Such statistics were political dynamite for Johnson, now in an election campaign against the hawkish conservative Republican Barry Goldwater, who was campaigning for an aggressive American response against communism everywhere, especially in Cuba and Vietnam. For Johnson, the results pointed to a policy failure, one that might in turn generate calls for an even harder line approach. As Chase pointed to McGeorge Bundy, the problem was that many of Washington’s successes with allies pertaining to Cuba had to remain secret.

Canada was not exempted from a trip to Rusk’s woodshed. On September 9, Rusk and Cuban Affairs Coordinator John Crimmins met with Ambassador Ritchie and George Kidd, now in a new post as a Minister at the Canadian embassy in Washington. After discussing the recent OAS resolutions and Cuba’s hemispheric activities, the conversation turned to trade. Rusk confronted the Canadian diplomats with statistics revealing their country as Cuba’s largest free world trading partner, even ignoring the wheat sold via Moscow. When Ritchie tried to defend these actions, Rusk suggested Canada was out of synch with the rest of the hemisphere and suggested it review its position.

In public statements after the meetings, all the State Department officials would say is that Cuba was discussed as “a matter of general interest” aware that any indications of American pressure on Canada could stoke nationalist sentiments in Canada. Drawing on his experiences in Havana and with Canadian policymakers, Kidd advised his American counterparts to keep its noise level low in meeting with Martin.

In his home town of Windsor, Martin finally met with Rusk on September 13. In Rusk’s briefing document for the meeting, apart from the trade figures, Washington’s biggest concern regarding Cuba was the marked increase in the sale of Canadian fertilizer, a commodity deemed

209 Memorandum of Conversation between Secretary of State Rusk and Canadian Ambassador Charles Ritchie “OAS Foreign Ministers Resolution on Cuba,” September 9, 1964 (Secret) in RG 59, Executive Secretariat: The Secretary and Under Secretary’s Memoranda of Conversation, Entry 1566, Box 30, NARA
210 Memorandum of Conversation between Secretary of State Rusk and Canadian Ambassador Charles Ritchie “Cuban Situation”, September 10, 1964 (Secret) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 2068, File POL-CUBA, NARA
valuable to the Cuban economy as it aided in sugar production.\textsuperscript{211} In their actual discussion, Martin attributed the export increase to the Soviet wheat, and reminded Rusk about how Canada had cooperated by refusing Moscow credit for the portion it intended to ship to Cuba. Rusk concluded that he did not anticipate further measures by Canada, but the NSC afterwards thought Canada was on the defensive over the almost fourfold increase in its Cuba trade.\textsuperscript{212} The next day, Pearson met with Johnson for the second time, the occasion being the formal implementation of the Columbia River Treaty. The President’s brief only had a single point on Cuba, which Johnson did not intend to raise unless Pearson initiated – a request for less trade.\textsuperscript{213} The Prime Minister was advised against raising the issue, given the “strong emotions” that it aroused in the United States.\textsuperscript{214} Pearson’s mind was on achieving a sectoral Canada-US free trade agreement in auto parts, a goal realized in January 1965, and thus he did not want to further upset the President.

By the end of 1964, Cuba finally began to lose its profile in the tiers of American foreign policy. Johnson was safely elected with an unprecedented landslide, and in very short order Vietnam would greatly overshadow Cuba, becoming the administration’s pre-eminent, if not all consuming foreign policy concern. A March 1965 memo clearly outlined that Washington was intentionally seeking a “lower temperature” on Cuba, as US military involvement in Southeast Asia rapidly expanded.\textsuperscript{215} Still, Johnson had no intention of loosening the embargo, and was spurred on by Rusk and especially Inter-American Affairs Secretary Thomas Mann (whom Johnson appointed back to his old position in January 1964). He zealously supported any development in Latin America that countered Castro’s influence, such as the 1964 coup in Brazil, and training and support for aggressive counter-insurgency efforts in countries such as

\begin{footnotes}
\item[211] Memorandum from William R. Tyler, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs to Secretary of State Rusk, “Your Private Lunch with Secretary of State for External Affairs Paul Martin, Windsor September 13: Briefing Memorandum”, September 11, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 1990, File POL CAN-US, NARA
\item[212] Memorandum of Conversation between Secretary of State Rusk and the Hon Paul Martin, Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada September 14, 1964,(Secret) in FRUS 1964-1968, Vol. XII, Doc. 322, 688 and also Memorandum from Robert Sayre to McGeorge Bundy, September 15, 1964 (Confidential) in DDRS Doc. CK3100492184
\item[213] Memorandum for the President “Talking Points – Subjects Pearson may Raise” September 15, 1964 (Secret) in DDRS Doc CK3100510759
\item[215] For specific reference of need to shift focus from Cuba to Vietnam see Memorandum from Chase to Bundy, March 2, 1965 (Secret) in DDRS Doc. CK3100329034. Also quoted in Schoultz, \textit{That Infernal Little Republic}, 239.
\end{footnotes}
Guatemala. He would also send US Marines into the Dominican Republic in April-May 1965 on the auspices of preventing a second Castro-type government.

In March 1965, at the behest of the United Kingdom, the United States agreed to host a confidential two day conference on Cuba. The British wanted to include Canada, and Washington reluctantly conceded to its participation. The meetings included no Cabinet level participants, although they included senior and experienced Latin American exports from State, the Foreign Office and External Affairs. All three countries offered largely similar assessments of the Cuban situation, save for the question of Cuban subversion in Latin America, which the British and Canadians did not believe was spreading as rapidly as did the Americans. 216 The United States delegation hoped for a common assessment, although it had no illusions about reaching a common policy. 217 Gordon Chase of the National Security Council had hoped to “educate the British and Canadians to our side of the story and, hopefully, to persuade them that we are really not madmen when it comes to Cuba.” 218 A.J. Pick, Canada’s lead participant, concluded that “the United States was not at this time actively interested in the possibility of moving towards a more flexible policy on Cuba.” 219 Canadian policymakers thus anticipated occasional turbulence with the Americans on this issue, even though by 1965 the situation had more or less stabilized, and a major new crisis over Cuba seemed remote.

In the mid and late 1960s, there was more bilateral head-bumping with Washington over Cuba than Ottawa expected. Following a second discovery of Cuban arms in Venezuela in the spring of 1967, the Johnson administration resumed its pressure campaign on NATO and OAS member states to restrict their trade with Cuba, especially credit, which Canada was still not yet extending to Havana. That did not prevent Canadian embassy from receiving an unexpected earful from a frustrated William Bowdler of the National Security Council’s Cuba desk, who fumed that it was “incomprehensible and disgraceful that our friends and allies continued to trade with Castro” when the latter’s behaviour in the hemisphere now be apparent to all. 220 A

familiar scenario in Canadian-United States relations appeared ready to repeat itself. Fortunately for Canada, this brief Cuban tempest was overshadowed by more pressing issues in Washington – escalating casualties in Vietnam, growing domestic turmoil over the war and over civil rights, and the Arab-Israeli Six Day war. Cuba did not enter into the discussion at all when Johnson finally made his long promised visit to Canada in late May 1967, complete with a visit to the Expo 67 world’s fair and meetings with Pearson at a lakeside retreat outside Ottawa.  

International concern about Cuban activities subsided substantially following the capture and death of Che Guevara at the hands of Bolivian soldiers in October.

By mid-1968, in a calculated move Castro shifted away from what Michael Erisman called “proletarian internationalism,” towards a full embrace of the Soviet Union, even to the point endorsing the Brezhnev Doctrine, which had declared socialist revolutions to be irreversible, even if requiring preservation by force. A State Department policy review on Cuba from mid-1968 reaffirmed that improved relations depended on satisfying the two core objectives outlined in November 1962. The stand-off between Cuba and the United States would remain at a stalemate. As a consequence, Canada’s ongoing relationship with Havana would still occasionally generate sparks with its neighbour. These usually pertained to export controls, civil aviation or subversion. The same patterns of cooperation were for the most part successfully employed to mitigate problems: bilateral cooperation, especially in intelligence, the use of legal technicalities and compromises.

The thorny and interrelated issues of export controls and extraterritoriality continued throughout the latter years of the Pearson-Johnson era, notwithstanding expectations from the 1965 Heeney-Merchant principles that routine licences would be issued to Canadian subsidiaries. Between 1964 and 1967, periodic incidents still drew the attention of Canadian and American bureaucrats alike, and occasionally found their way into the Canadian press and the House of Commons floor. Canada remained obstinate in rejecting such US interference, while the United States remained unflinching in its belief the Cuban Assets Controls were justified and

222 Michael Erisman, Cuba’s Foreign Relations in Post Soviet World (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000), 75-76. For the evolution of Castro’s positions regarding the Soviets in the mid and late 1960s see James G. Blight and Philip Brenner, Sad and Luminous Days: Cuba’s Struggle with the Superpowers (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), Ch. 4.
necessary measures that its government had the right to impose on American citizens, wherever they might be physically situated.

External Affairs reports recorded that American law interfered with at least seven Canadian business transactions with Cuba between April and October 1964 alone, effecting activities ranging from filling export orders to repairing aircraft to financial transactions and information flows. Examples included Allis Chalmers Canada’s attempts to export steam valves to Cuba and Allied Aviation of Newfoundland’s contracts for repair and servicing work on Cubana aircraft at Gander, both of which were US owned Canadian firms. While Allis Chalmers’ owner received a US Treasury Department licence without much difficulty, the Allied Aviation case was more contentious. The Treasury Department had already appealed to Imperial Oil, owned by Standard Oil of New Jersey (later Exxon) not to supply fuel to a US owned Canadian airline maintenance firm for Cuba bound flights. In addition, it subsequently ordered Allied Maintenance, which owned the Newfoundland repair firm, to cease servicing Cuban aircraft through its Canadian branches, and to declare illegal any of the latter’s contracts with Cubana airlines. The United States government again backed off only after when the Canadian government strongly protested such interference.

Such extraterritoriality surfaced again in 1966 and 1967 in two incidents that exposed the limitations of the Heeney-Merchant understanding, both of which concerned the presence of American citizens as directors or senior managers of Canadian subsidiaries. In 1966, the US parents of prominent food industry firms Quaker Oats, Robin Hood, and Pillsbury, all declined approval for their Canadian subsidiaries to mill Canadian wheat for flour exports to Cuba via the Soviet Union, fearing that American managers and directors might face prosecution in the

Apart from the sovereignty principle, the Canadian government objected to the notion of Canadian businesses losing economic opportunities and revenue by not filling Cuban orders. In a directive, Trade and Commerce Minister Robert F. Winters directed the Canadian milling firms to act in their own economic interests, and that of the country, rather than following “any directives from abroad which might interfere with the normal exercise of commercial judgement by Canadian companies.”

When the Quaker Oats example became public in the summer of 1966, NDP leader Tommy Douglas, a steadfast and vocal critic of US interference in Canada’s Cuba policy, grilled Winters in the House of Commons. In preparing his Minister for parliamentary questioning and for an upcoming meeting with Dean Rusk, External Affairs Under Secretary Cadieux advised Martin to avoid specifics but to remind the Secretary of State about the Heeney Merchant principles and its call for general exemption licences in such circumstances, although Cadieux in turn had been advised that Washington would be loath to exempt American citizens from their country’s laws. Cadieux also warned Martin that the United States might in return ask Canada once again to assign formal COCOM controls to Cuba, which Ottawa continued to resist. Wanting to avoid another Canadian-American row over extraterritoriality, the State Department officials advised their harder-line colleagues at Treasury to eliminate licencing requirements altogether for Canadian subsidiaries if the goods to be exported were non-US in origin and consisted of foodstuffs and medical supplies, as was this case.

More contentious and complicated was a 1967 incident concerning a Cuban order for power start crank shafts for tractors. Produced by agricultural manufacturer Hayes Products

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227 Department of Trade and Commerce, Briefing for the Minister (R.H. Winters) [re Cuban Assets Controls and Canadian Milling Companies], July 13, 1966 (no classification marking) in RG 25, Vol.13837, File 36-18-2-CUBA, pt. 1, LAC
228 Memorandum from Under Secretary (Cadieux) to the Minister of External Affairs (Martin), “Prevention of Canadian Flour Companies from Trading with Cuba”, July 13, 1966 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.13837, File 36-18-2-CUBA, pt. 1, LAC
232 Memorandum from JCL Langley to Under Secretary Marcel Cadieux, “United States Foreign Assets Control”, July 19, 1966 (Confidential) in the same file.
Limited of Thorold, Ontario, that company also had an American parent, Dana Corporation of Toledo, Ohio. Having filled several previous Cuban orders, the companies were both concerned about risks to their American directors, and consequently approached the State and Treasury Departments for advice on licences; while not formally refusing the licences, Dana was reminded that such a sale would contradict American policy, and its licence request would become public, potentially hurting its business in the United States.\(^{234}\) Hayes President G.B. Mitchell asked Denis Harvey, Assistant Deputy Minister of Trade (Commodities and Industries) to intervene with the Americans to request its directors be exempt from prosecution, hoping to keep the matter from become publicized.\(^{235}\) In a reverse instance of extraterritoriality, Rusk did not want the Canadian government serving as an intermediary between a US parent company and Washington, and he relayed to Butterworth that the US Treasury had never yet granted such an exemption to American company directors.\(^{236}\) In a letter to Winters, Treasury Secretary Henry H. Fowler argued his government had already done much to accommodate Canadian sensitivities, but the Dana-Haynes case was more complicated, both on account of the legal obligations of American citizens, and the fact this time the goods were machine parts that were on Washington’s “critical list.”\(^{237}\)

An angry Harvey wrote Butterworth that the United States was in effect blackmailing Dana into non-application for the licence, in an effort to halt the Hayes sale, and he warned that if publicly exposed, this effort could bring about “serious political repercussions” in Canada.\(^{238}\) As Acting Under Secretary, Basil Robinson wrote Martin that the situation posed “a serious problem” in bilateral relations, as US made decisions impeded on the ability of Canadian firms to make what in Canada were legitimate transactions.\(^{239}\) In August, the matter was escalated up to the Prime Minister, with Martin describing Dana-Haynes as “the most extreme” episode yet

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\(^{235}\) Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 1802, April 21, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1967-1969, Box 1400, File STR 9 CUBA, NARA

\(^{236}\) Telephone from Secretary of State (Rusk) to US Embassy Ottawa, no. 196677, May 17, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1967-1969, File STR 9 CUBA, Box 1400, NARA

\(^{237}\) Letter from US Treasury Secretary (Fowler) to Canadian Minister of Trade and Commerce (Winter), July 7, 1967 in RG 25, Vol. 13838, File 36-18-2-CUBA pt. 2 LAC

\(^{238}\) US Embassy Ottawa Airgram A-68, July 20, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1967-1969, Box 1400, File STR 9-1 CUBA, NARA

regarding the Cuban Assets Controls. He advocated direct negotiations with the United States to remove these constraints. Pearson scribbled on Martin’s memo that he wanted a quick follow-up. In a formal embassy note to the State Department, Ottawa requested that the issue be addressed in terms of broad principles, citing its imposition on the Canadian economy and its running counter to the Heeney-Merchant understandings. After a month of discussions, in October the Americans responded that Dana would receive an export licence upon application, but that this had to seen as an exception and not a change of US Cuba policy. Company executives informed External Affairs orally at the beginning of November that the licence had been issued and Hayes was free to proceed with the Cuban order.

For the United States, this matter did not end satisfactorily, as it resulted in both an exception and in press leaks, which both governments had wanted to avoid. In mid-September, the Globe and Mail featured a story on Dana-Hayes, and two months later journalist Peter Newman wrote an editorial on the episode for the Ottawa Journal. The Economic Counselor at the US embassy chided the Canadians, telling Assistant Under Secretary James Langley afterwards that “the disclosure of information to the press in such delicate problems is hardly conducive to their resolution.” Playing out such disputes in public only served to polarize Ottawa and Washington.

In an oblique reference to the Heeney-Merchant study, Rufus Smith, now on the Canadian Desk at State, mused how that group’s efforts to eliminate friction over trade with Cuba had proved unsuccessful. In the fall of 1967, even the normally hard line and cynical Ambassador Butterworth, now five years at his Ottawa post, was tiring of this issue’s drag on Canada-United States relations. Uncharacteristically, Butterworth cabled Rusk in October that it

240 Memorandum from Secretary of State for External Affairs (Martin) to the Prime Minister (Pearson) “USA Cuban Assets Control Regulations: Possible Prohibition of Canadian Sale of Drive Lines to Cuba”, August 11, 1967 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 13838, File 36-18-2-CUBA pt. 2 LAC
241 Letter from Canadian Embassy, Washington no. 276, September 12, 1967 (No classification marking) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1967-1969, Box 1400, File STR 9-1 CUBA, NARA
244 US Embassy Ottawa Airgram A-616, November 18, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1967-1969, Box 1400, File STR 9-1 CUBA, NARA
245 Memorandum from Rufus Z. Smith, Canadian Desk to Assistant under Secretary of State for European Affairs (Benneville), July 14, 1966 (Secret) in RG 59 Bureau of European Affairs. Country Director for Canada, Files Relating to Economic Matters 1956-1966, Entry 5299, Box 12, File “Civil Aviation AV 3 Canada-USSR Air Agreement (Aeroflot Case) 1966”, NARA
was in Washington’s interests to remove this ongoing irritant, cheekily adding that “ultimately this form of neo-colonialism will certainly be swept away.” 246 His bigger concern was that Pearson’s minority government might be pushed even further in a nationalist and leftward direction, as reflected in his telegram to Rusk:

The Pearson govt has been working out more policies, at variance with US views and harmful to US interests, which spell a general outlook which, if not anti-American in inspiration, is certainly anti-American in result. Some of these policies have some realistic relationship to Canadian interests; others reflect little more than a yen to yank Uncle Sam's beard. 247

To the relief of both governments, Cuban Assets Control flashpoints became fewer in number and remained relatively quiet for the next seven years. The Johnson administration had little incentive to change its overall Cuba policy, especially as Castro was then exceptionally militant in his efforts to promote revolution across the hemisphere. Having essentially given up on toppling Castro by paramilitary means, Johnson’s main hope was to contain, isolate and eventually try to strangle the revolutionary regime, thus making the embargo the cornerstone of Washington’s anti-Castro strategy. However, by 1967 some in the State Department began to even question the latter, which had made life difficult for the Cuban regime but had not weakened its resolve. 248 The following summer, the Department’s Policy Planning Staff produced a lengthy review paper on Cuba, one that advocated softening the more abrasive aspects of the Cuban Assets Control regulations and allowing for a limited US-Cuban engagement. 249 The revised policy was not approved.

Extraterritoriality and embargo enforcement generated unwanted publicity in both neighbours. Yet considerable activity on embargo enforcement went on quietly behind the scenes, with some aspects unbeknownst to the other country. Canada had already demonstrated that it would quietly inform the Americans of any efforts to sidestep the ban, to which it faithfully complied. However, the Americans also chose follow the pattern set in late 1960 of monitoring Canada’s Cuba trade discreetly through intelligence operations, ones that also required tacit Canadian cooperation. Since 1964, the US Naval Attaché in Ottawa had been

246 Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 2178, October 23, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject Numeric Files 1967-1969, Box 1613, File POL CAN-US, NARA
248 Action Memorandum From the Chairman of the Policy Planning Council (Owen) to Secretary of State Rusk “US Policy Towards Castro’s Cuba”, May 2, 1967 (Secret) in FRUS 1964-1968, Vol. XXXXII, Doc. 314, 740
under a standing order to provide detailed information on maritime transportation to Cuba, especially ship cargo manifests, to determine if US origin goods were included.\textsuperscript{250} Evidently a variety of American government agencies, including the CIA, watched this traffic with considerable diligence.\textsuperscript{251} The signatory on many such reports was one William C. Sturbitts, a career CIA officer who later testified before Congressional Intelligence Investigations about being involved in covert activities against Cuba. Among Sturbitts’ revelations was that the Agency, in collaboration with the Departments of Commerce and the Treasury, encouraged the executives of some 600 US corporations not to allow their foreign subsidiaries fill Cuban orders. As well, the CIA pre-emptively purchased spare parts from foreign companies to make them unavailable to Cuba, and arranged through third country agents in Europe to have spare parts destined for Cuba manufactured in the United States to a substandard quality and then transhipped to Cuba through European countries.\textsuperscript{252} Sturbitts made no specific mention of Canada in his testimony, but the clear evidence of his close eye on its Cuba trade suggests that it was targeted or involved in some manner. The political sensitivity concerning alleged US espionage in Canada, and possible Canadian collaboration with it, all but ensures that complete story will remain untold at least for some time to come.

Along with export controls, Canada’s civil aviation links to Cuba remained prominent in the Canadian-US discourse on that country during the Pearson and Johnson period. The United States continued to see such connections as vital for Cuba’s strengthening its Soviet orientation, as well as a principal means to obtain goods and to move people in support of its revolutionary mission. Canadian policy, like that of its neighbour, sought to curtail the first and third objectives, and Ottawa was inclined to cooperate with the United States in these areas. It was in the second area, of transporting legitimately traded goods that Canada differed with its neighbour. For its mitigation strategy, Ottawa sought to control the frequency and nature of charter flights to Cuba, along with continuing to deflect Havana’s request for a scheduled

\textsuperscript{250} Reported in US Embassy Ottawa Airgram A-1448, June 29, 1968 (Secret) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1967-1969, Box 1401, File STR 10 CUBA, NARA


\textsuperscript{252} For details on Sturbitts’ career and testimony concerning CIA operations to halt the Cuba trade, see Testimony of William C. Sturbitts, April 16, 1975 (Secret) 24-26 in Church Committee Boxed Files, JFK Assassination Records Collection, Doc 157-10011-10083, NARA. Accessible online via Mary Ferrell Organization www.maryferrell.org. There are also summary details of these activities in Brian Latell, \textit{Castro’s Secrets: The CIA and Cuba’s Intelligence Machine} (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 100-101.
passenger service; regarding the latter, A.J. Pick bluntly conceded that Canada could not ignore the anticipated negative reaction in the United States. As on earlier occasions, Ottawa liberally used legalities and technicalities to throw up administrative roadblocks. In doing so, it sought to preserve a veneer of propriety while in reality currying favour with the United States to the greatest extent possible. The Cuban government largely saw through Ottawa’s smokescreen.

In the spring and summer of 1964, Canadian, American and Cuban diplomats and bureaucrats alike devoted considerable energy to the Canada-Cuba cargo charter flights that Montreal’s World Wide Airways operated on behalf of the Cuban government on a per flight basis since 1962. Seeking more Canadian raised livestock, Castro wanted more flights, and company President Don McVicar was all too keen to oblige, seeing profitable opportunities. With each flight still requiring Air Transport Board approval, Ottawa agreed to raise the monthly ceiling from six to fifteen flights, and allowed a special series of twenty additional flights to accommodate a special Cuban order of Ontario hogs.

The Pearson government, already feeling vulnerable with Washington over its growing exports to Cuba, did not want to incur the wrath of the Johnson administration and the American press over the flights – a continuing reminder that Canada was not supporting the embargo. However, trade was not Washington’s only concern in this regard. A Cuban defector had indicated that World Wide’s cargoes contained not only livestock and diplomats, but also smuggled US goods; with Cuban intelligence personnel and propaganda boarding the return flights. Preparing to meet Paul Martin in September, Inter-American Affairs Assistant

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254 Memorandum from Economic Division (Stoner) to A.E. Ritchie, “Charter Flights to Cuba” July 29, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10453, File 42-8-1-2-1-CUBA, pt. 4.1, LAC. See also Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Havana, no. E-1188, June 18, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10453, File 42-8-1-2-1-CUBA, pt. 4.1, LAC
255 Memorandum from Under Secretary of State for External Affairs (Cadieux) to Secretary of State for External Affairs (Martin), “Canada-Cuba Charter Flights,” May 7, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10453, File 42-8-1-2-1-CUBA, pt. 3, LAC, and also Memorandum from Inter-American Affairs Section (Adams) to Governor Averill Harriman, “Canadian Economic Ties with Cuba,” August 5, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 1429, File STR 12-3-CUBA-CAN, NARA. For an example of pro-Castro propaganda found on World Wide Flights see Memorandum from Inspector for the Division of Security and Intelligence to DL (2), November 30, 1964 (Secret) in RG 146, File Robert Franklin Williams, Vol. 2 ATIP2011-00409, LAC

The defector may well be the same individual identified in Brian Latell, Castro’s Secrets, 100-101.
Secretary Mann advised Rusk added that the World Wide flights were “a serious concern,” to be raised with the External Affairs Minister.256

The United States government took matters into its own hands to undermine World Wide’s operations. As the carrier had previously deviated off course over sensitive military sites in Florida, including Cape Canaveral (whether intentionally or not is unclear), American authorities ordered its flight paths re-routed to a longer and costlier path 200 miles out to sea.257 A CIA cable reported that as Havana was billed on a per mile basis, the new route would make the carrier too expensive for the Cubans; indeed this was the case and the number of flights soon rapidly dropped, to the chagrin of Company President Don McVicar.258 Cuban Affairs Coordinator John Crimmins told Ambassador Ritchie that Washington was very annoyed with the Canadian airline for flying near sensitive locations, and Ottawa conceded the United States’ legitimate security concerns, although it countered that an offshore route was more dangerous and contravened the ICAO.259 American officials disagreed, and threatened World Wide with either forced landings or outright exclusion from American airspace should it not comply with the new route.260 As a double measure, the Americans also impounded an engine for one of the airline’s DC-4s, then under repair in Florida, and blocked the shipment of a spare part for another. In both cases, Washington argued that the Cuban Assets Controls applied, as World Wide was under contract to the Cuban government.261 Aware that these flights were “especially

256 See Memorandum from Assistant Secretary of State for Inter American Affairs (Mann) to Secretary of State Rusk, “Your Appointment with the Canadian Ambassador, Charles S.A. Ritchie at 5:30 September 9,” September 8, 1964 (Confidential) and attached Talking Points in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 997, File FT-CUBA, NARA
260 See Memorandum from Special Assistant to Secretary of Defense (Califano) to Coordinator for Cuban Affairs, “Canadian World Wide Airways,” May 20, 1964 (Secret) and accompanying attachments RG 59, JFK Assassination Records Collection, Coordinator of Cuban Affairs Records pertaining to Operation Mongoose, Box 3, File AV Aviation – Civil – World Wide Airways, NARA
irksoné” to the United States, Ottawa did not raise additional objections.262 As a consequence, Havana turned to its ships as a more economical means of transportation, and thus the number of World Wide flights dropped dramatically.263

When Ambassador Mayrand expressed concern that limiting the flights hindered Havana’s taking delivery of the promised livestock and made for awkward relations, Cadieux reminded Paul Martin that “good relations with the United States are so vastly more important than our trade and relations with Cuba that the risks are out of proportion to the rewards.”264 Such an approach did however incite an outburst by Castro. In October, a desperate McVicar, losing considerable revenue with the dwindling number of flights, ordered a writ of seizure impounding a Cubana airliner (carrying Foreign Minister Raul Roa from overseas meetings) as it made a technical stop in Montreal in October. An apoplectic Castro, ever suspicious of the United States and frustrated by its apparent interference with Canadian-Cuban air linkages, denounced this action as blackmail, wondering aloud to Mayrand whether “Canada had decided to join the USA crusade against his country” and calling on Cuban ships to resist such seizure to the point of being sunk! 265 In a report reminiscent of his predecessor George Kidd, the Ambassador was shaken by what he described as the Cuban leader’s capacity “to make impulsive and potentially irreversible decisions in hot blood.” 266 Canadian officials told Ambassador Cruz in Ottawa that the federal government could do little to prevent a private citizen from taking civil action, but that other writs could be filed to release the assets.267 Once

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262 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no 2608, July 20, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10453, File 42-8-1-2-1-CUBA, pt. 4.1, LAC and also Memorandum from Under Secretary (Cadieux) to the Minister of External Affairs (Martin) “World Wide Airways Incorporated versus the Cubans,” July 20, 1964 (Confidential) in the same file
263 See Memorandum from Under Secretary (Cadieux) to the Minister of External Affairs (Martin) “World Wide Airways Incorporated versus the Cubans,” October 6, 1964 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol,10453, File 42-8-1-2-CUBA, pt. 4.2, LAC
265 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 454, October 7, 1964 in RG 25, Vol,10453, File 42-8-1-2-CUBA, pt. 4.2, LAC
266 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 457, October 7, 1964 in RG 25, Vol,10453, File 42-8-1-2-CUBA, pt. 4.2, LAC. For the summary of a Mayrand interview recalling this incident see Harold Boyer, “Canada and Cuba: A Study in International Relations,” unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 1972, 422.
this was done, Castro appeared to forget his outburst and reassured Mayrand that Canadian-Cuban relations were excellent.\footnote{268} In the meantime, Ottawa rebuffed an effort by McVicar to recommence the charters, by insisting on a fifteen per month maximum and by requiring that World Wide satisfy all regulations, including those of the United States.\footnote{269} These flights never resumed, and World Wide Airways was defunct within a year.\footnote{270}

Other aviation issues carried over into mid-decade. One was the unresolved matter of Canadian landing rights for Cubana’s Soviet made IL-18s, with Ottawa still waiting for the technical specifications it had insisted on in 1963. Twice in the fall of 1964, IL-18s carrying very senior Cuban officials en route to and from overseas meetings, landed in Canada.\footnote{271} In the first instance, the State Department was taken by surprise when an IL-18 carrying Raul Roa overflew US territory en route to Montreal, where the Foreign Minister subsequently made connections to Europe and then Egypt for the Non-Aligned summit.\footnote{272} External Affairs officials reassured the US embassy that this action did not signify its approval of the IL-18 for regular service, rather was a “special courtesy” for VIPs; they also added that it was not Canada granting Cubana permission to cross United States airspace.\footnote{273} Rusk instructed Butterworth to communicate Washington’s appreciation at Canada’s stalling on regular use of the Soviet made aircraft, but also to request that it either block similar unscheduled flights, or immediately notify the State Department, as such flights would be subject to mandatory landing and searching at a United States airport.\footnote{274} Ottawa refused to deny landing permissions for such flights, but did...
promise in such circumstances to promptly inform the Americans. Seeking to demonstrate its good will, External Affairs reported to the US embassy that the IL-18 carrying Roa was not permitted to take on either new cargo or passengers on its return flight to Cuba. Ottawa notified the State Department about IL-18 flights picking up President Oswaldo Dorticos a week later, en route home from the summit. No Canadian-American problems resulted.

In December occurred a more unusual incident. The Cuban government requested Ottawa’s permission to allow an aircraft carrying Che Guevara to make a made a technical landing at Gander, and then to allow him to transfer to another flight that would eventually carry him to Algeria. The Cuban Industry Minister’s trip was to follow the United Nations General Assembly, where he would give a fiery, no holds barred address denouncing United States imperialism and promising no peaceful coexistence between “exploiters and exploited.” While in New York, Cuban expatriates launched rockets during his speech. As well, Guevara belligerently told an unofficial American delegation led by Senator Eugene McCarthy that Havana would continue to support leftist revolutionaries, and promised the swift execution of any CIA saboteurs discovered in Cuba. Long viewed by the United States government as being the most extreme in Castro’s government, Guevara’s messaging did little to change its opinion. However this time, given the United Nations context and ICAO rules, the State Department permitted a Cubana Britannia carrying the Argentine expatriate to pick him up in New York and to cross American airspace en route to Gander.

When first approached by the Cuban embassy with this request, Under Secretary Cadieux argued that Canada was not obligated under ICAO to permit either the landing or the transfer, as such a flight was considered as state and not civilian in nature. What made it awkward was that Ottawa had already set a precedent in allowing such privileges for Roa and Dorticos, although the circumstances here were even more exceptional; Guevara and his

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275 Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Department of State, no. 477, October 6, 1964 (Confidential), in RG 59, Subject Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 620, File AV 6 CUBA, NARA
276 Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Department of State, no. 469, October 5, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 620, File AV 6 CUBA, NARA
277 Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Department of State, no. 476, October 6, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 620, File AV 6 CUBA, NARA
entourage were originally to fly from New York to Montreal, transfer to an Air Canada flight to Halifax and then board a Cubana IL-18 sent from Havana to carry him overseas. For security reasons, the plan was revised so that he only flew in and out of Gander.\textsuperscript{280} As he had American cooperation, a reluctant Cadieux recommended approval of the second plan as a courtesy, despite having serious reservations and security concerns should Guevara’s presence in Canada become public knowledge. The Montreal option was simply too risky with the growing violence of the exile community, which as will be discussed later, was a major security concern for Ottawa in general.\textsuperscript{281}

The Guevara flight went ahead without incident, the one known time the revolutionary icon was on Canadian soil.\textsuperscript{282} Despite Ottawa’s wishes, the story did not remain completely secret. Reports appeared in the Canadian Press and the \textit{Globe and Mail} that Guevara had been picked up in Gander by a “Russian airliner” on a clandestine flight to an “undisclosed location.” Cadieux advised his Minister if questioned in the House of Commons to respond with partial truths, acknowledging that the Guevara flight had taken place using a Cuban aircraft (of Soviet manufacture), but that the only official and required information Ottawa possessed regarding the flight’s destination was its next port of call, which was Shannon, Ireland.\textsuperscript{283} The Minister’s recommended reply was in fact technically true, as the Cuban government had not disclosed Guevara’s ultimate destination in its request for transit rights, although both Ottawa and Washington knew from informants that he was bound for Algiers.\textsuperscript{284} Pick later chastised Ambassador Cruz that his government for failing to be transparent about Comandante Guevara’s destination. Responding to Pick’s rebuke in a similar fashion as over the 1963 Algerian “volunteers” flight, Cruz denied knowing that Guevara was en route to Algeria until

\textsuperscript{280} Memorandum from Under Secretary Marcel Cadieux to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Acting), “Request for Landing at Halifax for Cuban Aircraft,” December 14, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25 Vol. 10453, File 42-8-1-2-1-CUBA, pt. 4.2, LAC
\textsuperscript{281} Memorandum from Under Secretary Marcel Cadieux to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Acting), “Request for Landing at Halifax for Cuban Aircraft,” December 14, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25 Vol. 10453, File 42-8-1-2-1-CUBA, pt. 4.2, LAC
\textsuperscript{282} This author found no evidence of any other Guevara visit to Canada, nor any communication between him and Canadian officials while on Canadian soil.
\textsuperscript{283} Memorandum from Under Secretary Marcel Cadieux to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Acting), “Canadian Press Reports on Cuban Minister’s Flight Through Gander” December 16, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25 Vol. 10453, File 42-8-1-2-1-CUBA pt. 4.2, LAC
\textsuperscript{284} Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Washington, no. E-2513, December 15, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25 Vol. 10453, File 42-8-1-2-1-CUBA, pt. 4.2, LAC
reading about it in the press!\textsuperscript{285} What the Ambassador actually knew will have to await general access to the Cuban archives.

Despite its subversive connection, the Guevara flight, which had US cooperation as it was tied to the UN, was an exception. When Cuba asked Canada a year later for special permission to land another unscheduled IL-18 carrying Cuba bound “artistic groups” for the revolution’s seventh anniversary celebration, the story was different. The first of the two flights included groups from North Vietnam and the People’s Republic of China, now the United States’ leading enemies as it was by then fully engaged militarily in Vietnam.\textsuperscript{286} Ottawa’s position was that such approvals would be on a case by case basis, subject to Canadian rules.\textsuperscript{287} The State Department was not pleased by Canada’s posture, given the visitors’ countries of origin and also because they would likely stay on in Cuba after the anniversary to attend Castro’s forthcoming Tricontinental Congress. The latter was an international gathering of radical Marxists from the global south scheduled for late January 1966, an event John Crimmins, the Department’s Cuban Affairs Coordinator, greatly understated as “not likely to be particularly productive from the standpoint of the West.”\textsuperscript{288} Rejecting as hairsplitting the Americans’ efforts to differentiate the circumstances, Canada would not budge in principle from allowing occasional technical landings of civil IL-18s (although not regular service), even if connected to events External Affairs officials readily viewed as “distasteful.”\textsuperscript{289} Washington’s concerns were not the use of Soviet made aircraft per se, but the spreading of Cuba’s revolutionary ideology, a central objective of both the Tricontinental and its hemispheric follow up eighteen months later, the Latin American Solidarity Organization Conference, events seen

\textsuperscript{285} Memorandum from Latin American Division ( Pick) to Economic Division (Haffey), “Post Mortem on Guevara flight through Gander,” December 21, 1964 (Unclassified) in RG 25, Vol. 10044, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 4, LAC
\textsuperscript{286} Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 446, December 15, 1965 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10453, File 42-8-1-2-1-CUBA, pt. 5, LAC
\textsuperscript{287} Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 429, December 3, 1965 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10453, File 42-8-1-2-1-CUBA, pt. 5, LAC and also Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy Havana, no. E-2859, December 10, 1965 (Confidential) in same file
\textsuperscript{288} Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 3942, December 14, 1965 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10453, File 42-8-1-2-1-CUBA pt. 5, LAC. For US version see Telegram from Department of State (Ball) to US Embassy Ottawa, December 14, 1965 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 620, File AV 6 CUBA, NARA
\textsuperscript{289} Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy Havana (copy Washington), no. XL-234, December 31, 1965 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10453, File 42-8-1-2-1-CUBA, pt. 5, LAC
in Ottawa and Washington alike as inflammatory.\textsuperscript{290} In contrast, the United States would not complain when Canada allowed Cubana on a case by case basis to use IL-18s to ferry goods to Montreal for Cuba’s pavilion for Expo 67, although as will be shown, there would be propaganda concerns about that venue as well.\textsuperscript{291}

The Johnson administration’s fear of Cuban subversion also drove it to its testiest aviation related episode with Canada, concerning the 1966 Canadian-Soviet air agreement. That spring, the Canadian government decided to formally negotiate a bilateral air agreement with the Soviet Union, following a two year discussion. The proposal would give Soviet airline Aeroflot landing rights in Montreal, its first at a North American airport, with Air Canada having reciprocal privileges in Moscow, along with an en route stop in Copenhagen.\textsuperscript{292} Such a development would not in its own right bother the United States, which was then working on its own air agreement with Moscow. The complication was that the Soviet Union was pushing for Aeroflot to have onward rights from Montreal to Havana, as reciprocity for the Copenhagen stop. Moscow badly wanted easier air access to Cuba, as its only direct link to the island was by means of a 14 hour haul over international waters from Murmansk to Havana, a route American officials had assessed in 1963 as “the longest and probably riskiest regularly scheduled flight in the world.”\textsuperscript{293}

Even when Moscow first hinted at a Montreal-Havana leg, a 1964 Cabinet committee paper noted that this proposal had “repercussions for our relations with the United States.”\textsuperscript{294} As the onwards rights question moved from the hypothetical to the real in the spring of 1966, this proved true. At the beginning of June, the Soviet negotiating team formally requested this

\textsuperscript{290} For a good description of the LASO conference see CIA Weekly Review. Special Report, “The Latin American Solidarity Organization Conference,” September 22, 1967 (classification excised but Secret), DDRS, Doc. CK 3100067016


\textsuperscript{293} Memorandum from the Director of Intelligence and Research (Roger Hilsman) to Secretary of State Rusk, “Civil Air and Shipping into Cuba,” January 25, 1963 (Secret) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1963, File POL 31-1 CUBA-US, NARA. On UPA microfilm Dept. of State Cuba Internal and Foreign Affairs 1963-1966, Reel 6

\textsuperscript{294} Memorandum to Cabinet Committee on Communications and Works: Air Service to the USSR”, September 9, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.14857, File 42-8-3-1-USSR, pt. 1, LAC
option, citing cost efficiencies and to balance the Copenhagen stop. Seeing the Soviets’ viewpoint, Canadian officials believed they had the better deal, and hoped that Air Canada might gain similar onward rights to destinations in South Asia. Still, Marcel Cadieux suspected the Americans would have difficulty with the Montreal-Havana connection, and advised Martin to keep Washington informed. On June 2, the Pearson Cabinet approved Moscow’s request; it agreed that the United States should be informed, adding the caveat that it not have veto power over a Canadian government decision. Trade and Commerce Minister Mitchell Sharp also anticipated American displeasure, although he believed the United States’ real concern was the economic competition Canadian carriers would pose for their American rivals. While the State Department offered a cool response, it suggested that Moscow be offered New York, rather than Havana, as an onward rights alternative.

President Johnson viewed the situation much more seriously, viewing any air links to Cuba as enabling it to further its revolutionary mission, a viewpoint Ottawa did not share. In mid-1966, US Cuban relations were in a state of simmer rather than boil, but Johnson’s emotional temperature on Cuba remained high, as did his expectations of US allied support. Pearson and the Cabinet seriously underestimated the President’s intensity of feeling on the issue, but remembered all too well Johnson’s volcanic response a year earlier to Pearson’s Temple University speech on Vietnam. Thus for the first time since 1960, (excluding the missile crisis), Cuba became the subject of direct Presidential-Prime Ministerial correspondence. Johnson wrote Pearson that he was “disturbed” at Canada’s willingness to allow Aeroflot a Montreal-Havana run, arguing such a position “could greatly hamper the efforts of the Hemisphere to secure the effective insulation of Cuba, which so far as been our main defence

### Footnotes
295 Memorandum from the Under Secretary (Cadieux) to the Minister (Martin), “Canada Soviet Union Air Negotiations”, June 1, 1966 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.14857, File 42-8-3-1-USSR, pt. 2, LAC
296 Memorandum from the Under Secretary (Cadieux) to the Minister (Martin), “Canada Soviet Union Air Negotiations”, June 1, 1966 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.14857, File 42-8-3-1-USSR, pt. 2, LAC
297 Memorandum from the Under Secretary (Cadieux) to the Minister (Martin), “Canada Soviet Union Air Negotiations”, June 1, 1966 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.14857, File 42-8-3-1-USSR, pt. 2, LAC
301 For a description see Donaghy, 129-130 and also Charles Ritchie, *Undiplomatic Diaries*, 499.
against serious subversive efforts throughout Latin America.”

Using admittedly forceful language, Johnson warned Pearson to expect strong disapproval of such flights in Latin America and in the United States. Reinforcing the seriousness of his position, the President sent veteran US diplomat W. Averell Harriman to Ottawa to personally deliver the letter to Pearson.

Taken aback by the strong Presidential response, Cadieux suggested that in reply, Pearson and Martin take the position that the Soviets and Cubans did not need a Montreal-Havana route to further their objectives, and that as Canada’s Cuba policy remained unchanged, Ottawa doubted the flights would spark significant new criticism in Latin America, save perhaps from a few rightist military dictatorships. Similarly to Sharp, Cadieux - his own pro-American outlook aside - also suspected Washington was protecting commercial interests, and he believed that the Pearson government would have difficulties with its own electorate if it overtly yielded to American pressure. Pearson replied to Johnson on June 28, welcoming his “frankness,” and repeated Cadieux’s advice. The Prime Minister wrote that for Canada, the Moscow-Montreal service was the core issue, one that would be good economically and useful with the impending centennial year celebration. Pearson also used the familiar approach of cautioning the President that a last minute cancellation by Ottawa would, apart from straining Canadian-Soviet relations, have every semblance of a caving in to American pressure, an action that in turn could stroke anti-American sentiments in Canada.

Johnson and his foreign policy team would not give up. George Ball cabled Butterworth in Ottawa that Washington was “extremely disappointed” by Pearson’s reply, and the President used those very words in a very terse follow up letter to the Prime Minister. The White House

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302 Letter from President Johnson to Prime Minister Pearson, June 14, 1966 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.14857, File 42-8-3-1-USSR, pt. 2, LAC
303 Ibid
304 Telegram from Under Secretary of External Affairs (Cadieux) to Canadian Ambassador, Washington DC (Ritchie) no E-1936, June 16, 1966 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol.14857, File 42-8-3-1-USSR, pt. 2, LAC
305 Memorandum from Under Secretary (Cadieux) to the Minister of External Affairs (Martin) “Canada-USSR Air Agreement”, June 20, 1966 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol.14857, File 42-8-3-1-USSR, pt. 2, LAC and for Latin American see Department of External Affairs, Memorandum “Latin American Reaction to Soviet Air Rights through Montreal to Havana”, June 20, 1966 (Secret) in the same file.
306 Memorandum from Under Secretary (Cadieux) to the Minister of External Affairs (Martin) “Canada-USSR Air Agreement”, June 20, 1966 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol.14857, File 42-8-3-1-USSR, pt. 2, LAC
307 Letter from Prime Minister Pearson to President Johnson, June 28, 1966 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.14857, File 42-8-3-1-USSR, pt. 2, LAC
308 Telegram from Department of State (Ball) to US Embassy Ottawa, June 30, 1966 (Secret) in RG 59 Bureau of European Affairs. Country Director for Canada, Files Relating to Economic Matters 1956-1966, Entry 5299, Box
interpreted the Canadian response as a firm rejection, and once again Harriman was en route to Ottawa to persuade Pearson to change his mind.” On July 4, Harriman met with Martin and Jack Pickersgill, the Minister of Transport, and was “blunt and explicit in making it clear that the US would find it difficult to understand such an action on the part of a close ally.” The External Affairs Minister described the meeting to Pearson as a difficult one, but offered as a silver lining Harriman’s suggestion that Ottawa use as a stalling tactic a technical argument that Air Canada would be unable to exercise similar rights with its anticipated jump in demand due to Expo 67. The Canadian government took Harriman’s advice, although fearing a backlash if revealed, it sought to keep these meetings secret. That the Pearson government succumbed to American pressure was not only a matter of appearance, but was one of fact, one that it did not want the Canadian public to know.

To Ottawa’s surprise and delight, the Soviets agreed to the postponement, and on July 7 the Cabinet approved the final agreement, with the signing taking place four days later. The two countries agreed to postpone further discussion of onward rights until after Expo 67, although the door was left open to do so beforehand if both parties agreed. While details of the negotiations remain murky, the Soviets revised their position when Canadian officials requested onward rights from Moscow to a point in the Far East, a suggestion the Soviets rejected, knowing this scenario would put Air Canada jets over sensitive territory in Siberia. Pearson informed Johnson that Canada had taken the US viewpoint into consideration, and told Butterworth by telephone that while the issue had been staved off for a number of months, he

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12, File “Civil Aviation AV 3 Canada-USSR Air Agreement (Aeroflot Case) 1966”, NARA. For Johnson’s reply to Pearson see Letter from President Johnson to Prime Minister Pearson, July 2, 1966 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol.14857, File 42-8-3-1-USSR, pt. 2, LAC
311 Memorandum from the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Martin) to the Prime Minister (Pearson), “Canada-USSR Air Agreement,” July 4, 1966 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.14857, File 42-8-3-1-USSR, pt. 3, LAC
313 Telegram from the Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy Moscow, no. E-2105, July 5, 1966 (Confidential), in RG 25, Vol.14857, File 42-8-3-1-USSR, pt. 3, LAC
suspected the Soviets would likely revisit the issue. Butterworth replied that if Canada actually insisted on reciprocity, it meant onward rights for both, and he suspected the Soviets would back off again, ever protective of their airspace.\footnote{315}

While Ottawa hoped its diplomacy with the Americans would stay out of the press, there evidently was a leak. On July 12, the day after Canadian and Soviet officials signed the agreement, George Kidd, as acting Chargé d’Affaires in Washington, met with the State Department’s Rufus Smith and informed him that the Canadian embassy had been peppered with calls about alleged American disapproval of the agreement. The Canadian government’s official line was that it regularly consulted with the United States on many subjects, and on an agreement with the USSR, such conversations would be expected.\footnote{316} More detailed stories appeared in \textit{La Presse}, Montreal’s leading French-language daily, that Johnson had written Pearson on the agreement and particularly about Soviet-Cuban air links.\footnote{317} Finding its way to the House of Commons, opposition leader John Diefenbaker asked directly whether or not the United States government, particularly President Johnson, had objected to the Canada-USSR deal. Martin replied that the former Prime Minister should know that such top level communications would be privileged, but he assured Diefenbaker that the agreement \textit{as it had been signed} had not been opposed by the United States.\footnote{318} This leak question resurfaced in November when a Havana embassy staffer, Allan McLaine, reported that a Soviet official in Cuba knew about the Johnson-Pearson correspondence and allegations of US pressure on Ottawa. External Affairs officials concluded the Soviets were speculating using the \textit{La Presse} accounts and the Diefenbaker-Martin parliamentary exchange.\footnote{319} This issue quickly quieted and the Liberal government successfully dodged a bullet with the United States and the Canadian public.

\footnote{315}{Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 50, July 11, 1966 (Secret) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1964-1966, File AV 4 CAN-USSR, Box 616, NARA}
\footnote{316}{Memorandum of Conversation, “Canadian Embassy Press Comment on Canada/USSR Air Agreement” July 13, 1966 (Secret) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1964-1966, File AV 4 CAN-USSR, Box 616, NARA}
\footnote{317}{US Consulate Montreal Airgram A-8, July 14, 1966 (Unclassified) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 616, File AV 4 CAN-USSR, NARA.}
\footnote{318}{Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 066, July 12, 1966 (Secret) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 616, File AV 4 CAN-USSR, NARA}
\footnote{319}{See Letter from Allan McLaine, Canadian Embassy, Havana to J.W. Graham, November 30, 1966 (Personal and Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 14857, File 42-8-3-1-USSR, pt. 4, LAC and also Memorandum from Latin American Division (JW Graham) to Defence Liaison (2). “Soviet Knowledge of Background to Canadian Decision Not to Permit Aeroflot Flights to Havana,” December 15, 1966 (Secret) in same file.}
The Johnson administration achieved a short term victory and had helped Canada save face. However, State Department officials knew the issue would likely resurface, and the President was advised accordingly.\(^{320}\) When Pearson met Johnson at Campobello, New Brunswick late in August 1966, the Prime Minister ignored the advice of External Affairs and raised the matter, telling the President that he believed that the Soviets would likely revisit the issue.\(^{321}\) The record does not indicate the President’s reply. As Rufus Smith at the Canadian Desk reported, Ottawa’s deflection, even though it followed American advice, gained it no credit in Washington, as the United States knew well Canada’s predisposition to allow Aeroflot onward rights to Cuba. Canada simply saw the Cuban subversion issue as less urgent and prevalent than its neighbour.\(^{322}\)

The Montreal-Moscow flights began that November, without the onward rights.\(^{323}\) Yet as Pearson predicted, as Expo drew to a close in October 1967, the Soviets suggested amending the agreement to allow onward rights, this time to New York, as well as allowing it to use Gander as a technical stop for its flights to the Americas – primarily Havana but also Mexico City, with Air Canada to gain in turn the right to fly on to destinations in South Asia or the Middle East.\(^{324}\) The Soviet Union was not yet an ICAO signatory, giving Canada had more negotiating leeway. Martin explained these advantages to Pearson, noting that his concerns about allowing subversives and spies into Canada were low with the airport being Gander, and Aeroflot was not requesting permission to take on or let off passengers.\(^{325}\) Once again Ottawa

\(^{320}\) President’s Evening Reading, July 5, 1966 (Secret) in RG 59 Bureau of European Affairs. Country Director for Canada, Files Relating to Economic Matters 1956-1966, Entry 5299, Box 12, File “Civil Aviation AV 3 Canada-USSR Air Agreement (Aeroflot Case) 1966”, NARA


\(^{322}\) Memorandum from Rufus Z. Smith, Canadian Desk to Assistant under Secretary of State for European Affairs (Benneville), July 14, 1966 (Secret) in RG 59 Bureau of European Affairs. Country Director for Canada, Files Relating to Economic Matters 1956-1966, Entry 5299, Box 12, File “Civil Aviation AV 3 Canada-USSR Air Agreement (Aeroflot Case) 1966”, NARA

\(^{323}\) Telegram from US Embassy Moscow to Secretary of State, no. 1639, October 6, 1966 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 618, File 4 CAN-USSR, NARA

\(^{324}\) Memorandum from External Affairs Minister (Martin) to the Prime Minister, October 25, 1967 (Secret) in Lester B. Pearson Papers, MG 26, Series N-4, Vol. 280, File 841/US6, LAC

\(^{325}\) Ibid.
underestimated American sensitivities on Cuba. Tensions between Washington and Havana had heated up in 1967, and Cuban subversion had become once again a significant Presidential concern, not only because of its activities in Venezuela and Bolivia, but also as Havana was seen as a major inspiration to American radicals, especially the militant wing of the African-American civil rights movement led by Stokely Carmichael and Robert F. Williams, both of whom spent time on the island.\(^{326}\) As the Johnson White House was in no mood to see Cuba benefit, the timing of the Soviet Union’s new request to Ottawa was a bad one for Canadian-American relations. Attuned to American sensitivities, Pearson got directly involved, cabling Ambassador Edgar Ritchie (who replaced his namesake Charles Ritchie in 1966) and advising him to give the United States the opportunity to present its views before Canada allowed any amendments with the Soviets.\(^{327}\) Washington’s response was equally blunt, although without Prime Minister to President correspondence. Under Secretary Nicholas Katzenbach informed Ritchie on October 28 that his government found the Gander suggestion “just as objectionable” as the Montreal-Havana run, raising the familiar that it would “raise all kinds of hell here” with the press and Congress, and make it trickier to resolve other bilateral differences.\(^{328}\)

Temper ran high in both directions. After reading Ritchie’s conversation summary, Martin thought Katzenbach had exceeded the boundaries of “friendly expression” in both tone and substance.\(^{329}\) At an Ottawa reception, the External Affairs Minister fumed to the US embassy’s Political Counsellor that “the US could not treat Canada like a banana republic,” adding that he understood Cuba’s importance to the United States and that “Canada was the best friend the US had.” The American diplomat held his ground, countering Martin by citing Canadian positions on Cuba, Vietnam and Chinese representation at the UN. Becoming even angrier, the External Affairs Minister retorted that “on Cuba, Canada had long allowed its self respect to suffer by playing the game so much in the US favor.” Martin did back off when the American reminded him that proportionally, Canadian exports to Cuba exceeded those of every

\(^{326}\) See CIA Information Cable Incoming 67583, October 9, 1967 (Classification excised) in National Security Files, Cuba Country File, Folder Cuba Volume 3 [Bowdler], 8/67-3/68, Box 19, Lyndon B. Johnson Library (LBJL). On UPA microfilm Lyndon B. Johnson National Security files (NSF), Latin America Supplement 1, Reel 5. Williams connections to Fair Play for Cuba Committee Canada are in Chapter 4.

\(^{327}\) Telegram from Prime Minister Pearson to Canadian Ambassador Washington DC (Ritchie), no E-3645, October 26, 1967 (Secret) in Lester B. Pearson Papers, MG 26, Series N-4, Vol. 280, File 841/U56, LAC

\(^{328}\) Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 3977, October 28, 1967 (Confidential) in Lester B. Pearson Papers, MG 26, Series N-4, Vol. 280, File 841/U56, LAC

\(^{329}\) Telegram from the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Martin) to the Canadian Embassy, Washington DC, October 30, 1967 (Secret) in Lester B. Pearson Papers, MG 26, Series N-4, Vol. 280, File 841/U56, LAC
other NATO country. Ritchie met with Rusk a few weeks later, and by then emotions had cooled down. The Secretary stressed the bad timing of Moscow’s request, coming on the heels of a new anti-Castro resolution in the OAS and the proof provided by Che Guevara’s death that Cuba was indeed supporting the Bolivian insurgency. As his predecessor had a year earlier, Ritchie responded that Canada’s position concerned its aviation interests and reciprocity with the Soviet Union, not sympathy for Cuba. In the end, it was another moot point. Canada could find no suitable counterpart for such technical landings in the Soviet Union. The issue faded.

Canada’s civil air links to Cuba were intricately connected to subversion and espionage, as well as trade. On the former, Pearson was resolute about keeping promises he had personally made to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson about curtailing such activities on Canadian soil. Despite preserving a veneer of official formality and diplomatic propriety, Ottawa did not trust Cuban diplomats, mistrusting their agenda and believing that they pushed and exceeded what External Affairs considered to be proper boundaries. Ottawa was annoyed by Havana’s regular requests to allow extra passengers on incoming Cubana’s flights, as well as the oversize bags carried by its diplomats, which had been improperly used to smuggle US made goods. Many of these problems were connected to Cuba’s Montreal Trade Office, which developed a reputation with External Affairs and the RCMP as the common factor in many infractions. Its personnel were subject to searches on leaving Canada, a sore point with the Cubans. There was also the matter of Prensa Latina, whose members had been given only temporary journalist visas, but who had apparently stayed on and distributed propaganda out of the Montreal Office – a fact confirmed by the British in 1964 when Cuban literature linked to the Montreal office was found in Bolivia. Well before this confirmation, A.J. Pick scolded Ambassador Cruz for a lack of transparency in what Prensa Latina’s representatives were doing in Canada, and its members

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330 Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 2229, October 31, 1967 (Secret) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1967-1969, Box 1613, File POL CAN-US, NARA
331 Memorandum of Conversation between Secretary of State Rusk and Canadian Ambassador A.E. Ritchie, November 16, 1967 (Secret – Limdis) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1967-1969, Box 1613, File POL CAN-US, NARA
332 Agreed Minute between Canada and USSR, November 1, 1967 (no classification marking) in RG 25, Vol. 14857, File 42-8-3-1-USSR, pt. 4, LAC
were subsequently expelled from Canada.\textsuperscript{335} The documentation on all these matters rarely made explicit reference to the United States. However, there is little doubt that Ottawa undertook precautions that risked difficulties with Havana to minimize exposure and embarrassment with the United States. In one incident, the scenario played out in reverse: in June 1966, the State Department accused staff at Canada’s Havana embassy of smuggling American goods purchased in Florida back into Cuba, which they viewed as vastly superior to those obtainable in Cuba. External Affairs had to officially discourage its diplomats from such cross border shopping escapades.\textsuperscript{336}

Along with bags, journalists and extra passengers, the Pearson government also believed Cuba had disproportionately large staff allotments at its facilities in Canada, facilitating possible extracurricular activities. Spurred on by the RCMP, in early March 1963, the Security and Intelligence Branch had recommended a staff quota for Cuba’s facilities.\textsuperscript{337} Others in External Affairs such as W.F. Stone of the Economic Division and A.J. Pick argued that Cuba’s staff levels were not unreasonable, as Canada’s trade volume with the country was either comparable or larger to that with the Soviet Union and several other East bloc countries.\textsuperscript{338} As Expo 67 loomed, the issue resurfaced when Havana requested visas for over 200 of its nationals to staff its pavilion, including sixty security guards (twenty more than the Soviet Union). This figure alarmed Pearson, believing it to be excessive. Cadieux later presented a revised figure of 50 staff, with half being security.\textsuperscript{339} Recent anti-Castro violence in Canada, coupled with right wing extremist threats against the pavilions of other communist countries (especially Yugoslavia) led Cadieux to believe substantial security was warranted. Not trusting the Cubans, policymakers in

\textsuperscript{335} Memorandum from Latin American Division (AJ Pick) to Under Secretary of External Affairs (Robertson), February 26, 1963 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 5077, File 4568-40, pt. 12, LAC

\textsuperscript{336} Memorandum from A. J. Pick (Latin American Division) to J.W Graham (Latin American Division), June 24, 1966 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 8906, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 3, LAC and also Memorandum from Latin American Division (JW Graham) to Canadian Ambassador in Washington (Charles Ritchie) June 28, 1966 (Confidential) in the same file. The Canadian diplomats lamented the scarcity and poor quality of locally available items, thus motivating the cross border shopping trip

\textsuperscript{337} See Memorandum from RCMP Assistant Commissioner and Director of Security and Intelligence (J.R.W. Bordeleau) to Defence Liaison (2) (J.J. Mccardle) March 7, 1963 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 8532, File 11185-F-40, LAC

\textsuperscript{338} Memorandum from Head of Economic Division W.F. Stone) to Defence Liaison (2) Division, July 5, 1963 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 2734, File 289-40, LAC and also Memorandum from Head of Latin American Division (AJ Pick) to Defence Liaison (2) Division, August 1, 1963 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 8532, File 11185-F-40, LAC

\textsuperscript{339} Handwritten note from Solicitor General Larry Pennell to Secretary of State for External Affairs Martin April13, 1967 in RG 25, Vol. 10502, File 55-7-3-MTL-2-CUBA, pt.1, LAC and also Memorandum from the Under Secretary for External Affairs (Cadieux) to prime Minister Pearson, “Cuban Security Personnel at Expo 67,” April 26, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10502, File 55-7-3-MTL-2-CUBA, pt.1, LAC.
Ottawa nonetheless wanted to be certain that “Canada is not used as a base by the Cubans for subversive activities.” In expressing such concerns, they were naturally thinking of the United States, whose visitors to Expo were expected to exceed by a wide margin all other countries.

Canada also continued to monitor travel to Cuba from its soil. Cuba had become a popular destination for left-leaning Canadians and Americans, with Havana being all too willing to showcase the revolution’s accomplishments. Aware of this, the Johnson administration sought tighter restrictions on such tourism, and remained concerned that Canada was a potential avenue of getting to the island. In May 1963, the pacifist Canadian Committee of 100, partnering with the American Committee for Non-Violent Action, launched a Quebec to Guantanamo peace march, both in response to the Cuban missile crisis and to protest the United States’ Cuba policy. There were two legs of the walk. The first one commenced in Quebec City and featured 11 walkers, including 8 Americans, who went to Montreal and Ottawa before crossing the border. A second group originated in Hamilton and crossed at Niagara Falls, meeting up with the first group near a US military base at Rome, New York before marching south. In December, two Canadians and 23 Americans were arrested in Albany, Georgia for “disorderly conduct” and detained, with some being apparently mistreated before release. American officials refused to grant the marchers passport authorizations for travel to Cuba, and the effort fizzled finally in November 1964, when the last participants quit, failing to reach their destination.

340 Memorandum from Latin American Division (JW Graham) to Information Division (Seaborn) “Expo- Cuba” March 28, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10502, File 55-7-3-MTL-2-CUBA,pt.1, LAC. See also Letter from Information Division R.G. Seaborn to Executive Assistant for Expo 67 Corporation (Jacques Asselin), March 30, 1967 (Confidential) in same file.

341 Airgram from US Embassy Ottawa to Department of State, Weeka 44, November 3, 1967 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1967-1969, Box 1936, File POL 2-1 CAN, NARA


Also that summer, additional student trips to Cuba were organized both in the United States and Canada. Recalling the previous summer’s event, the Johnson administration anticipated the trips and the State Department asked other countries, notably Mexico, to refuse transit rights to US students travelling to Cuba without validated passports, of which none were granted.\textsuperscript{345} These efforts aside, in June, another 83 American students defied their government’s travel restrictions and travelled to Cuba via Europe, returning in mid August. Complicating the issue for Washington is that several of the more militant students carried firearms.\textsuperscript{346} Unlike the 1963 tour or the Quebec-Guantanamo marchers, none of these American students entered Canada as part of their voyage. At the same time, Canada had its own Cuba tour, as some 45 youth and activists went for two months that summer on a venture organized by Fair Play for Cuba, with transportation paid for by the Cuban government.\textsuperscript{347} The reported highlight was a baseball game against a Cuban team that included Fidel and Raul Castro, with the students raving afterwards about the skill that both brothers exhibited in that sport. The students also praised the revolution’s accomplishments when back on their campuses.\textsuperscript{348} In a detailed report, John W. Graham at the Havana embassy described 30 out of the 45 students as being “normal,” and better behaved than their American counterparts, and only a minority were committed Marxists.\textsuperscript{349} A second tour planned for the summer of 1965 was cancelled when the Cuban government declined to fund it, an action that ended Fair Play’s most active period (it carried on...
as a distributor of Cuban government literature and organizer of pro-Castro events until its final wind-up in 1972).³⁵⁰

Ottawa treaded delicately when the travel flow went from Cuba to Canada, aware that little could infuriate Lyndon Johnson’s wrath like an ally hosting or sponsoring a pro-Castro, anti-American gathering. Late in 1963, American officials learned that just such an event was scheduled to take place in Montreal in 1964: the second meeting of the International Congress for Sovereignty, Independence of American Nations and Solidarity with Cuba. The Montreal location was suggested by Michel Chartrand, the leader of the Parti Socialiste de Quebec, who indicated his province was also involved “in a battle for national self determination.” The gathering was also championed by veteran Canadian Communist leader Tim Buck, believing it would further the Party’s work in the Americas.³⁵¹ Dean Rusk cabled Butterworth that this Congress, scheduled to overlap with the OAS meetings in July, was “a communist inspired meeting designed to provide a pro-Castro, anti-US sounding board,” and the United States was adamant that this meeting not take place in Canada.³⁵² The Pearson government well appreciated the Americans’ concerns, and was appalled that such a pro-communist and pro-separatist meeting would take place in Canada. Marcel Cadieux vehemently opposed permitting this meeting to go ahead, disbelieving that the Canadian tradition of free speech and assembly obligated it to host a gathering committed to revolutionary violence. The strongly anti-communist Under Secretary informed Martin he would rather have criticism from the Canadian left than in the United States and elsewhere in Latin America, expressing explicitly “in view of the implications of this meeting in regards to our relations with the USA and the separatist group in Quebec, exceptional and drastic measures are required.”³⁵³

³⁵⁰See Memorandum from F.L. Higgitt, Assistant Director of Security and Intelligence RCMP to Defence Liaison (2) September 16, 1965 (Secret) in RG 146, File “Fair Play for Cuba Committee – Student Delegation to Cuba, 1965,” Vol. 4, ATIP 2009-00188, LAC and also Memorandum from Canadian Embassy in Havana “Canadian Fair Play for Cuba Committee,” October 20, 1965 (Secret) in Vol. 5 of the same file series.


³⁵²Telegram from Secretary of State to Embassy in Ottawa, No 818, March 16, 1964 (Secret) in National Security Files; Box 16, Country Files Cuba: Cables Vol. 2, 3/64-5/64, Lyndon B. Johnson Library. On UPA microfilm Lyndon B. Johnson National Security files (NSF), Latin America Supplement 1, Reel 4. Also in DDRS CK3101145997

³⁵³Memorandum from the Under Secretary for External Affairs (Cadieux) to the Minister (Martin), “Second Congress for the Independence of the Peoples of America and Solidarity with Cuba – Montreal,” February 27, 1964 (Secret) in RG 146, File Number (Redacted), “Second Continental Congress of Latin American Countries July 16-19, 1964,” Vol. 1, ATIP2011-00248, Stack 1, LAC
The Pearson government had no intention of defying the United States in this context, and moved proactively to stop the Latin American and Cuba Solidarity group from meeting in Canada. Evidence suggests it even requested a little American assistance in helping to shut down this meeting. Rusk reported to Ambassador Butterworth that Canadian embassy staff had suggested that Washington formally ask Ottawa “to prevent or place obstacles” regarding the meeting – in other words the Canadian government invited direct US interference. Martin secured the support of his Cabinet colleague in Citizenship and Immigration to deny visas to the delegates, which it had been doing since the 1950s for communist oriented events. George Ignatieff, attending NATO meetings that March, proactively told the other delegates that Canada intended to prevent the Congress happening in Canada and included this action on his list of examples demonstrating his country’s commitment to hemispheric security. Ottawa hoped such cooperation would shield it somewhat from the American heat it was experiencing over growing exports and cargo flights.

Believing Castro was ultimately behind the Congress, Cadieux and Martin thought it was essential to inform Havana that staging such political meetings in Canada was unacceptable. Acting via its embassy in Havana, External Affairs officials asked Cuban Foreign Minister Roa not to hold the meeting in Montreal. When Roa denied Havana’s ties to the Solidarity organization, a skeptical Ambassador Mayrand bluntly stated that as this organization clearly served Cuba’s foreign policy objectives, “sometimes one has to take responsibility for one’s friends.” For the Cubans, Canada was the ideal location for such a meeting, being a western

355 Memorandum from the Under Secretary for External Affairs (Cadieux) to the Minister (Martin), ‘Second Congress for the Independence of the Peoples of America and Solidarity with Cuba – Montreal` March 17, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 146, File Number (Redacted), “Second Continental Congress of Latin American Countries July 16-19, 1964,” Vol. 2, ATIP2011-00248, Stack 2, LAC. On visas and communist events see Letter from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Cadieux) to Deputy Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (C.M. Isbester). March 9, 1964 in the same file.
356 Department of State Telegram from NATO Delegation Paris to Under Secretary George Ball, POLTO 1338, March 23, 1964 (Secret) in RG 59, Subject Numeric Files 1964-1966, File POL 1- CUBA-US, Box 2073, NARA
357 Memorandum from the Under Secretary for External Affairs (Cadieux) to the Minister (Martin), ‘Second Congress for the Independence of the Peoples of America and Solidarity with Cuba – Montreal` March 17, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 146, File Number (Redacted), “Second Continental Congress of Latin American Countries July 16-19, 1964,” Vol. 2 ATIP2011-00248, Stack 2, LAC
hemisphere country, not bound by OAS resolutions and not normally requiring visas for visitors from the Americas. Not conceding any formal ties to the group, Roa reluctantly agreed to use his government’s good offices to seek an alternative location. However, he moved more slowly than Ottawa wished, requiring additional reminders from Mayrand in May after he received reports that advertisements continued to circulate about the Montreal Congress. Annoyed and perhaps embarrassed, Roa promised to raise the matter promptly with Castro. Clearly the Cuban leader’s views held sway, and the RCMP subsequently reported to US and British officials a few weeks later that the Congress had at least been indefinitely postponed. For the moment, Castro opted for pragmatism over revolutionary idealism, although that did not stop him from later on in the decade holding his own international meetings: the January 1966 Tricontinental and the August 1967 Latin American Solidarity Organization Conference, both of which he had to hold in Cuba as no other western hemisphere country would host such a venue.

As briefly noted, Quebec separatists were also among those attracted by the Cuban revolution. The so-called Quiet Revolution in Quebec was then in full swing and gaining momentum, making a response to Quebec nationalism and separatism a key preoccupation of the Liberal governments of Pearson and Pierre Trudeau. A radicalized minority of Québécois activists embraced Marxism and the New Left, and juxtaposed the aspirations of francophone Quebec with that of oppressed and colonized peoples all over the world. Much in the same vein as certain African American leaders, Québécois nationalists identified with and were inspired by Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution, and a number would travel to Cuba to see firsthand the radical socialist experiment. During his one day visit to Montreal in 1959, Castro

359 Latin American Division Report “Attempt. to Organize in Montreal the Second Congress for the Independence of the People of America and Solidarity with Cuba”, March 10, 1965 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 10044, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 4, LAC
362 RCMP Memorandum from Assistant Commissioner and Director of Security and Intelligence (JW Bordeleau) to unidentified June 24, 1964 (Secret) in RG 146, File Number (Redacted), “Second Continental Congress of Latin American Countries July 16-19, 1964,” Vol. 4 ATIP2011-00248, Stack 4, LAC
363 For an overview see Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal*, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens, 2010), Chapter 1
364 Mills, 66-73.
had celebrated the city’s “Latin atmosphere” and was thrilled by its enthusiastic reception.\(^{365}\)

The fruition of this look towards Havana was plainly evident in late 1970, when Cuba became the chosen destination for several members of the Front de Liberation Québécois (FLQ) as they entered exile after freeing kidnapped British Trade Commissioner James Cross.

By the mid-1960s, the FLQ had emerged as the militant and violent wing of radical Quebec separatists, and Canadian and American officials alike sought to determine whether the Castro regime, with its commitment to support revolutionaries everywhere, was providing it with any such assistance. In a lengthy September 1964 airgram, Jerome Gaspard reported from Montreal that an unnamed Cuban expatriate who favoured Quebec independence alleged that ties indeed existed between Havana and the movement. Among this informant’s more spectacular allegations were that Julia Gonzalez, Cuba’s Consul in that city, had close contact with separatists, that Cuban freighters had transported small quantities of arms to Quebec for an insurgency, and that a federal civil servant was a courier for the so-called Armée Liberation de Quebec (ALQ -- a similar body to the FLQ).\(^{366}\) Gaspard’s report offered no critical evaluation of the source, and the US Embassy passed it on to the RCMP. In an RCMP overview of violent separatists dating from September 1964, it was noted that FLQ coordinator Georges Schoeters met Castro in Montreal in 1959 and had visited Cuba several times, including a seven month stint working for Che Guevara’s Institute for Agrarian Reform (INRA). This assessment also noted that Guevara’s writings on guerrilla warfare were carefully studied by underground Quebec groups.\(^{367}\) Several of the participants in the 1964 Fair Play organized summer trip were identified as separatists.\(^{368}\) According to Gaspard, 46 French Canadian youth had travelled to Cuba that summer, some as part of the Fair Play tour. He noted that one reporter for the conservative Catholic newspaper \textit{L’Action} condemned these tours for indoctrinating

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\(^{365}\) \textit{Montreal Gazette}, April 27, 1959.

\(^{366}\) See American Consul in Montreal Airgram A-39 to Department of State, “Cuban Involvement in the Quebec Separatist Movement,” September 18, 1964 (Secret) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 1900, POL 18 CAN, NARA. This document was released to the author under FOIA review.

\(^{367}\) For background see RCMP Memorandum “The Development of Separatism in Quebec,” September 30, 1964 (Secret) in RG 146, File [redacted], A2011-00543, Stack 9, LAC.

\(^{368}\) Memorandum from P.A. Bridle (Latin American Division) to Mr. Langley, “Alleged Cuban Subversive Activities Directed toward Canada” December 19, 1967 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 10045, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 7, LAC.
impressionable young people in Marxism, fearing the spread of this ideology, as well as anti-clericalism, back home.\footnote{369}{Airgram from US Consul General in Montreal (Gaspard) to Department of State, “Local Comment on Recent Trip to Cuba by 46 French-Canadian Students,” no. A-17, July 29, 1964 (Unclassified) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1964-1966, POL 23-10 CUBA, Box 2074, NARA}

Ambassador Butterworth, well aware of the Pearson government’s extreme sensitivity regarding the Quebec issue, believed that a proven Cuba-FLQ connection would make Ottawa more sympathetic to the United States, perhaps even to the point of supporting the American embargo. In a telegram back to Rusk, Butterworth stated “I am of course keenly interested in GOC’s closest examination of Cuban activity and all its ramifications for GOC policy vis a vis Cuba.”\footnote{370}{Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State no. 450, September 30, 1964 (Secret) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 1990, POL 18 CAN, NARA. This document was released to the author under FOIA review.} Both Butterworth and Rusk opted to monitor the issue closely, but discreetly, lest the Canadian government see through such efforts. Fearing the issue might backfire for the Americans, Rusk requested that US officials (redacted but presumably the CIA station chief in Ottawa) confirm the reliability of the Cuban exile source, as well as corroborate with the RCMP’s own findings.\footnote{371}{Airgram from Secretary of State to US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State no A-70, November 12, 1964 (Secret) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 1990, POL 18 CAN, NARA. This document was released to the author under FOIA review.} The available documentary trail does not reveal the outcome.

In mid-October 1964, Castro asked Ambassador Mayrand directly about the Quebec separatist issue. The Canadian diplomat responded that this movement was vocal and drew more attention than it deserved, but added that English Canada needed to redress French Canada’s legitimate grievances – which Pearson was attempting to do by promoting greater bilingualism. In a tone the Ambassador believed was sincere, the Cuban leader responded that the break-up of Canada would be tragic. Mayrand believed Castro’s statement cast serious doubt, it not outright refuted, any rumours that the Castro regime was courting radical separatists.\footnote{372}{Canadian Embassy Havana Numbered Letter 751, October 22, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10044, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 3, LAC. Mayrand recounted this conversation to Harold Boyer. See Harold Boyer, “Canada and Cuba: A Study in International Relations,” unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 1972, 439.} As virtually nothing in Cuba happened without Castro’s knowledge or approval, the Cuban leader was in all likelihood seeking to contain rumours and allegations, and to reassure his principal non-communist trading partner that his regime was not seeking its division.

Castro’s denials to Mayrand, despite their semblance of candour, do not completely suffice to discredit the rumours. Evidence from now declassified FBI records, based on sources
from the radical left, leave troubling questions. According to a January 1964 teletype sourced by SOLO, the Bureau’s leading informant on the Communist Party USA (and also Canada), Castro had told a Canadian Communist Party delegate while in Moscow to “mind your own damn business” when the latter asked the Cuban leader not to support the FLQ. SOLO learned of this conversation by talking to Canadian Communist Party Secretary Leslie Morris. The evidence of Havana’s support for separatists is certainly not water tight, and such an action would have been highly risky, even foolhardy, for a government wanting consistent and cordial relations with Canada. At the same time, Castro was known to take risks, and in the mid-1960s he was in his most militant phase in fostering revolution. The full story awaits the disclosure of intelligence documentation from Canada, the United States and Cuba itself, records that will likely remain secret for decades to come.

The question of a Cuban connection to Quebec separatists resurfaced in the autumn of 1967 when Robert N. Thompson, a Social Credit Member of Parliament from Alberta (formerly the party’s leader) accused Havana from the House of Commons floor of using French language short wave radio broadcasts to encourage violent separatists to establish a guerrilla base in the Laurentians, following strategies developed by Che Guevara. Thompson’s sources were a Montreal Gazette story from August, as well as constituent letters complaining that Cuba was also broadcasting revolutionary propaganda in English. Thompson later wrote an open letter to Paul Martin repeating the Cuban connection to Quebec, as well as to an Aboriginal “Red Power” movement. He also complained that propaganda had been distributed from the country’s “overstaffed” pavilion at Expo 67. The Albertan argued that Quebec was Cuba’s principal target, and noted that the French used in the broadcasts more closely matched that spoken in Quebec than in Haiti or any other francophone parts of the hemisphere. In addition, Thompson

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373 FBI Teletype from SAC New York to Director (Hoover) January 3, 1964 (Top Secret), SOLO File part 53, Online at FBI Vault website http://vault.fbi.gov/solo. Cuba was much closer to the Trotskyite controlled Fair Play for Cuba Committee rather than the Canada-Cuba Friendship Committee, which was controlled by the Communist Party of Canada. In May, the CIA would report that Castro and the Canadian Communists had repaired their breach. See CIA Information Report TDCSDB-3/660,967 May 1, 1964 (Secret) in National Security Files Box 32, Country Files Cuba: TDCSs [CIA Intelligence Information Cable], vol. 1, 11/63-6/64, Lyndon B. Johnson Library (LBJL)

374 Memorandum from Under Secretary (Marcel Cadieux) to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Martin), “Alleged Subversive Broadcasts from Cuba,” October 18, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10045, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 6, LAC John Kirk and Peter McKenna deny that there was any evidence to support Thompson’s claim. See Kirk and McKenna, Canada-Cuba Relations: The Other Good Neighbour Policy, 103-104.
stated that FLQ members had toured Cuba and had received Cuban arms to begin an insurgency.\textsuperscript{375}

Paul Martin’s public response was ambivalent. Refusing to confirm the veracity of Thompson’s statements, he believed that they contained enough truth to justify issuing a thinly veiled warning to Havana that Ottawa would not tolerate any action “which seeks to encourage subversion or revolutionary activity.”\textsuperscript{376} A number of the press reports Thompson provided contained details not wide of the mark, even though others in Ottawa could not confirm them publicly. Radio Havana’s director admitted to Montreal’s \textit{La Presse} that it broadcast in French via short-wave for 22 hours each day, promoting socialism. He admitted that Cuba was interested in the Quebec issue, but also wanted excellent relations with Canada.\textsuperscript{377} The director’s reply contradicted the Cuban Foreign Ministry’s aide-memoire that refuted Thompson’s allegations outright, and accused the Canadian press of indirectly abating “an ill-intentioned campaign against Cuba.” Havana offered to provide Ottawa a complete set of transcripts of all its radio broadcasts to prove no such calls to arms were made.\textsuperscript{378}

External Affairs officials dismissed the notion that there was an anti-Cuba press campaign, although they noted Thompson may have been fed erroneous information by some right of centre reporters.\textsuperscript{379} As for the subversive pamphlets Cuba was allegedly disseminating through its Expo pavilion, the RCMP suspected the real culprits were Cuban exiles – a not implausible suggestion, given that the latter were actively targeting Canada that year and had been caught illegally distributing anti-Castro literature on the Expo fairgrounds.\textsuperscript{380} Whether the exile community had a role in feeding Thompson’s accusations is unknown. Canada and Quebec were certainly caught in a Cuban propaganda crossfire from both directions.

\textsuperscript{375} Open Letter from Robert N. Thompson, M.P. to Secretary of State for External Affairs (Martin), October 30, 1967 in RG 25, Vol. 10045, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 6, LAC
\textsuperscript{376} Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Havana, no. XL-578, November 2, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10045, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 6, LAC
\textsuperscript{377} Memorandum from S.E. Gooch (Latin American Division) to P.A. Bridle, “Alleged Cuban Broadcasts to Canada – Press Treatment” October 31, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10045, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 6, LAC
\textsuperscript{378} Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs no. 1013, October 27, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10045, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 6, LAC
\textsuperscript{379} Memorandum from S.E. Gooch (Latin American Division) to P.A. Bridle, “Alleged Cuban Broadcasts to Canada – Press Treatment,” October 31, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10045, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 6, LAC
\textsuperscript{380} Memorandum from Under Secretary (Marcel Cadieux) to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Martin). “Alleged Cuban Subversive Issues Directed at Canada” November 22, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10045, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 6, LAC. For the prosecution of anti-Castro Cubans at Expo see Montreal \textit{Gazette}, August 1, 1967 found in RG 25, Vol. 10502, File 55-7-3-MTL-2-CUBA, pt.2, LAC
On receiving the RCMP investigation results, the Pearson government decided it had insufficient evidence against Cuba to launch a formal complaint.\(^{381}\) To smooth things over, Martin instructed Mayrand to reassure Roa that the Canadian government shared Havana’s concerns about the impact of such allegations on Canadian-Cuban relations. However, still having a tinge of suspicion, Martin also suggested that he remind the Cubans that Quebec separatism was a very sensitive issue in Canada, and repeat Ottawa’s warnings of the consequences of any subversive activities in Canada.\(^{382}\) Cadieux recommended that his Minister reply openly to Thompson (and therefore to Havana) confirming that his evidence was insufficient.\(^{383}\)

Thompson’s allegations that Cuba was encouraging an insurgency in Quebec received some attention in the United States. As with the 1964 investigation on a possible flow of Cuban arms into Quebec, American officials sought to verify whether any corroborating evidence existed. Quoting unidentified Canadian officials, likely the RCMP investigators, Butterworth reported to Rusk: “there appears to be a thread of truth in Thompson’s allegations, but in the main they constitute a charge that cannot be proved.”\(^{384}\) Requesting information about the radio broadcasts, the US Ambassador received confirmation from the US Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) that Cuba was regularly broadcasting programs “to the French speaking people of North America.”\(^{385}\) The few available State Department documents suggest Washington was in the end unconvinced by Thompson’s accusations, despite having a political interest in their veracity. Florida’s Republican Senator Richard Stone received several constituent inquiries from Cuban-Americans about the rumoured Laurentian training bases, and he followed up with J.W. Graham, now at External Affairs’ Latin American Division. Graham

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\(^{381}\) Possible Statement in the House on Alleged Cuban Subversive Issues Directed at Canada (undated) in RG 25, Vol. 10045, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 6, LAC
\(^{383}\) Memorandum from Under Secretary (Marcel Cadieux) to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Martin), “Alleged Cuban Subversive Activities Directed at Canada,” January 8, 1968 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 10045, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 7, LAC
\(^{384}\) Airgram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State A-655, November 30, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1967-1969, Box 1613, POL 23-7 CAN, NARA.
\(^{385}\) Telegram from Secretary of State (Rusk) to US Embassy Ottawa, October 23, 1967 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1967-1969, Box 1613, POL 23-7 CAN, NARA
repeated that the government’s investigation had failed to substantiate these rumours, although he added that it would be followed up.386

From the available record, whether or not Cuba actually had actual links to the separatists, or whether Havana’s exile foes had successfully duped Canada in a disinformation campaign are both inconclusive, although it is entirely plausible that the answer could be a “both and.” Neither Canadian officials nor their American counterparts completely dismissed the first rumours, and the issue did carry on into 1969, when Quebec Premier Jean-Jacques Bertrand outraged Cuba by accusing it of hosting FLQ terrorists. Labelling these charges “deplorable,” Cuban Chargé d’Affaires Francisco Garcia stressed that Canadian tourists did not need visas to tour Cuba, and thus an individual’s presence there did not entail Havana’s approval of their activities. 387 A Security and Intelligence document prepared in rebuttal reported that “at least 27 Canadians of extremist views” had visited Cuba since August 1967, five of whom had terrorism convictions. The Cuban government had apparently fed, lodged and offered them “other services,” a diplomatic cover term Ottawa used to mean guerilla and subversive training.388 Ambassador Fernandez De Cossio, Cruz’s replacement, told Mayrand in August 1969 that Cuba had no interest in getting involved in the Quebec issue.389 Whatever flirtation Castro had with separatists and revolutionaries in the mid-1960s, his tune changed considerably after 1968. By that time, he was seeking stability both with his principal Soviet sponsor but also his leading western trading partners, particularly Canada. Havana apparently took Ottawa’s warnings seriously enough that it backed off on the Quebec issue, doing it an invaluable favour in helping to end the 1970 FLQ kidnapping crisis. The Latin American Division reported in 1975 “whatever may have been Cuban policy in the past, we suspect that the Cuban government now considers that it is not in its interest to assist actively in any form of separatism in Canada.” 390

386 Memorandum from J.W. Graham (Latin American Division) to P.A. Bridle, “USA Inquiries Concerning Alleged Cuban Subversive Activities Directed to Canada” October 24, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10045, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 6, LAC
387 Memorandum from Latin American Division (Dier) to Security and Intelligence Division (Langley) August 25, 1969 (Confidential) in RG 146, File [redacted], A2011-00543, Stack 8, LAC
388 Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (signed E. R, Rettie) to RCMP Commissioner, October 9, 1969 (Secret) and enclosed “Draft Contribution by Security and Intelligence Liaison Division: Proposed Comments to be made to Cuban Ambassador,” in RG 146, File [redacted], A2011-00543, Stack 8, LAC
389 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 947, August 25, 1969 (Confidential) in RG 146, File [redacted], A2011-00543, Stack 8, LAC
The last major subversion issue connected to Cuba in the 1960s, one having real potential to strain Canadian-American relations, came from the United States and from the right wing, rather than from Cuba and the left. As mentioned earlier, expatriate opponents of the Castro regime had been angry from the outset over Canada’s refusal to join with the US embargo. Members of the Cuban opposition hoped that the events of October 1962 would inspire a revisiting of Ottawa’s policies, with one opposition group even asking for Canadian support in exchange for trade privileges in a post-Castro Cuba.\(^{391}\) Prime Minister Pearson himself received letters from Cuban exiles and their American supporters, all dismayed that Canada still traded with a government that in their view had turned their homeland into “one gigantic prison.”\(^{392}\) The exiles’ expressions of opposition to Canadian policy did not long remain limited to protest letters and moral persuasion. Beginning in April 1964, the Cuban embassy in Ottawa received several threatening telephone calls, which officials took seriously enough to add additional police protection.\(^{393}\)

Matters really escalated on August 9, 1964, when an explosion occurred near the Cuban freighter Maria Teresa as it stood docked in Montreal harbour. The RCMP had received warnings about possible attacks against Cuban shipping, and two constables had been stationed in the vicinity when the bomb exploded.\(^{394}\) In a matter of days, two different anti-Castro groups claimed responsibility for the bombing: the Miami based Cuban Nationalist Association (later the Cuban Nationalist Movement) and a second group based in New York called Cuban Action.\(^{395}\) Felipe Rivero, the head of the Cuban Nationalist Association and a veteran of the Bay of Pigs operation, turned out to be the mastermind of this first in a series of terrorist attacks against Cuban targets in Canada.\(^{396}\) Promising additional incidents, in November 1964 Miami-

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\(^{393}\) Memorandum from Protocol Division (P.R. Jennings) to Latin American Division (J.C. Hammond) “Threatening Telephone Calls received by Cuban Embassy,” April 13, 1964 (Unclassified) in RG 25, Vol. 10044, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 3, LAC

\(^{394}\) Telegram from the Department of External Affairs to the Canadian Embassy, Havana, no. XL-73, August 11, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10044, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 3, LAC


\(^{396}\) See FBI Report, “Asociacion Nacionalista Cubana” October 6, 1964 (Secret) in HSCA FBI Subject Files, JFK Assassination Records Collection, Doc 124-10289-10449, NARA. Accessible online via Mary Ferrell Organization www.maryferrell.org
based Cubans sent Canada’s UN mission a press release denouncing “the Cuban Communist penetration in governmental, commercial, academic, informational etc. entities in Canada.”

The Cubans did not protest to Ottawa over the explosion, and Ambassador Cruz appeared satisfied at the investigations of Canadian law enforcement personnel. He warned External Affairs officials that he believed anti-Castro groups were operating in Montreal, and was concerned for the safety and security of Cuban personnel in Canada. Fidel Castro, naturally and with some rational basis, attributed this action to the CIA. While the Agency was Castro’s favourite bête noire, his allegations were not completely baseless. In President Kennedy’s renewed covert action program of April 1963, Cuban shipping was specified as a target for sabotage; one strategy paper proposed “the placing of incendiary devices and/or explosives with suitable time delay within the hull or cargo to disable or sink Cuban vessels and/or damage their cargos while on the high seas;” it also called for the use of limpet mines in free world ports. By the spring of 1964, Johnson administration officials were scaling back such efforts, sufficiently worried that the exiles had become dangerous loose cannons, having the potential to bait the United States into action against Cuba, as well as drive a wedge between Washington and allies that still traded with Cuba, such as Canada. The Montreal incident, and a subsequent attack on a Spanish merchant ship, gave Washington pause for thought, and drove it to adopt a hands-off policy regarding the expatriates. One can rightly argue that the United States’ embarrassment over such incidents was a form of blowback from its earlier covert efforts.

In September 1966, Castro’s opponents upped the ante against Canada and Cuba’s representatives by lobbing a bazooka shell from a suitcase launcher, striking the Cuban embassy

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398 No RCMP file was located in response to an access to information request to the Library and Archives Canada on this incident, although other files dealing with later events certainly mention the agency’s involvement in investigating the Maria Teresa.
in Ottawa. There were no casualties, but the explosion damaged the structure, and greatly alarmed Ambassador Cruz and his staff. Three days after the attack, the Canadian Embassy in Caracas received a letter threatening more attacks if Canada did not break relations with Havana, a threat that was followed by an unsuccessful attempt to kidnap the ambassador’s daughters. The RCMP and FBI alike attributed these efforts all to Rivero’s organization, with the actual perpetrators of the Ottawa incident being three Cuban men who had entered Canada from the United States. The Cuban Nationalist Association attempted a repeat the attack on the Cuban embassy in Ottawa a year later, but the explosive failed to discharge.

Robert A. Stevenson, John Crimmins’ successor as the State Department’s Coordinator for Cuban Affairs, dismissed the Cuban Nationalist Association as “a small disreputable group.” While perhaps on the fringe of the exile community, this group, along with an affiliate calling itself Podre Cubano (Cuban Power), led by the notorious exile and terrorist Orlando Bosch, persisted in conducting violent acts against Cuba’s commercial and diplomatic presence in the non-communist world. Back in Miami, Rivero proudly claimed responsibility for the Ottawa embassy attack, promising that it was only the first among many in a world-wide campaign against the Castro regime and its interests abroad. In mid-November, Weekend magazine, a Saturday supplement to numerous newspapers across Canada, featured an interview with Rivero by reporter Bill Trent, with the Bay of Pigs veteran claiming to have a terrorist cell in Canada. In the spring of 1967, spouting the same rhetoric and threats, Rivero told a CTV

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407 For extensive details on Bosch’s career, including his involvement in blowing up a Cubana airliner mid-flight in October 1976, as well as a good overview of the political influence and the darker side of the Miami exile community, see Ann Louise Bardach, Cuba Confidential: Love and Vengeance in Miami and Havana, (New York: Vintage, 2002), esp. 114-117, 188-190.
408 FBI Report “Bombing of the Cuban Embassy in Ottawa, Canada September 22, 1966,” September 23, 1966 (no classification marking) in Office Files of Mildred Seagall, Box 64A, Folder “Cuba and Related Matters,” Lyndon B. Johnson Library
reporter that he was at war with the communist regime in Cuba, and that “if they (the communists) are in the North Pole. We’ll fight them in the North Pole. That’s the tough luck of the Canadian government that we begun there [sic].” The RCMP could not find sufficient evidence to confirm the cells’ existence in Canada. With only a miniscule Cuban émigré presence in Canada, all evidence pointed to the attacks originating from south of the 49th parallel. Paul Martin ordered additional RCMP protection for Ottawa to provide additional security for Ambassador Cruz and Cuban officials in Canada.

Such threats and violent acts intensified in 1967, just as the Pearson government prepared to welcome the world to Montreal for Expo and for Canada’s centennial celebrations. On March 11, a Montreal auction house, Fraser Brothers, was firebombed after it had advertised a sale of rare antiques that the Cuban government had sold to a Canadian dealer for auctioning off, in an effort to obtain much needed foreign currency. Prominently advertised in the *Globe and Mail*, the items for sale included 18th century French paintings, furniture, silver and other “treasures from Cuba.” Learning of the sale, incensed Cuban expatriates in Miami denounced the auction as an illegitimate sale of stolen property. Pearson himself again received several angry letters from Americans, mostly Cuban expatriates, sharply criticizing his government for not preventing the sale of “plunder.” When questioned by US Embassy officers in Ottawa, the Assistant Deputy Minister for Trade and Commerce argued that such a sale was perfectly legal.

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415 For the elite’s collection of treasures and Castro’s confiscations see John Paul Rathbone, *The Sugar King of Havana* (New York: Penguin, 2010), 22
416 Letter from Luis V. Manrara, President of The Truth About Cuba Committee Inc, to Prime Minister Pearson, March 31, 1967 in Lester B. Pearson fonds, MG 26, Series N-4, Vol. 245, File 840/C962, LAC. There are several other examples of such letters in this file.
in Canada. Havana apparently conducted similar auctions in Europe, including art collections and even racehorses that had belonged to wealthy Cubans during the Batista era. According to CIA veteran Brian Latell, the Agency encouraged the former owners of such property to take legal action to halt such sales, at times with success. In Montreal, the Cuban National Association had expressed its displeasure more directly, and FBI intelligence shared with the White House reported that Guillermo Novo, another Cuban rightist militant from New Jersey (and later convicted terrorist) had carried an explosive charge aboard an Air Canada flight to Montreal.

Cuban expatriates focussed their attention that year on Expo 67, which opened at the end of April. Denouncing “Red Cuba’s” right to have a pavilion at the world’s fair, the exiles interpreted Canada’s permission as a declaration that Cuba was “a civilized law-abiding respectable state,” which made Canada their enemy. The FBI reported that in mid-March, two Cuban-Americans drove into Canada with explosives destined for the Cuban pavilion, although they could not gain access to the fair’s grounds. In early April, an unexploded bazooka shell was found near the pavilion. Despite redoubled efforts by law enforcement and border patrol officials, a small explosion did occur in the pavilion’s vicinity on May 30, although Canadian authorities concluded the device was made by amateurs and was possibly a prank. Expo security reported it as such, and a Montreal newspaper described it as a firecracker; although at the same time, the Cuban Nationalist Association took credit for the blast. Even if mostly

417 Airgram from US Embassy Ottawa to Department of State, no. A-27, July 11, 1966 (Secret) RG 59 Subject-Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 1425, Folder STR 9-1 CUBA, NARA
419 Telegram from FBI Director (Hoover) to White House Situation Room, March 16, 1967 (Secret) in Office Files of Mildred Seagall, Box 64A, Folder “Cuba and Related Matters,” Lyndon B. Johnson Library
420 See Letter from Luis V. Manrara, President of The Truth About Cuba Committee Inc. to Prime Minister Pearson, March 31, 1967 in Lester B. Pearson fonds, MG 26, Series N-4, Vol. 245, File 840/C962, LAC. There are several other examples of such letters in this file. Novo was a notorious terrorist and would have a long career extending into the 1970s. See also Chapter 9.
421 FBI Memorandum “Associacion Nacional Cubana” March 20, 1967 (no classification marking) in Office Files of Mildred Seagall, Box 64A, Folder “Cuba and Related Matters,” Lyndon B. Johnson Library
422 Montreal Gazette, April 10, 1967 clipping found in RG 25, Vol. 10502, File 55-7-3-MTL-2-CUBA, pt.1, LAC
psychological intimidation, rightist Cubans had a track record for making good on violent threats, requiring that Ottawa and Washington alike take the problem seriously.

Similar counter revolutionary activities continued as 1967 progressed. President Johnson was informed in mid-July that the Cuban Nationalist Association had an ambitious terror program for Canada that summer, targeting the Expo pavilion, Cuban athletes competing in the Winnipeg Pan-American Games, Ambassador Cruz and Fidel Castro himself should he visit Expo. The FBI believed all but the Expo plan had been foiled by a series of arrests of Cuban extremists. With the threats against the pavilion continuing right up to the fair’s closure in late October, Canadian law enforcement at all levels, with FBI cooperation, maintained close vigilance. While these security efforts prevented a second Expo explosion, a small phosphorous device exploded on October 15 near the Cuban Trade Office in the north part of Montreal. This episode would by no means be the last.

The growing violence raised questions in Canada about whether or not the United States was adequately cooperating with Canadian law enforcement and intelligence personnel, given its past sponsorship of such groups and its resentment of Canada’s Cuba trade. The day after the September 1966 attack on the Cuban embassy, Prime Minister Pearson commented publicly that role of the US based exile community “ought to be looked into”, although he fell short of

426 See Memorandum from Marvin Watson to President Johnson, July 21, 1967 and attached Telegram from Director FBI to White House Situation Room, July 20, 1967 (Secret) in Office Files of Mildred Seagall, Box 64A, Folder “Cuba and Related Matters,” Lyndon B. Johnson Library. Also see Memorandum from Marvin Watson to President Johnson, July 14, 1967 and attached FBI Telegram in same file. For the RCMP reference to the MIRR member see RCMP Report from Officer J.R Dubeau GIS Montreal to “C” Division Montreal “Cuban Pavilion Expo 67 - Proposed Damage to” July 20, 1967 (Secret) in RG 18, File 67HQ-190-C-5, “Cuban Pavilion Expo 67 - Proposed Damage to,” Vol. 8, A2010-00154, Stack 17, LAC. For the specifics on the arrests see Montreal Gazette, July 20, 1967 in same file
427 For a threat as late as a week before Expo 67 closed see RCMP Report from Montreal G.I.S. to “C” Division Montreal “Cuban Pavilion Expo 67 - Proposed Damage to” October 20, 1967 (Secret) in RG 18, File 67HQ-190-C-5, “Cuban Pavilion Expo 67 - Proposed Damage to” Vol. 10, A2010-00154, Stack 18, LAC
428 See RCMP Report from Montreal GIS to C Division, October 20, 1967 (Secret) in RG 18, File 67HQ-190-C-5, “Cuban Pavilion Expo 67 - Proposed Damage to” Vol. 10, A2010-00154, Stack 18, LAC. See also FBI Report, New Jersey Office, January 31, 1969 (Secret), FBI Chile Collection, Tranche II. Online at US Department of State FOIA Electronic Reading Room, http://foia.state.gov/SearchColls/FBI.asp As a number of Cuban exile organizations, especially the Cuban Nationalist Movement, were later involved in activities supporting the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, several hundred FBI documents pertaining to their activities in the late 1960s and 1970s, including incidents in Canada, were declassified as part of the Chile Declassification project in 1999 and 2000.
suggesting any formal protest to the United States.\textsuperscript{429} Following the Montreal auction house incident, NDP leader Tommy Douglas pressed Paul Martin in the House of Commons on whether the government was raising these security concerns with the Americans; reticent about publicly commenting on private diplomatic discussion, the External Affairs Minister replied tersely in the affirmative.\textsuperscript{430}

Martin’s response was partially correct. A March 20 FBI report suggested that no meetings had yet been held between Canadian and American officials on the auction house attack.\textsuperscript{431} However, there had indeed been other such conversations. After the shelling of the Cuban Embassy and the threats to the Canadian ambassador’s family in Caracas, Canadian embassy officials cautioned the Americans about \textquotedblleft the unfortunate repercussions [for Canadian-American relations] which might result from acts of violence by hotheads amongst Cuban exiles in the USA.	extquotedblright\textsuperscript{432} The Washington embassy was instructed to ensure that the State Department and FBI were both in the loop on these events, and requested that the Americans alert Canada upon learning of any specific threats to Canadian missions in either Latin America or the United States.\textsuperscript{433} Solicitor General Lawrence Pennell described FBI-RCMP relations to Martin as being excellent, and praised the Americans for promptly interrogating one of the principal suspects when he arrived in Miami from Ottawa the day of the embassy attack. Unfortunately, the US officials could not find enough hard evidence to charge him with a felony, especially as the crime itself did not take place on American soil.\textsuperscript{434}

With incidents mounting in the spring of 1967, the Canadian government grew frustrated by Washington’s seeming inability to control the Cuban-American militants. Its approach

\textsuperscript{431} FBI Memorandum “Asociacion Nacional Cubana,” March 20, 1967 (no classification marking) in Office Files of Mildred Seagall, Box 64A, Folder “Cuba and Related Matters,” Lyndon B. Johnson Library
\textsuperscript{433} See Memorandum from Under Secretary (Marcel Cadieux) to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Martin), “Possibility that Cuban Exile Groups May Attempt to Harass Canadian Missions in Latin America and in US,” October 4, 1966 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10044, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 5, LAC and also Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Washington DC, no. XL-300, October 4, 1966 (Confidential) in the same file.
towards the Americans however vacillated between directness and caution. Ottawa did not want to offend the United States government by suggesting its agencies were nonchalant, uncooperative or incompetent. Yet at the same time, Canadians wanted Ottawa to be proactive in stopping future assaults and in bringing the perpetrators to justice. The Pearson government did not want these violent incidents to spark anti-American sentiment, a real possibility should the United States appear to be either to be indifferent, or worse, passively complicit in them. External Affairs’ officials hesitated for much of April and May before finally giving Ambassador A.E. Ritchie in Washington formal instructions to raise Canada’s concerns with the State Department. Not wanting to appear accusatory, the instructions to Ritchie underwent multiple drafts and careful inter-departmental scrutiny to avoid use of antagonizing language.  

In the final version, which was not wired to Washington until May 31, the Canadian government expressed its satisfaction with American help, most importantly the recent arrest and detention of Rivero. Still, Ritchie pointed out to the State Department that Canada did not want Expo visitors exposed to “unacceptable risk“, and that “in appreciating [US] cooperation [we] do not want to undermine real concern of Canadian government of this problem.”

American officials would not acknowledge the impact of Canadian pressure on its decision to detain Rivero in mid-May for violating the terms of his refugee status. Yet without question, Canada’s warnings that ongoing violence originating from the United States would harm bilateral relations made detaining the exile leader a high priority. The matter was complicated for Washington, as on principle it would not deport him to Cuba. In addition, there was a significant call within the Cuban-American community for his release, including a demonstration in Miami of some three thousand people.

435 See draft Telegram from the Department of External Affairs to the Canadian Embassy, Washington DC, no. XL-285, May 15, 1967 (Secret) in RG 18, File 67HQ-190-C-5; “Cuban Pavilion Expo 67 - Proposed Damage to” Vol. 4, A2010-00154, Stack 12, LAC. See also Memorandum from RCMP Assistant Commissioner and Director Criminal Investigation Branch (H.S. Cooper) to Latin American Division (J.W. Graham), May 17, 1967 (Secret) in RG 18, File 67HQ-190-C-5; “Cuban Pavilion Expo 67 - Proposed Damage to” Vol. 4, A2010-00154, Stack 12, LAC

436 The final version is Telegram from the Department of External Affairs to the Canadian Embassy, Washington DC, no. XL-310, May 31, 1967 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 10502, File 55-7-3-MTL-2-CUBA, pt.2, LAC


439 Telegram from Director FBI to White House Situation Room, May 20, 1967 (Secret) in Office Files of Mildred Seagall, Box 64A, Folder “Cuba and Related Matters,” Lyndon B. Johnson Library
embassy officials abreast regarding developments relating to this case. In October, Rivero was released on condition that he refrain from further calls to violence, a call rejected by the New York and New Jersey branches of the Cuban National Association led by brothers Guillermo and Ignacio Novo, both of whom also participated in the Canadian terrorist attacks. At least Rivero was kept out of action for the rest of Expo, including Cuba’s national day. Yet the Novo brothers carried on the work, and the following year they targeted ships, businesses, tourist offices and aircraft belonging to Canada and other countries trading with Cuba. Air Canada’s Miami office was bombed, and the RCMP would spend much of 1968 monitoring Canadian ports frequented by Cuban ships such as Halifax, Saint John, and Montreal. The FBI continued to forward useful information to the Canadians, including an informant’s report that Cuban-Americans in New York monitored the timetables of Cuban ships’ arrivals at Canadian ports. Anti-Castro groups remained a security problem for Canada well into the 1970s.

All evidence suggests that the United States government responded promptly and even proactively to Canada’s concerns about the exile attacks. State Department officials from both the Canadian and Cuban desks reassured Ambassador Ritchie that they too were concerned about exiles’ violent actions. From the files of his FBI liaison, President Johnson himself monitored reports on virtually all the anti-Castro threats and attacks on Canada. As the host country of the perpetrators, this time it was the United States that was on the defensive concerning a Cuba related issue, one that affected not only Canada, but Great Britain, Spain and several other western countries. In addition, the United States was vulnerable to having embarrassing details of its past connections to such unsavoury elements exposed, a concern that was on Lyndon Johnson’s mind that spring. Later that May, he received a secret internal CIA history of its plots against the Cuban leader, a program he later described to a journalist as a US

441 Telegram from Director FBI to White House Situation Room, November 2, 1967 (Secret) in Office Files of Mildred Seagall, Box 64A, Folder “Cuba and Related Matters,” Lyndon B. Johnson Library
442 See RCMP Memorandum from Inspector, Fredericton Division (R.E. Goodyear) to NCO Saint John Detachment, April 23, 1968 (Secret) in RG 18, File HQ-190-Q-1,“Cuban Exiles – Threats By,” Vol. 3, A2010-00154, Stack 3, LAC. See also RCMP memorandum from Saint John Detachment CIB (W.F. Gallager) to J Division, April 25, 1968 (Secret) in the same file.
443 See RCMP Memorandum from Inspector, Fredericton Division (R.E. Goodyear) to NCO Saint John Detachment, April 23, 1968 (Secret) in RG 18, File HQ-190-Q-1,“Cuban Exiles – Threats By,” Vol. 3, A2010-00154, Stack 3, LAC. See also RCMP memorandum from Saint John Detachment CIB (W.F. Gallager) to J Division, April 25, 1968 (Secret) in the same file.
444 See Telegram from Canadian Embassy Washington DC to Department of External Affairs no. 2179, June 8, 1967 (Secret) in RG 18, File 67HQ 190-C-5 Vol. 6, A2010-00154, Stack 14, LAC
run “Murder Incorporated.” The President, recalling well the circumstances in which he had become President, was concerned about his own safety as domestic turmoil grew and anger mounted at home and abroad over Vietnam. Preparing for a late May visit to Expo, to be followed immediately by meetings with Pearson at his Harrington Lake retreat, Johnson asked the CIA to prepare two reports for him on Expo security. The risks were assessed as “slight,” but greater than those of a recent European visit. Antiwar activists, Quebec separatists and anti-Castro Cubans were all specifically identified as possible protesters against his visit.

The Cuban exile attacks also complicated planning for Cuba’s official visit to Expo and the celebration of its national day in July. Fidel Castro himself wanted to represent his country at the exhibition and to showcase his country’s pavilion. Canada once again found itself in that awkward position of trying to maintain proper and cordial relations with Havana while satisfying its own security interests, which in these circumstances aligned well with those of the United States. Governor General Georges Vanier had sent Cuba’s official invitation to President Oswaldo Dorticos, technically still Cuba’s official Head of State, in the fall of 1966. However, the Cubans hinted that Castro, as Prime Minister, also wanted to visit Canada and attend the fair, even in a non-official capacity. The Canadian government did not welcome a Castro visit for numerous reasons. Naturally, it was concerned about the reaction in Washington and especially from American tourists, on which Ottawa was counting on large numbers to visit Expo. The principal argument however concerned the Cuban leader’s safety, and External Affairs officials advised Cruz that Castro’s presence in Canada would interfere with its responsibilities for other official state visits.

Given the risks and sensitivities, Lester Pearson adopted a hands-on approach regarding Cuba’s official visit, instructing External Affairs officials to tell that Cruz that “our concern is entirely for the safety of your PM. It has no rpt no political motivations nor is it inspired by

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446 Memorandum from Under Secretary (Cadieux) to the Minister of External Affairs (Martin), “Expo – Cuban State Visit”, January 17, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10502, File 55-7-3-MTL-2-CUBA, pt.1, LAC
pressure of any sort from the USA.” Such instructions were misleading, and Cruz was not fooled, telling Martin that Canada’s excuses were “too official,” and that Castro would view them as a smokescreen to spare Canada uncomfortable political ramifications with the United States. Martin relayed this information to Pearson, and both worried that the Cuban leader might test and embarrass Canada.

Canadian officials talked to their American counterparts about this issue. Washington indeed had serious concerns about a Castro visit to Canada. Cuban Affairs Coordinator Stevenson told Ritchie that serious international repercussions would result from an attempt on the Cuban leader’s life in Montreal, particularly if the assailant was an American resident. Stevenson was confident that Canadian and US law enforcement had the so-called “Cuban nut organizations” under control, a highly debatable point given recent developments, but also added that the large crowds at the fair posed unique security challenges. The United States fell shy of directly asking that Ottawa keep Castro out, but its preferences were unambiguous. On this matter, Washington had a very sympathetic neighbour.

At the beginning of July, Havana informed Martin that Castro had opted out of attending Cuba’s national day, but it still hoped for a Dorticos visit. The External Affairs Minister recommended that Canada accept such a scenario to preserve some dignity for the Cubans. However, the Prime Minister was not convinced. Setting aside normal diplomatic concern for Cuban sentiments, Pearson wired Mayrand directly, and in a blunt message sought to discourage both Dorticos and Castro from attending. With rumours still abounding that Castro might attend on his own after the Cuban national day, Pearson resolutely declared: “I am not rpt not prepared to have the government accept the extraordinary security risk which such a visit would entail.” A Dorticos visit was seen to pose serious, but manageable security challenges; a last minute arrival by Castro was a different matter altogether, with “the risk to his safety that would be involved in such a visit would be unacceptable.”

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447 Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy Havana no. XL-245, April 22, 1967 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 10502, File 55-7-3-MTL-2-CUBA, pt. 1, LAC
448 Memorandum from the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Martin) to Prime Minister Pearson, June 6, 1967 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 10502, File 55-7-3-MTL-2-CUBA, pt. 2, LAC
449 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 1378, April 13, 1967 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 10502, File 55-7-3-MTL-2-CUBA, pt. 1, LAC
450 Memorandum from the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Martin) to Prime Minister Pearson, July 5, 1967 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 10502, File 55-7-3-MTL-2-CUBA, pt. 2, LAC
relieved when Havana finally announced that its official delegation would consist of Foreign Trade Minister Marcello Fernandez Font and Education Minister Jose Llanusa Gobel, who would also visit Ottawa and the Pan American games in Winnipeg. It told the Americans that “[Canada and Cuba] had a firm understanding that there would be no last minute surprise visits by either Castro or Dorticos.”

Complicating the diplomatic scenario even further was the very close proximity between Cuba’s national day and the highly anticipated (and dreaded) visit of France’s President Charles De Gaulle. Accommodating the General’s schedule had already proved to be a major logistical headache for Ottawa, and it was far from happy about the prospect of an overlapping Castro visit. On De Gaulle, the Canadian charge in Paris confided to the American Deputy Chief of Mission that “the best we can hope for is that he leaves the country without having been the cause of a crisis in Canadian domestic relations” – which indeed transpired sure enough. The French Foreign Minister Couve De Murville also warned the Americans that a De Gaulle-Castro encounter at Expo was a possibility, although he admitted that France was not particularly concerned. To Ottawa’s (and Washington’s) great relief, no such meeting ever occurred. Pearson received the Cuban delegation on July 26, one day after De Gaulle’s inflammatory “Vive le Québec Libre” speech. A.J. Pick reported to the Americans that the Cuban delegation was well behaved, spread no propaganda and provoked no incidents. The official Cuban-Canadian meetings focussed mostly on trade. The security worries in Canada and the United States were thus successfully mitigated.

With the arrival of the year 1968, Cuba had again moved down the tier of Canadian-American priorities, and any Canadian-US concerns about it reverted back to the working levels. There were no new incidents concerning exports or air flights, and the subversion issue was being managed. Castro de-emphasized revolution abroad and shored up his regime instead by moving closer to the Soviet Union. The year was also characterized by a nearly complete

452 Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 69, July 19, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1967-1969, Box 2019, File POL 7 CUBA, NARA
453 Telegram from US Embassy Paris to Secretary of State, no. 867, July 19, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1967-1969, Box 2019, File POL 7 CUBA, NARA
454 Telegram from US Embassy Paris to Secretary of State, no. 807, July 18, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1967-1969, Box 2019, File POL 7 CUBA, NARA
455 Airgram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Department of State, no. A-164, August 10, 1967 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1967-1969, Box 2019, File POL 7 CUBA, NARA
456 Memorandum of Conversation, “Meeting with Cuban Trade Delegation, 3pm July 25, 1967,” (Confidential) in RG 20, Vol. 2634, File 20E2-C6, pt. 1, LAC
changing of the guard in the governments and embassies of Canada and the United States. In December 1967, Lester Pearson announced his intention to retire as Prime Minister upon selection of a new Liberal Party leader, which after a lively internal campaign resulted in Justice Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau’s ascent to power in April. Calling an election almost immediately after taking office, the charismatic, charming and intellectually astute new leader won his party’s first majority government in fifteen years, as a tide of so-called Trudeau mania swept across Canada. Trudeau had very few dealings with Lyndon Johnson, as only days before the Liberal convention, an exhausted President announced that he would not seek re-election, worn down by the worsening and seemingly endless violence on Vietnam’s battlefields and in America’s cities. Even the long serving Cuban and American ambassadors in Ottawa finally departed; first Américo Cruz left in April, followed by Walton Butterworth in September. How Canadian-American relations would unfold, and how Cuban issues would come into play, had to wait until the arrival in the White House of Richard M. Nixon.
Chapter 9: Pierre Trudeau, Richard Nixon and the Routinization of Difference: 
Canada, the United States and Cuba: April 1968 to August 1974

Very few Canadian Prime Ministers have been larger than life in office, and have continued on as legends and symbols afterwards. Perhaps the most important and celebrated recent exception is Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Brilliant, witty, dashing, and a well-travelled adventurer, this Montreal-based millionaire bachelor was seen by the many Canadians who voted for him in June 1968 as a strong leader who represented a new generation, much as many Americans had viewed John F. Kennedy in 1960. Of both French-Canadian and Scottish descent, the fluently bilingual Trudeau was a true Canadian nationalist, seemingly in tune with the aspirations of a changing country. Motivated above all else by a loathing of Quebec separatism, the new Prime Minister remained committed to a strong federal government, and to making Canada, especially its government, more truly bilingual. Trudeau’s other strategic objectives to unify Canada included a decade long on and off effort to repatriate Canada’s constitution from Great Britain – a feat accomplished in April 1982 – as well as opening Canada’s doors to make it a more diverse, multicultural society.\(^1\) As Trudeau’s legacy, these developments changed Canada forever.

Regarding Canadian foreign policy, at least at the beginning, the new Prime Minister departed from his predecessor in terms of vision, focus and style. Trudeau had travelled extensively as a young man, and had seen much of Europe, the Middle East and Asia from the ground up, in contrast to Pearson, who had seen what he had of the world principally through his British university education and his movement up the bureaucratic ranks of the Department of External Affairs; only after he became Minister in 1948 did he travel more widely. Trudeau was wary about the External Affairs bureaucracy, believing it had limited and stifled Canada’s potential on the global stage. Seeking more creativity in Canada’s ties abroad, Trudeau wanted

Canada to have strong bilateral connections with a wider range of countries, rather than relying on its traditional interactions with Great Britain and the Commonwealth, the North Atlantic community and the United States, or on multilateral organizations like the United Nations. Trudeau was not anti-American per se, but was less in awe of Canada’s superpower neighbour than his predecessors. He disliked the Cold War, believing it had brought the world near the nuclear abyss, and believed the ideological excesses of US foreign policy had contributed greatly to the crises and wars of the previous two decades, especially Vietnam. At the same time, he knew he could not ignore the influence of the United States and he devoted more energy to Canadian-US relations than he might have otherwise liked, famously likening the Canadian experience to “living next to an elephant,” aware of its “every twitch and grunt.”

Shortly after becoming Prime Minister, Trudeau ordered a major foreign policy review, whose outcome was the 1970 publication Foreign Policy for Canadians, as well a 1972 trade document known as the “Third Option”, which advocated that Canada intentionally seek new European and Asian markets rather than relying on the status quo or closer integration with the American economy. In following these strategies, Trudeau would seek new connections in China, Latin America, and the socialist bloc. A natural candidate satisfying several of these criteria was Fidel Castro’s Cuba.

Much has been made of Trudeau’s seeming gravitation towards Cuba, and his apparent ambivalence towards the United States in that regard. In January 1976, he would be the first NATO leader, let alone Canadian Prime Minister, to officially visit Havana, an undeniably crowning moment of an era correctly portrayed as the high water mark in Canadian-Cuban relations, the culmination of a seven year crescendo of widening and deepening ties between the two countries. Commencing in early 1969 with the Canadian government’s decision to extend export credits to Havana, Canadian contacts with Cuba in the early 1970s multiplied to include agricultural and development aid, academic, sports and cultural exchanges, and the establishment of passenger charter flights that enabled Cuba to become an emerging tourist destination for Canadians seeking a winter escape. All these developments laid the foundation for bilateral visits by members of parliament, agency heads, Cabinet ministers and finally, the

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3 See Ibid. and also John English, Citizen of the World, 261-268.
4 Quoted in English, Just Watch Me, 169.
Prime Minister himself. Most significantly, the volume of trade between the two countries grew steadily and then jumped rapidly after 1973, making Cuba Canada’s fourth largest trading partner in Latin America and its largest in the Caribbean.\(^5\) The leading monographs on Canadian-Cuban relations during this period, John Kirk and Peter McKenna’s survey and Robert Wright’s account of Trudeau’s 1976 trip and his budding friendship with Castro, both portray these developments as a Canadian foreign policy triumph. These authors argue that in this unique and regrettably short lived window, Trudeau showed great leadership in putting Canadian interests first and took considerable risks in calling his own tune against an occasionally domineering United States, which continued to hold a position on Cuba rooted in hemispheric imperialism and Cold War irrationality.\(^6\)

Follow his own Cuba policy Trudeau certainly did. Yet at the same time, despite his independent streak and his reservations regarding the cautiousness of the Department of External Affairs, Trudeau’s approach to Havana was neither an intentional poke at the United States nor a flagrant override of Ottawa’s experienced foreign policy hands. At times he bemoaned the risk adverse culture in External Affairs, and he grew to rely as a counterpoint on the opinions of an academic appointee in the Prime Minister’s Office, Ivan Head. Yet on Cuba in particular, Trudeau followed a surprisingly cautious and hands-off approach for most of his first two mandates. He neither spurned the Department’s advice nor disregarded the viewpoint of the United States. In fact, as Greg Donaghy and Mary Halloran suggest, except in spurts, Trudeau did not give Cuba much attention at all for much of his time in office.\(^7\) After giving the Canadian-Cuban relationship a gentle push forward in early 1969, Trudeau left Cuban matters largely in the hands of Canada’s diplomats and bureaucrats until after his 1974 re-election. The seasoned veterans in External Affairs, who knew well the volatility of the Cuba issue in the United States, had established over a decade a mostly successful \textit{modus operandi} with their

\(^5\) For a year-by-year table of Canada-Cuba trade statistics, using Cuban figures, see John Kirk and Peter McKenna, \textit{Canada-Cuban Relations: The Other Good Neighbour Policy} (Gainesville, Fla: University of Florida Press, 1997) 107.


American counterparts in handling differences across various theatres and enabling Ottawa to meet its two central objectives: continuity in its commercial and diplomatic relationship with Havana and minimizing friction with its powerful American neighbour.

As a realist, Trudeau understood and recognized the importance of both objectives. While willing to expand the boundary limits with Washington where possible, at no point did Trudeau overstep them, even as will be shown in travelling to Havana. From 1968 to 1974 in particular, he followed the direction of Departmental officials, diplomats, and his first External Affairs Minister, Mitchell Sharp, all of whom advocated that Canada proceed forward in its ties to Cuba, but that it do so slowly and incrementally, always with one eye on the reaction in Washington. Ottawa would take the next step when it concluded that there would be no repercussions in Canadian-United States relations.

As will be shown, the irony of the Trudeau years is that despite the considerable warming between Ottawa and Havana that occurred between 1968 and 1976, Cuba was for the most part much less of a problem in Canada-United States relations during this period than it had been during either the Diefenbaker or even the Pearson governments. This was especially remarkable given that enough ingredients were present to cause substantial difficulty in this regard, most notably President Nixon’s hard line personal views on the Castro regime and his personal aversion to the Canadian Prime Minister. Apart from discussions regarding parallel efforts to reach an accord with Havana on aircraft hijacking, and a winter 1974 re-visitation of Cuban Assets Control extraterritoriality problems, the most senior levels in Ottawa and Washington did not address Cuba at all in bilateral exchanges during this period. Matters pertaining to that country were relegated and managed by the experienced foreign policy bureaucrats in both countries. In fact, many in the State Department privately sympathized with the Canadian approach, having witnessed ten years of covert actions and embargo measures failing to dislodge the Castro government, which was very much alive, well and now firmly established in Cuba. Working diligently, State and External Affairs professionals kept this sensitive issue away from Trudeau’s meetings with Nixon, and as such deserve considerable commendation for preventing this ever sensitive matter from further complicating a challenging and testy period in Canadian-United States relations.

The early Trudeau years indeed posed challenges in Canadian-American relations. American officials were cautiously optimistic about Trudeau when he first took office. In his
last major despatch from Ottawa, Walton Butterworth celebrated the passing of the Pearson era, and indicated he had found Trudeau’s first few months a refreshing change. Contrasting the new Prime Minister with the retiring Pearson, whom Butterworth described as “a nice little guy” with a propensity for “crusading abroad,” Trudeau was described as a realist, who recognized that his country’s role in the world had diminished. Yet ironically, Trudeau was perceived to have a greater confidence in Canada, and did not need to take an independent course from the United States for its own sake. This optimism soon wore off, and successive administrations in Washington found Trudeau’s economic, cultural and energy policies far more nationalistic than was to their liking, and detected an occasional hint of anti-Americanism in his pronouncements and policies. The Americans also saw Trudeau’s tendency to philosophize and pontificate as tiresome. They would be uneasy about several of his foreign policy decisions, especially the halving of the number of Canadian troops in Europe in 1969, his recognition of the People’s Republic of China in 1970 and his refusal to deport American Vietnam draft dodgers. The latter situation especially angered Nixon, and he would vent to his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger in April 1972 that “[the Canadians] are giving aid and comfort to all these draft dodgers and we don’t like that so we just ignore something they are against us on.”

Trudeau would have a difficult but ultimately workable relationship with Richard Nixon, whose intellect he admired, but he had much warmer and more respectful ties with both Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. Ronald Reagan later posed a different challenge, which will not be covered here. Kissinger, serving as the National Security Advisor and later Secretary of State under both Nixon and Ford, grew to respect Pierre Trudeau’s intellect, and admired his celebrity-like popularity, characteristics he shared with the Canadian Prime Minister. Trudeau reciprocated his admiration for the former Harvard Professor, respecting his brilliant mind and his realpolitik, even if he often disagreed with him. Kissinger described Trudeau to President

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Ford in December 1974 as “foppish and a momma’s boy,” but predisposed to get along with the United States. In a briefing document of the same time, the Prime Minister was assessed as:

[a] highly educated, acutely intelligent, intellectually tough man with inherited means whose character mixes arrogance, informality, shyness, temperance and occasional vulgarity.

Despite some contrary impressions in Washington, Trudeau was not per se anti-American. He and his foreign policy advisor Head would later write that his government was not anti-American, and in fact had devoted considerable attention to relations with the United States. All of his foreign policy in one way or another had the United States as a key reference point, even if the goal was to move in a different direction. He viewed Washington’s assumptions concerning the Soviet threat very skeptically, and had considerable disdain for the more hysterical forms of American anti-communism, having experienced the latter first hand when US authorities denied him entry for having attended a 1952 socialist economic conference in Moscow. He had opposed the Korean and Vietnam wars, abhorred nuclear brinksmanship, and greatly welcomed the superpower detente of the early and mid 1970s. In his final term, he would later have great difficulty with the ideologically charged climate of the renewed Cold War.

By the time of the Trudeau-Nixon period, the two neighbours had by then had an established pattern of disagreeing on Cuba. During the early 1970s, Canada and the United States still experienced friction over Cuban issues in the same theatres as before - export control enforcement, civil aviation, travel and law enforcement, all broadly linked to the larger question of containing revolutionary subversion and espionage. Apart from flare ups over extraterritoriality late in the Nixon and into the Ford administrations, the scope of bilateral cooperation over Cuba faded after 1976. By then times had changed, and perceived threats either disappeared or ceased to be of concern. While early in the decade, Canadian-Cuban civil air links and tourism still caught Washington’s attention, for intelligence purposes and to

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11 Memorandum from Acting Secretary of State (Robert Ingersoll) to President Ford, “Visit of Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau,” November 27, 1974 (Confidential) in National Security Files, VIP Visits, Box 4, Folder “12/4/74 Canada – Prime Minister Trudeau (4),” Gerald R. Ford Library
monitor American citizens circumventing their government’s travel ban to the island. Yet by late 1976, the long awaited regular passenger service between Canada and Cuba finally commenced, with few bilateral problems. The two neighbours continued to did work together to monitor and control the residual pro-Castro activity, especially the student led Venceremos brigades of sugar harvesters; such activity had quieted down substantially by 1972. Longer lasting were concerns about the anti-Castro Cuban expatriates, which remained a problem for both countries until late 1976, with several Cuban connected targets in Canada and the Caribbean suffering terrorist attacks. On all these issues, as well as on political and economic developments in Cuba, the United States government continued to value reports from Canadian embassy in Havana, although this too would fade in importance once the United States had its own ears on the ground in Cuba, with the establishment of an Interests Section in the summer of 1977.

Cuba was not an overly high priority for Pierre Trudeau early in his tenure, but nonetheless he certainly fostered a more proactive climate than his predecessor. Trudeau was directly involved in the beginning, as well as the culmination, of the Canada-Cuba flowering of 1969-1976, although he took a more hands off in the middle years. In December 1968, the Prime Minister granted a relatively rare personal audience to Cuba’s new Ambassador in Ottawa, Fernandez De Cossio, a skilful diplomat adept at playing off intra-governmental differences of opinion who won the admiration of Under Secretary A.E. Ritchie as “one of the cleverest [foreign diplomats] in Ottawa.”14 Refreshing for De Cossio was Trudeau’s fluency in the Spanish language, in which their first meeting was conducted in its entirety, and his government’s renewed interest in Latin America, with Mitchell Sharp undertaking an extensive tour late that autumn. De Cossio asked Trudeau for credit to buy purchase Canadian fertilizer; although non-committal, the Prime Minister handed the query to Industry, Trade and Commerce Minister Jean-Luc Pépin. 15 However, he was certainly inclined to move forward, seeing a favourable reply as consistent with his objective of better relations with countries in the Third World and in the socialist bloc.

15 Memorandum from Latin American Division (P.A. Bridle) to File, “Prime Minister's Interview with Cuban Ambassador”, December 31, 1968 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8636, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 8, LAC
Extending credit to Cuba was an important departure in Canada’s policy towards that country. Up to this point, Canada had followed a cash-only approach to commercial transactions, making it the most conservative NATO country in this regard, a position made entirely in deference to the United States. Extending Havana credit, especially for fertilizer, actually posed a double risk in Canadian-United States relations. As Dean Rusk had told Paul Martin in 1964, the United States saw granting Cuba any credit as giving it foreign exchange to support revolutionary activity, and fertilizer meant higher sugar yields, which in turn aided the Cuban economy.  

Still somewhat cautious, Ottawa delayed De Cossio’s fertilizer credit request for a year. However, Cabinet broke the ice in June by approving a credit sale to Cuba of Holstein cattle, amounting to $12 million. The two relatively cautious and pro-American men in charge of External Affairs, Mitchell Sharp and Marcel Cadieux, both favoured the Holstein sale as a test case, believing it to be a low-risk opportunity that added “a new element in Canada’s commercial relations with Cuba,” without obviously alarming the Americans.

Trudeau was less inclined to let the United States constrain what he believed was in Canada’s interests, but his government did not ignore possible American reactions. Beginning with the Holstein sale, Sharp and his subordinates regularly tested Washington’s reaction to such baby steps forward, using the latter as a barometer for how bold the Canadian government could be in additional initiatives with the Cubans without paying a significant diplomatic price. Washington embassy staff received a surprisingly mild response from the State Department’s Office of Cuban Affairs when they briefed it on the Holstein sale; without any discernible objection. The Americans’ only comment was that Castro had a strong interest in agriculture, particularly livestock. Such a muted response emboldened Ottawa, which quickly came to believe that at least in the agricultural field, it could proceed with relative impunity to expand its ties to Cuba, even credit sales. With the credit barrier now broken, the Cabinet agreed in April

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16 Memorandum from William R. Tyler, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs to Secretary of State Rusk, “Your Private Lunch with Secretary of State for External Affairs Paul Martin, Windsor September 13: Briefing Memorandum”, September 11, 1964 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 1990, File POL CAN-US, NARA


18 Letter from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Cadieux) to Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce (J.H. Warren), April 24, 1969 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8636, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 9, LAC

1970 to extend credit insurance up to $8 million for the sale of mixed fertilizer.\textsuperscript{20} Once again, no protest was forthcoming from the United States government, even though sugar featured prominently in thinking about Cuba that year, with Fidel Castro hard driving his citizens to reach a much touted 1970 sugar harvest of 10 million tons, a target that by mid-year would clearly not be met. Through the mid-1970s, agricultural goods formed the largest component of Canadian exports to Cuba, with wheat being the largest (59\% in 1971) followed by milk products (19\%), cattle (2\%), seed potatoes (2\%), and farm machinery (2\%).\textsuperscript{21} Substantially smaller still than its exports, Canada’s chief imports from Cuba were also agricultural goods - sugar and rock lobsters.\textsuperscript{22} A way was now opened for a new chapter in Canadian-Cuban relations. As will be shown, the emerging pattern was that Canada would ready itself for another forward step, sound out the State Department for a response, and proceed once it was clear that the Americans would not protest. Ottawa’s confidence that it had inconsequential freedom of action in this regard grew steadily.

Thus the Trudeau government began slowly but incrementally to expand the range of Canada’s ties with Cuba. While largely a matter of inference from the available record, its most significant challenge from the United States on Cuba was Richard Milhous Nixon himself. The record is abundantly clear, especially from the secret White House tape recordings, that the President simply could not stand either Pierre Trudeau or Fidel Castro.\textsuperscript{23} Each of them tapped into different facts of Nixon’s dark, deeply resentful and brooding personality, one which his closest advisors, especially Kissinger, had to manage (and would at times manipulate for their own ends). The Nixon-Trudeau relationship was somewhat of a replay of the Kennedy-Diefenbaker personality clash, although the positions were now reversed; Trudeau represented everything that Nixon resented in the late President Kennedy— an elite upbringing, Ivy League education, charisma, and popularity among young people (especially women). The President possessed none of the above. A brilliant lawyer and ruthlessly ambitious, Nixon had come from


\textsuperscript{21} Memorandum from Aid and Development Division (John Moritz) to Under Secretary for External Affairs (Ritchie), “Notes for Visit of Cuban Vice Minister of Foreign Trade - Mr. Raul Leon,” November 24, 1972 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 11922, File 38-1-7-CUBA, pt. 1, LAC

\textsuperscript{22} See Memorandum for Secretary of State for External Affairs, Minister of Industry Trade and Commerce. Minister of Finance, Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Transport “The Future Course of Canadian Relations with Cuba,” October 1, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8638, 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 28, LAC

\textsuperscript{23} For an overview of the Nixon-Trudeau personality clash see Bothwell and Granatstein, \textit{Pirouette}, 46 and English, \textit{Just Watch Me}, 166-170.
a modest background (much like Diefenbaker) and struggled to overcome his insecurities through his long climb as a highly partisan career politician, a journey in which he would at times resort to the lowest of tactics. Writing with considerable diplomacy years later, Kissinger described how the two men were “not ideally suited to one another.” Nixon instructed the new Ambassador to Canada, Adolph W. Schmidt, in August 1969 that the Prime Minister was “erratic, with many of the characteristics so frequently associated with intellectuals” and that he was taking Canada on a more independent course. Privately, Nixon’s recorded comments on the Prime Minister were much harsher, and were often riddled with profanity. Trudeau’s name does not appear at all in Nixon’s memoirs.

For his part, Trudeau took the higher road in his comments on the American President, reflecting his higher level of self esteem and his steely resolve. Following revelations in 1974 that the President had called Trudeau some very unflattering names on the White House tapes, the Prime Minister famously replied that he “had been called worse things by better people.” In his memoirs written two decades later, Trudeau did not write disparagingly of Nixon, although he acknowledged the relationship had not been a warm one. In a private discussion with the newly appointed US Ambassador Thomas O. Enders in March 1976, Trudeau commented that he believed he had in fact a good relationship with Nixon. The relationship was certainly distant, but in sharp contrast to the Kennedy-Diefenbaker, at no time did Trudeau and Nixon allow their personality clash to impede workable and businesslike interactions in their three formal meetings (March 1969, December 1971 and April 1972), even though by this era all earlier sentimental notions of a so-called “special relationship” were gone, as Nixon

24 See Bothwell and Granatstein, Pirouette, 46.
26 Memorandum of Conversation between the President and Departing Ambassadors to Australia, Barbados, Canada, Iceland, Peru and Romania, August 20, 1969 (Secret) in FRUS 1969-1976, Vol. XLI, Doc. 98, 398-399. Schmidt would hold the post until early 1974. NOTE All Nixon Presidential records viewed for this study were viewed either on microfilm or at NARA’s College Park MD when the records were housed there as the Nixon Presidential Materials. As all this material was moved to the Nixon Presidential Library in Yorba Linda in 2010, I am now indicating their current location, even though I did not visit the Yorba Linda facility.
28 English, Just Watch Me, 169.
would himself officially declare to the House of Commons in April 1972. The only time the personal rift truly hindered bilateral relations was after the Commons passed a New Democratic Party sponsored motion in early January 1973 condemning the Christmas 1972 US bombing campaign in North Vietnam, a motion the now-minority Trudeau government (after the October 1972 election) had to pass to avoid defeat. However, for this action, the President never forgave Trudeau or Canada. This incident aside, the two leaders did respect one another’s intelligence, with Nixon describing the Canadian Prime Minister to his Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman as a “clever son of a bitch.” As Bothwell and Granatstein described it “that Nixon did not love Trudeau is clear, yet he always behaved rationally towards Canada.”

The two disparate personalities worked well enough together to weather some significant challenges. In fact, the two leaders shared similar approaches and outlooks regarding foreign policy. Both believed in putting their own country’s interests first and foremost. Both men also broke earlier Cold war conventions and reached out to China and to the Soviet Union, although with some different motifs. They also both distrusted their own foreign policy establishments, and relied on personal foreign policy advisors. But one similarity they did not share was a common view of Fidel Castro, and it was to Trudeau’s considerable benefit that Canada’s relations with Cuba gained little of Nixon’s attention during his presidency. Trudeau had famously attempted to canoe from Florida to Cuba in 1960, and had spent several weeks there in the spring of 1964, admiring the revolution’s accomplishments. On that trip, Trudeau had appeared on a list of five persons who registered at the Canadian embassy after accepting the Cuban government’s invitation to visit the island for the May Day celebrations (an event also attended by members of the Communist Party of Canada). Mayrand described these Canadian visitors as curious, rather than as fellow-travellers, and Trudeau was merely identified as a Law

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34 Bothwell and Granatstein *Pirouette*, 75.
36 Canadian Embassy Havana Numbered Letter 354, May 12 1964 (Secret) and also “Delegates to First of May Celebrations: Statement by Alfred Dewhurst, member of Secretariat of Canadian Communist Party, undated in RG 25, Vol. 28379, File 29-12-CUBA, pt. 1, LAC
Professor from the University of Montreal. Trudeau’s admiration for the Cuban leader grew greatly in the fall of 1970, when a grateful Prime Minister personally thanked Castro for his government’s critical role in ending the FLQ kidnapping crisis. The personal relationship between the two men, even from afar, was largely favourable.

Trudeau’s inclinations and experiences regarding Cuba contrasted sharply with those of Richard Nixon. As Vice President, he had visited the island in February 1955 and spoke warmly of dictator Fulgencio Batista, even comparing him favourably to Abraham Lincoln. He had also held a decade long personal grudge against Castro, having been an enthusiastic support of CIA efforts to topple him, and viewing him as a common factor in his electoral defeats for the Presidency in 1960 and the California governorship in 1962. Nixon’s intransigence on Castro stood sharply in contrast with his reversal on China, as the former member of the hard-right China Lobby visited Beijing as President and de-facto recognized the communist regime he had virulently opposed two decades earlier. Unlike the People’s Republic of China, the President never saw Castro’s Cuba as a major world power to be reckoned with, and thus it remained a convenient outlet for him to retain his anti-communist credentials as he simultaneously pursued detente with the two communist giants. A 1972 State Department paper stated as much, candidly acknowledging that China and the Soviet Union were both major world powers, but also ones that had tangibly demonstrated a desire for better relations with the United States. Fidel Castro’s Cuba was the opposite in both aspects.

Nixon was also heavily influenced on Cuban issues by Charles “Bebe” Rebozo, a wealthy Florida businessman of Cuban ancestry with close ties to the anti-Castro exile community. A friend of Nixon since the early 1950s, Rebozo was regarded as one of his very few close personal confidantes, one who provided the President with considerable support and

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39 For the best portrait of the Trudeau-Castro-relationship see Robert Wright, Three Nights in Havana, 196-200
solace during the Watergate period. Thus Rebozo’s views on Cuba held considerable sway. Kissinger attested to this fact in his memoirs, and in his first discussion on Cuba with Gerald Ford after the latter assumed the Presidency, the Secretary of State advised the new President that “Nixon had strong personal views on Cuba.” Canadian officials also recognized this fact, and an Ad-Hoc Interdepartmental Committee reported that “President Nixon’s personal antipathy towards Castro and his close friendship with Bebe Rebozo, an anti-Castro expatriate [sic]” had hindered any further American efforts to re-open relations with Havana. In a December 1971 conversation, the President repeatedly told Kissinger that a reconsideration of United States policy towards Cuba was out of the question:

Nixon: I've said that I'm not going to change the policy. [Unclear] several papers about it—
Kissinger: I know.
Nixon: [Unclear]. I'm not changing the policy towards Castro as long as I'm alive.
Kissinger: All right. Well, then—
Nixon: That's absolute. Final. No appeal whatever. I never want you to raise it with me again.

The personality differences and contrasting views of Castro’s Cuba between the leaders at the helm in Canada and the United States meant that the differences in approach were potentially very thorny. Several favourable developments kept it from being so. On the larger international scene, Cuba’s active support for revolution in the hemisphere, while never completely ceasing, was at this time in retreat. Havana’s leading champion of such activities, Che Guevara, was dead, and Castro had finally decided to throw his lot in fully with the Soviet Union by accepting Moscow’s lead, particularly in endorsing its August 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. Apart from a mini-crisis concerning a Soviet submarine base at Cienfuegos in the early fall of 1970, Cuba generated no major international crises during the Nixon presidency.

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46 See Memorandum from Chair of Ad-Hoc Interdepartmental Committee on Canada-Cuban Relations (Fortier) for Secretary of State for External Affairs, Minister of Industry Trade and Commerce. Minister of Finance, Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Transport “The Future Course of Canadian Relations with Cuba” October 1, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8638, 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 28, LAC
More importantly for Ottawa, Canada did not make Nixon’s list of high priority countries for which the President wanted to personally manage bilateral relations from the White House, rather than relegate to the State Department. In his March 1970 foreign policy triage directive, coined by Lars Schoultz as the “Do Not Disturb” list, the only NATO countries were the United Kingdom, France and West Germany.\(^{48}\) Despite being the United States’ leading trading partner, both Nixon and especially Kissinger thought that Canada was small, unimportant and relatively dull in comparison to the more exciting geopolitical developments of the time. As neither trade nor economics interested these men, they handed off foreign relations with countries where economic issues predominated to others in the Cabinet, notably Treasury Secretary John Connally.\(^{49}\)

Cuba was the only Latin American state on Nixon’s list, but this was primarily on account of its connections to the Soviet Union. The President and Kissinger viewed the region and its people with considerable condescension, with Nixon arguing “no one gives a damn about Latin America,” and Kissinger adding that nothing historically significant ever came from the global south.\(^{50}\) Apart from Chile, which elected a Marxist President in 1970, and Brazil, which Nixon saw as his leading regional ally, the southern portion of the western hemisphere received little White House attention. The triage directive suggested Canada’s Cuba policies might bring two possible outcomes in Canada-United States relations. On the one hand, they certainly would not receive a sympathetic ear in the White House. On the other, assigning a low priority to Canada meant that its relations with Cuba, unless they touched on broader security concerns, might not reach Nixon at all. The record clearly suggests the latter.\(^{51}\)

\(^{48}\) Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic*, 246. The list itself can be found in Memorandum from President Nixon to his Assistant (Haldeman), his Assistant for Domestic Affairs (Ehrlichman), and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), March 2, 1970 (Eyes Only) in FRUS 1969-1976, Vol. I, Doc. 61, 204-206.


\(^{51}\) Canada’s relations with Cuba do not come up at all in the NSC Country files for Canada at the Nixon Library. The only document mentioning Cuba concerned a 1971 State Department status update request on progress in Canada’s hijacking accord negotiations with Havana. See Telegram from Secretary of State to US Embassy, Ottawa, no. 32635, February 26, 1971 (Secret/Exdis), in NSC Country Files Box 670, Canada, Vol. II [March 1969–Aug. 1971], 1 of 2. Richard M. Nixon Library, found on UPA Microfilm Richard M. Nixon National Security files – Western Europe, Reel 3. The Nixon NSC Latin American Country Files were not yet available for research at the time of writing. Extracts from those files published in FRUS volume covering the American Republics from 1969-1972, Vol. E-10, suggest the main issues on Cuba were the Cienfuegos incident, the hijacking
A very early proponent of overthrowing Castro, Nixon’s personal instincts were to maintain maximum pressure on his regime, and he toyed with the idea of reviving the anti-Castro covert activities that Johnson had stopped in 1965, even if more for harassment purposes or as instruments of linkage connected to other international developments such as Vietnam or the Soviet submarines at Cienfuegos.52 Suspicious that the State Department favoured normalization, Nixon angrily scrawled at the bottom of an early memo on the topic: “State has handled this with disgusting incompetence; the careerists are pro-Castro for the most part.”53 A few months later, when rumours floated of an imminent policy change, the President ordered Kissinger to “turn that off,” adding “we are going to go in the other direction.”54 The National Security Advisor and his staff on several occasions between 1969 and 1971 had to constrain the President from resuming anti-Castro activities, with virtually everyone but Nixon himself believing that supporting the exiles would further Castro’s objectives. One NSC Latin American expert, Viron Vaky, described them as “an unguided missile.”55 After Nixon had apparently issued a handwritten Presidential instruction not to inhibit Cuban exiles from taking actions against their homeland, NSC staffer and future Secretary of State Alexander Haig suggested that Kissinger take up the matter with Nixon in a quiet manner “so the President does not have to accord, and the activities of the exiles. The State Department Central files for 1970-1973 also have sparse documentation on Canada’s Cuba policy. The pertinent series from the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, the Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs and the Ottawa Embassy Post files were also not yet available for research from this period.


54 Telephone Conversation between Henry Kissinger and President Nixon, April 23, 1969 (no classification marking) in Kissinger Transcripts Collection, Document KA 00595, Digital National Security Archive

treat this as a test of his manhood.” The matter appeared to be resolved by early 1972, when the State Department issued a circular telegram announcing that the United States government would not sanction the use of its territory for exile activities against Cuba – a key requirement for progress on an anti-hijacking accord with Havana. While support for exile activities was now turned off, Washington made it clear it had not loosened its commitment to Havana’s political and economic isolation.

On the flip side, Castro also had little enthusiasm in the early 1970s for reconciling with the United States, and any feelers his government put out were at best half hearted. As Nixon’s unrelenting hostility was no secret, Castro both publicly and privately reciprocated and mirrored the US President’s sentiments. In the official government newspaper Granma, the letter “X” in the President’s name had been replaced with a swastika. During a publicized visit to then-socialist Chile in December 1971, Castro stated that he saw no hope of a rapprochement with the United States as long as Nixon remained in the White House, although he also told a journalist that he would talk to “a ‘realistic’ US government that desired to pursue ‘a policy of peace.’” Canadian diplomats in turn reported that during a 1971 visit by the US national volleyball team, which some hoped would replicate US-China “ping-pong” diplomacy, Castro declared “our treatment of US athletes does not signify the slightest change to our irreducible, intransigent and unyielding opposition to Yankee imperialism.” A State Department policy paper from May 1972 described Castro as moving even closer to the Soviet Union rather than the United States. The US bombing of North Vietnam sparked Castro calls for the trial of

56 Note from Alexander Haig to Henry Kissinger, October 3, 1971 (Secret) in National Security Council Files: Henry A Kissinger Office Files; Box 128, Country Files Latin America: Folder “Cuba – Items to Discuss with the President,” Richard M. Nixon Library. This document is also quoted in Schoultz, That Infernal Little Cuban Republic, 248.
57 Department of State Circular Telegram 27141, February 14, 1972 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1970-1973, Box 2221, File POL 30-2 CUBA, NARA
58 Memorandum of Conversation, “USAF Officers Spend Two Days in Cuba,” November 1, 1971 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1970-1973, Box 2223, File POL CUBA-US, NARA. This action led a US air force pilot, on a stopover in Cuba after carrying Soviet Premier Alexsei Kosygin across US airspace, to ask how this action squared with better US-Cuban relations, and embarrassed Cuban officials promised not to repeat the incident.
59 Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research Intelligence Note RARN-40, “Cuba A More Extreme Castro?” December 27, 1971 (Secret/ Limdis) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1970-1973, Box 2220, File POL 15 CUBA, NARA
60 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 756, August 20, 1971 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 4, LAC
Nixon as a war criminal, and the Cuban leader never forgave the Nixon administration for its efforts to topple Chile’s Socialist President Salvador Allende, who died during a bloody military coup in September 1973. From Havana’s viewpoint, a change of leadership in Washington had become a prerequisite for progress. Cuban-United States relations were less stormy than in the 1960s, but remained nonetheless in a deep freeze.

The cold state of Cuba’s relations with the United States and Richard Nixon’s hostility were good reasons for Canada to want a low profile for its relationship with Havana. There were enough Canadian-United States disagreements on bigger issues such as Vietnam draft dodgers, the size of Canada’s NATO force, Arctic sovereignty, the environment, and nuclear tests. The most serious row in bilateral relations during these years was the aftermath of the August 1971 so-called “Nixon shocks.” Spearheaded by his pugnacious Treasury Secretary Connally, Nixon unilaterally announced the end of the 1944 Bretton Woods system that tied currencies to the United States dollar, and ultimately to a gold standard, as well as adding a cross-the-board ten percent import surcharge for all countries. Canada was not granted an exemption, and the economically critical Canada-US Auto pact of 1965 hung in the balance. Nixon only saved the latter after a December 1971 meeting with Trudeau and after opting to accept the advice of Kissinger over Connally - no mean feat given that the Treasury Secretary was a Presidential favourite in the Cabinet. Rare among American officials, Connally genuinely disliked Canada, and was determined to make it pay for its perceived anti-Americanism. Several years later, Ambassador Cadieux recalled the Treasury Secretary complaining that the United States had “no worse adversary than Canada,” and that “no communist country had criticized [the] US as
Canada had done.”  

Further Canadian-American turbulence was only averted by his departure as Treasury Secretary in the spring of 1972.

Thankfully for Ottawa, Nixon and Connally did not mention Canada’s now budding new relationship with Cuba in the otherwise testy bilateral meetings of late 1971 and early 1972. As the Cabinet official in charge of the Cuban Assets Controls, the Treasury Secretary could have easily leveraged these measures to make matters even more difficult for Canada. Had he either continued in the Nixon Cabinet or succeeded him as President, Trudeau would have likely experienced considerably greater difficulty with the United States government over relations with Cuba, and a trip to Havana under a Nixon or Connally presidency would have been all but impossible without paying a serious, perhaps even heavy price in Canadian-American relations.

The record suggests that Cuba did not come up at all in any of Trudeau’s three face to face meetings with Nixon, or if it did, it was as an unrecorded sidebar discussion. The initial March 1969 gathering in Washington, the first official such visit there by a Canadian Prime Minister in five years, was primarily about establishing a working relationship, rather than resolving any key issues of substance. The other two meetings in December 1971 and April

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65 Letter from Canadian Ambassador, Washington DC (Marcel Cadieux) to Secretary of State for External Affairs (Allan MacEachen), June 5, 1975 (Confidential) in Basil Robinson fonds, MG 31, E-83, File 18-10, LAC. For more on Connally’s views of Canada see Bothwell and Granatstein, Pirouette, 64-65.

66 Connally also had an interest in Latin America, and served as a Presidential envoy there in the spring of 1972, shortly before leaving office. Like Nixon, Connally hated Castro and was a keen supporter of rightist military dictatorships, even telling his boss that Nicaragua’s Anastasio Somoza Jr. was the United States’ “only friend” in the region, agreeing with Nixon that he hoped Somoza would not liberalize his regime. See Conversation among President Nixon, the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), the President’s Assistant (Haldeman), and Secretary of the Treasury (Connally), Washington, June 11, 1971 in FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-10, Doc 43. Online at http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve10/d43

Nixon was also very partial to Brazil’s General Emilio Médici, the most repressive of its military strongmen during the 1964-1985 dictatorship. See Stephen G. Rabe, The Killing Zone: The United States Wages Cold War in Latin America (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 116-120. Nixon and Kissinger would later both welcome the violent military overthrow of Chile’s Socialist government in September 1973, which ushered in the infamous Augusto Pinochet dictatorship, which would last until early 1990.

67 Peter McKenna and John Kirk suggest that “one can be reasonably sure” Nixon would have raised Cuba with Trudeau. The evidence suggests not. See Peter McKenna and John Kirk, “Sleeping with the Elephant: The Impact of the United States on Canada-Cuba Relations,” inMorris Morley and Chris Mcgillivray ed. Cuba, The United States and the Post Cold War World: The International Dimensions of the Washington Havana Relationship, (University of Florida Press, 2005), 160.

1972 focussed on the aftermath of the Nixon shocks, and broader issues relating to the so-called “special relationship,” superpower detente and the China opening, and of course Vietnam; Cuba was entirely absent. For the 1969 meeting, both leaders were prepared to discuss Cuba, but from a reactive posture, raising the topic only if the other leader did so first. Trudeau’s briefing note repeated Canada’s well-worn policy line about the non-sale of strategic goods, and that its position closely resembled other NATO countries. Nixon’s response was to regret the disagreement, but argue that the United States position would remain firm unless Castro changed his outlook. The President was also advised to recognize Canada’s opposition to extraterritoriality, but to reaffirm the Cuban Assets Controls, although adding that United States would give “prompt, sympathetic consideration to exemptions of importance to Canada” - none of which he would do when the issue surfaced late in his Presidency. When Trudeau was asked about Canada’s Cuba trade at his famous 1969 National Press Club conference, he replied that Canada traded with Cuba, China and other countries with which it differed profoundly in its political system and outlook. At least at the highest levels, Cuba was a sleeping dog that was wisely left to lie.

While prospects looked dim at the most senior levels for better US-Cuban relations, at least in the early days of the Nixon presidency, some Canadian diplomats, and a few American officials, had subtly hoped that the President’s pragmatism would win out over ideology and personal vendetta. In early 1969, journalists and even some State Department officials had wrongly speculated that the new President would be more conciliatory and rational towards Cuba than his predecessor, despite his past hard line views. The long serving Ambassador in Havana, Léon Mayrand, patiently and regularly looked for cracks in the ice, especially signals

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69 For the contents of these meetings see Memorandum for the President’s File by the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), “Meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, Monday, December 6, 1971, 4:00–6:00 p.m., the Oval Office,” December 6, 1971 (Top Secret) in FRUS 1969-1976, Vol. XLI, Doc. 109, 422-425 and also Memorandum for the President’s File by the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), “The President’s Meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Pierre-Elliott Trudeau,” April 14, 1972 (Secret/ Sensitive) in FRUS 1969-1976, Vol. XLI, Doc. 112, 431-433.
70 Briefing Paper for Prime Minister’s Meeting with President Nixon March 24-25, 1969 “Relations with Cuba” March 14 1969 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8636, 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 8, NAC
73 Quoted in Wright, 104-105.
from the State Department. In the end, he would be repeatedly disappointed. Aware that the United States required signs of movement from the Cuban side, Mayrand believed such indicators were then present. Speaking with two visiting British Leyland officials (one being former British Ambassador Adam Watson, whom Mayrand knew well), the Canadian Ambassador learned that Castro would be open to “reasonable suggestions” from the Americans on better relations, and that Foreign Minister Roa had interpreted more moderate articles in the American press as a sign that official Washington’s thinking on Cuba might be shifting.74 Mayrand was even more excited, and keen to brief the State Department, after an April 1969 conversation with President Dorticos.75 Cadieux relayed to Sharp the ambassador’s views that “it would be appropriate for us to encourage any possible amelioration of the situation.”76 Cadieux favoured and even encouraged Canadian diplomats to update the State Department on Cuban developments, but was all too aware that the United States did not favour Canadian “mediation” over Cuba, and advised his Minister that Canada should exercise “great caution and circumspection on such a delicate matter.”77 Not trusting his man in Havana, who he believed still had a hidden agenda, Cadieux once again poured cold water on Mayrand’s excitement, a position supported by Ambassador Ritchie in Washington.78 Mayrand was soon to retire, but refused to abandon his dream that Canada could serve as a useful diplomatic bridge across the Florida Strait. He would carry out his study of the issue as a retirement project, completing a small French language publication on the issue shortly before his death in France in March 1975.79

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74 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 380, April 23, 1969 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8906, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA pt. 3, LAC. Roa may have assumed the US government had the same control over its media as Havana did over Granma and related publications.

75 The actual Mayrand–Dorticos transcript was not found in the expected files from that time dealing with Cuban-US relations RG 25, Vol. 8906, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA pt. 3 or Canada-Cuban relations, RG 25, Vol. 8636 File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 9, both of which are at the Library and Archives Canada. Evidence from other documents in both files suggest Dorticos had given Mayrand some indication that Havana was open to a dialogue with the Americans.

76 Memorandum from Under Secretary (Cadieux) to the Minister of External Affairs (Sharp) “Cuban-USA Relations: Ambassador Mayrand’s Interview with President Dorticos” May 7, 1969 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8906, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA pt. 3, LAC.

77 Memorandum from Under Secretary (Cadieux) to the Minister of External Affairs (Sharp) “Cuban-USA Relations: Ambassador Mayrand’s Interview with President Dorticos,” May 7, 1969 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8906, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA pt. 3, LAC.

78 Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Havana XL-315, April 23, 1969 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8906, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA pt. 3, LAC.

79 Additional details taken from Mayrand’s civil service personnel file, RG 32, Vol. 1401, File “1905-11-01 Mayrand, Léon,” pt. 4 and pt. 5, LAC.
The Americans had no problem discussing Cuban developments with the Canadians, but they painted a much less rosy picture. John Crimmins, by then Deputy Assistant Under Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, downplayed rumours of an imminent thaw with Castro and characterized the more moderate rhetoric from Castro as reminiscent of the earliest days of the Johnson presidency, when similar misplaced rumours abounded. The veteran Cuba hand still saw the revolutionary leader as incorrigibly anti-American, and believed that he was merely regrouping and re-strategizing. To quell such rumours, in early 1970, Under Secretary of State Elliot Richardson reminded all US diplomats via a circular telegram:

There is no basis in fact for such speculation about a change in USG policy toward Cuba. That policy remains unaltered. There are no reports of conversations underway or contemplated between the USG and the Cuban Government concerning a modification of the present relationship.

State Department officials repeated the same line to External Affairs officials numerous times, dispelling the rumours that Havana would be next after Nixon’s summits in Beijing and Moscow, a journey that Cuban Affairs Deputy Coordinator Joseph Norbury described to Canadian embassy staff in March 1972 as “inconceivable.” Late that year, Inter American Affairs Assistant Secretary Charles Meyer repeated this position, noting that “unlike China or USSR, Cuba did not enter into [the] global thinking of USA,” although he left open the prospect that Cuba might become less of a thorn as US-Soviet detente progressed.

With Washington’s message being unequivocal that Cuba was a low priority and its relationship with it would not change anytime soon, Ottawa concluded that it could proceed slowly and gradually in broadening the scope of its relationship with Cuba, at least in safe theatres. It would begin with agriculture, followed by cultural, sports and academic exchanges, tourism, and eventually development aid, roughly in that progression. In doing so, Canadian officials continuously gauged the American reaction. John Kirk and Peter McKenna argue that Trudeau’s government had to overcome “substantial pressure from Washington,” as well as

80 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 1636, May 9, 1969 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8906, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 3, LAC
82 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 857, March 3, 1972 (Confidential/ Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 4, LAC
83 Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Havana, no. GWP-109, December 19, 1972 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 4, LAC
resistance by veterans within the Department of External Affairs, as it forged ahead.\textsuperscript{84} This is somewhat of an overstatement. Indeed Cadieux, Ritchie and others who had followed the Cuba file since the days of John Diefenbaker were more cautious and circumspect, recalling their experiences. Kirk and McKenna are correct that most of the initiative for broader bilateral ties originated in Havana rather than in Ottawa.\textsuperscript{85} A Cabinet review paper from April 1974 identified Canada’s posture towards Cuba as largely reactive, and devoid of policy planning.\textsuperscript{86} It concluded if relations with Cuba were to progress, Canadian initiative needed to be bolder and more intentional.

Some in the External Affairs Department, including the next three ambassadors in Havana after Mayrand, believed Canada had been overly excessively cautious with the Cubans, Leading this charge were officials from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Some internal friction developed between advocates of a more forward approach and those that believed Canada’s relationship with the United States had to take primacy, and required prudence. Kenneth Brown, who arrived in the Havana post as Ambassador late in 1970, wanted to proceed with Canadian development aid to Cuba. In the agricultural field, Havana anxiously sought Canadian veterinary expertise to counter a terrible outbreak of swine fever, which in 1971 had led to a culling of many of the island’s herds. Cuba was grateful for help it received from Canadian veterinarians and Agriculture Canada experts.\textsuperscript{87} Brown was frustrated at Ottawa’s overall hesitancy on development aid, lamenting to External’s Western Hemisphere Bureau Director Klaus Goldschlag in May 1971 that “everything we do and say in Havana is conditioned by our awareness of possible reactions in Washington.”\textsuperscript{88}

Marcel Cadieux, now Ambassador in Washington, was External Affairs’ leading naysayer. He doubted Canada could provide such assistance to Cuba without incurring the wrath of the Nixon administration. In January 1971 he cabled Ottawa that “the provision of bilateral assistance in the foreseeable future would be particularly ill received by the administration and Congress.” In his assessment, the Americans had not objected to the Holstein credit sale as

\textsuperscript{84} Kirk and McKenna, \textit{Canada-Cuba Relations: The Other Good Neighbour Policy}, 99.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{86} See also Memorandum for the Cabinet, “The Future of Canadian Cuban Relations,” [ca. April 5, 1974] (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 11922, File 38-1-7-CUBA, pt. 2, LAC
\textsuperscript{87} There is extensive documentation on Canada’s assistance to Cuba on this episode in RG 25, Vol. 8637, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 13, LAC. Cuba would blame the CIA for planting the virus. See Wright, 112.
\textsuperscript{88} Letter from Canadian Ambassador to Cuba Kenneth C. Brown to Western Hemisphere Bureau Director Klaus Goldschlag, May 20, 1971 (Personal and Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8637, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 13, LAC
Canada was the primary economic beneficiary. This would not be the case with aid projects, and that any benefits Canada would gain in assisting Cuba would be offset by adverse consequences with the United States.\footnote{Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 30, January 5, 1971 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8636 File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 12, LAC} Disagreeing with his colleague, Brown took the moderate US response on formerly contentious issues such as credit as a good indicator. Not only did he see an expanding relationship as in Canada’s commercial interests, and in keeping with Trudeau’s foreign policy direction, but he believed Canada owed Havana a tangible expression of gratitude for its help in resolving the FLQ crisis.\footnote{Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 16, January 8, 1971 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8636 File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 12, LAC. See also Greg Donaghy and Mary Halloran, “Vivo el pueblo Cubano: Pierre Trudeau’s Distant Cuba 1968-1978” in Robert Wright and Lara Wylie ed. Our Place in the Sun: Canada and Cuba in the Castro Era (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 148.} At a Departmental meeting on Cuba in November 1971, Brown lamented the slow pace of progress as his first year in Havana drew to a close, and attributed his Department’s reticence to “Washington syndrome.”\footnote{Memorandum for File drafted by Caribbean Division, Western Hemisphere Branch (CE Stedman), “Canada-Cuban Relations”, November 15, 1971 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8637, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 14, LAC. Also cited in Donaghy and Halloran, in Wright and Wylie, ed., Our Place in the Sun, 148-149.} The Cabinet had largely sided with Brown, and in July it ruled Cuba eligible in principle for Canadian technical assistance.\footnote{Cabinet Conclusions, July 22, 1971 (Secret) in RG 2, Series A-5-a, Vol. 6381, LAC. Online at http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/conclusions/index-e.html} Expanded ties indeed meant potentially lucrative opportunities for Canadian businesses, such as the mining firm Sherritt International, who sought to expand their investments in Cuban nickel mining in 1973 by some $200 million.\footnote{For details of Sherritt Gordon’s expansion see Memorandum from Commercial Secretary, Canadian Embassy Havana to (J.D. Blackwood) to Western Hemisphere Bureau “Cuban Nickel Projects – Sherritt Gordon Interests” [Minutes of Discussion at briefing dinner for Ambassador M.N. Bowl], November 22, 1973 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 11922, File 38-1-7-CUBA, pt. 2, LAC} Canadian exports to Cuba began to grow sharply at this time. After an incremental rise from 1969 through 1972, the trade volume for 1973 was 40 per cent larger than for 1972, and the first half of 1974 exceeded all of 1973 by 30 per cent.\footnote{See Memorandum for Secretary of State for External Affairs, Minister of Industry Trade and Commerce, Minister of Finance, Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Transport “The Future Course of Canadian Relations with Cuba” October 1, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 28, LAC} These developments drew little notice, let alone grumbling south of the border, although such quiet did not reassure veterans of Canadian-United States relations such as Cadieux or Under Secretary Edgar Ritchie that Canada-Cuban relations should accelerate any more rapidly.\footnote{See Donaghy and Halloran in Wright and Wylie eds., 148.} In particular, Richie sought to constrain Canadian International Development Agency
(CIDA) President Paul Gérin-Lajoie, who he believed was overly enthusiastic about projects in Cuba and was inclined to raise Havana’s expectations about incoming dollars. In 1972, Ritchie reminded him that “the nature, size and timing of Canadian assistance to Cuba are essentially matters of foreign policy” and that Cuba was “of a rather special character and where our relations with a large number of other countries need to be taken into account,” not the least being the United States. In a similar interchange a year later, Ritchie rejected Gérin-Lajoie’s suggestion that Cuba be made “a country of concentration” for Canadian aid, an idea he saw as fraught with problems. Ritchie was certain Washington’s response would be very cool, if not outright alarmed, should Canada make Cuba a special aid priority. Ritchie believed the rest of Latin America would not understand Canada prioritizing a small communist country for such assistance, He also thought Ottawa needed leverage to encourage movement by Havana on some outstanding issues. Among the latter were outstanding debts owed to Canadian companies, an aircraft hijacking accord and the release of Ronald Lippert, a Canadian incarcerated in Cuba since October 1963 for participating in CIA operations and for whose freedom a growing number of Canadians were pressuring for government action. Lippert would be released in November 1973, and three months later, Gérin-Lajoie was in Havana, promising it $10 million in Canadian development funding over the next three years. The Ottawa-Havana relationship was now ready to move to the next level.

Cuban-Canadian ties expanded and broadened with relative impunity regarding the United States between early 1969 and mid-1974. The political arguments presented explain a great deal – Cuba’s lower international profile and the fact that the senior levels of the Nixon administration paid little attention to either Canada or Cuba. However, this does not entirely explain why there was little obvious friction. As during the Johnson period, Canada’s efforts

96 An overview of the CIDA-DEA relationship regarding Cuba can be found in Donaghy and Mary Halloran in Wright and Wylie ed. Our Place in the Sun, 149-150. Gérin-Lajoie was Quebec’s Education Minister in the early 1960s and was a pivotal figure in the Quiet Revolution, especially on Quebec’s efforts to represent itself internationally in areas under provincial jurisdiction such as culture and education.
97 Letter from Under Secretary for External Affairs (AE Ritchie) to CIDA President (Paul Gérin-Lajoie) [undated but summer 1972]. (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 11922, File 38-1-7-CUBA pt. 1, LAC
99 On the Lippert case, numerous examples of letters from 1973 calling for his release are in the Pierre Trudeau fonds, MG 26, Series O-7, Vol. 472, File 840/ C962, LAC
100 Memorandum from Latin American Division (B. Watson) to Economic Division “Aid to Cuba: Call by Messrs. Bédard and Wheatley of CIDA” July 26, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 11922, File 38-1-7-CUBA pt. 2, LAC
either to cooperate with the Americans, or to avoid needlessly offending them, were also critical. The theatres of cooperation remained largely the same, although some, such as the subversion concern, were fading. As in the 1960s, Canada provided the Americans with much valued intelligence on Cuba, and readily shared information and displayed sensitivity on embargo enforcement, civil aviation developments, including the parallel anti-hijacking efforts, and on travel by leftists. The burden of initiative was even more on Ottawa, which did not wish to aggravate Richard Nixon, knowing his loathing of Castro and radical activists, along with his less than favourable view of Trudeau. Washington in turn proved more helpful by their low key approach to Canada-Cuban developments, and by their actions to curtail Cuban exiles. Until late 1973, the Nixon administration also remained easy going about Canadian subsidiary trade. As will be shown, the golden age of Canadian-United States cooperation was receding, but such efforts prevailed sufficiently to keep Cuba a non-issue in bilateral relations until very late in the President’s tenure.

Information sharing still remained the most appreciated Canadian contribution regarding Cuba in the United States. Although standard operating procedure since 1961, the picture on these efforts is more fragmentary and murkier in the 1970s, although enough evidence is now accessible to suggest that this too went on at least until the early days of the Carter presidency. The one senior American official to recognize Marcel Cadieux when he finished his five years in Washington was CIA Director William Colby. The veteran spymaster praised the quality of Canada’s intelligence contribution, and thanked Cadieux for his personal interest in the Canada-US intelligence relationship. Cadieux recommended to Basil Robinson, who replaced Ritchie as under Secretary that year, that incoming ambassador Jake Warren be instructed to continue sharing intelligence with the Americans on an informal and confidential basis. Robinson concurred, replying “we should do what we can to preserve the confidence of the CIA and other parts of the US intelligence community.”

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101 Again certain key US records series that might contain a richer record, such as the files of the Coordinator for Cuban Affairs, the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, and the Records of the US Embassy in Ottawa, were not yet available for research at the time of this study for the latter 1960s and 1970s. Intelligence oriented records from RCMP/CSIS in Canada released via ATIP are very heavily redacted and censor out much that might be revealed about US-Canadian interchange. CIA records of this nature will be unavailable in all likelihood for decades to come.

102 Letter from Marcel Cadieux to Under Secretary Basil Robinson, May 23, 1975 (Personal and Secret) in Basil Robinson fonds MG 31, E-83 Vol. 18, File 18-10, LAC

103 Letter from Under Secretary Basil Robinson to Marcel Cadieux, June 4, 1975 (Personal and Secret) in Basil Robinson fonds MG 31, E-83 Vol. 18, File 18-10, LAC
regularly directed Havana embassy staff to debrief the State Department and CIA, as well as forward them regular reports. When leaving his post in 1970, Léon Mayrand and his successor Kenneth Brown were both sent to Washington; the State Department instructed American diplomats in Ottawa to express “appreciation for Canadian cooperation and for their making available their Havana embassy reports which we find extremely helpful.”

The intelligence Canada shared with the United States on Cuba in the 1970s either concerned the political and economic situation on the island, or the movement of people and goods between Canada and Cuba. American officials especially wanted Canadian assessments of the attitudes of the Cuban regime towards the United States. In June 1971, Havana embassy Counselor William Warden met with the State Department Cuban Affairs’ officials to discuss Castro and Cuba. Warden described how Cuban officials were wary of contacts with western diplomats, particularly those that could provide the most defence oriented information. Thus it was difficult for Canadian Embassy personnel to obtain hard information on important items such as the number of Soviet personnel in Cuba. Easier to obtain were reports on the mood in Cuba, and on the state of its leaders. Warden described Castro as a pragmatist and opportunist but who saw the United States as “a special case,” and was in no hurry to move closer to it. Warden read the Cubans accurately, and in turn his reporting likely reinforced the United States’ status quo posture.

As Canada’s official contacts with Cuba mushroomed in the mid-1970s, sharing intelligence on Cuba with the United States became trickier as Ottawa sought to preserve trust with the often suspicious Cubans. External Affairs did not cease such activities, but had to be more discreet in doing so. Western Hemisphere Bureau Chief J.S. Nutt wrote Vern Turner, the Minister at the Washington embassy, rejecting a proposed April 1975 debriefing by outgoing Ambassador Bow that:

although we are aware of the need to reciprocate as much as possible with the Americans on the exchange of information, and Cuba is one of the areas where we might be of some assistance to

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104 Telegram from Department of State to US Embassy Ottawa no. 209371, December 22, 1970 (Secret) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1970-1973, Box 2223, File POL CUBA-US, NARA. Released to the author under FOIA NW 32562.
105 Memorandum of Conversation “Visit of Canadian Official Stationed in Cuba” June 29, 1971 (Confidential) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1970-1973, Box 2160, File POL 17 CANADA CUBA, NARA
them, we have decided that the value of a meeting would be outweighed by the potential risk to our credibility with the Cubans if they learn of such an encounter.\footnote{J.S. Nutt, Director Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs to V.G. Turner, Canadian Embassy Washington DC April 30, 1975 (Secret), in RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 28, LAC}

A similar concern arose after Bow took up his new post as External Affairs Security and Intelligence Director straight from his Havana assignment, with Department officials advising their Minister, Allan MacEachen, that “the Cubans may be curious about the appointment given their sensitivity about intelligence and security.”\footnote{Memo from Latin American Division (D’Iberville Fortier) to Minister of External Affairs (MacEachen), “Your Luncheon with the Cuban Ambassador,” October 24, 1975 (no classification marking) in RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 28 LAC} Canada trod more carefully in this regard, but it continued to swap intelligence on Cuba, especially its activities in Africa, for several years hence.

Regarding another central area of Canadian–United States cooperation regarding Cuba – the enforcement of the American embargo, the Trudeau government, at least until 1974, followed the same policies set out by John Diefenbaker in December 1960. Occasional incidents concerning the possible trans-shipment of US goods still occurred, but with diminished frequency. Until 1974, no export control related matters generated any publicity. The Departments of External Affairs and Industry, Trade and Commerce continued to be cautious and ever sensitive to possible reactions in the United States about “embargo busting.” As Ottawa diversified what it sold to Cuba, it hesitated to issue export licences for technology products having potential military uses, and refrained from selling goods normally on the COCOM restrictions list. To cite one example, in 1968, the Canadian firm Scintrex was allowed to sell a fluxgate magnometer to UNESCO’s Regional Director in Cuba to train local mineral surveyors only as the technology was unclassified and also available from the Soviet Union.\footnote{Memorandum from Transport, Communications and Energy Division to Latin American Division, “Sale to Cuba of MF-1F Fluxgate Magnometer,” November 5, 1968 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.14784, File 37-22-1-CUBA, pt. 2, LAC and also Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Cadieux) to the Minister of External Affairs (Sharp) “Proposed Sale to Cuba of Fluxgate Magnometer,” November 29, 1968 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 14784, File 37-22-1-CUBA, pt. 2, LAC. The approval recommendation document is Memorandum from Under Secretary to the Deputy Minister of Industry Trade and Commerce, December 4, 1968 (Confidential) in the same file} The government was equally committed to preventing trans-shipments of US made goods, as when in early 1973, despite the now close cooperation between Canada and Cuba in agriculture, it refused to permit for export plant growth chambers as they contained US made parts, and it chided Havana later that year when staff from its Montreal Trade Delegation masked US made...
agricultural implements as Canadian, shipping them home along with “personal effects.” All unaccompanied shipments from Canada to Cuba remained subject to customs search.\footnote{See Telegram from Industry Trade and Commerce Representative, Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, no. 133 January 12, 1973 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 14784, File 37-22-1-CUBA, pt. 2, LACA and also Memorandum from Latin American Division (Charpentier) to Under Secretary for External Affairs (Ritchie), “Cuban Violations of the Export and Import Permits Act and Regulations,” June 3, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 14784, File 37-22-1-CUBA, pt. 2, LAC}

Canada’s ongoing refusal to re-export US made goods to Cuba affected its aid projects and fuelled additional friction between External Affairs and CIDA staff. In June 1973, Industry Trade and Commerce officials intervened when learning half the goods needed for a small CIDA supported project in Cuba were of US origin, forcing the development agency to seek German and Japanese made alternatives.\footnote{Telegram from CIDA Ottawa to Canadian Embassy, Havana no. PLLA 2173, June 6, 1973 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 11922, File 38-1-7-CUBA pt. 2, LAC} External Affairs officials were horrified in 1974 to learn that Havana was expecting to receive US made capital goods under commitments made at the beginning of the year by CIDA President Gérin-Lajoie.\footnote{See Memorandum from Latin American Division (B. Watson) to Economic Development Division, “Aid to Cuba: Call by Messrs. Bédard and Wheatley of CIDA,” July 26, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 11922, File 38-1-7-CUBA pt. 2, LAC} A highly annoyed Brian Watson of the Latin American Affairs Division wrote to his departmental colleagues in the Economic Development Division that:

> the matter [of non-re-export] was a fundamental question in Canadian-USA relations and it was highly unlikely that we would take a decision to change our policy unless we were quite confident that this would not be detrimental to our relations with the USA which are obviously of greater consequence than those with Cuba.\footnote{Memorandum from Commercial Policy Division to File, “Ad Hoc Meeting on Canadian Aid to Cuba,” August 29, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 11922, File 38-1-7-CUBA pt. 2, LAC}

Under Secretary Ritchie believed interdepartmental consultations were necessary, and at one such meeting in late August, Industry, Trade and Commerce officials had to remind fellow attendees that any Cuba bound goods with US parts had to be sufficiently reconstituted to qualify as Canadian.\footnote{Memorandum from Commercial Policy Division to File, “Ad Hoc Meeting on Canadian Aid to Cuba,” August 29, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 11922, File 38-1-7-CUBA pt. 2, LAC}

Finding itself in an uncomfortable position, the Canadian government either had to seek US permission to export goods for its aid projects – a proposal inconsistent with Canadian sovereignty and likely to be declined, or it could revise the 1963 Directive 9001 still in force
that prohibited such re-exports.\textsuperscript{115} Wanting to avoid problems with the United States, it opted to temporarily exclude US component goods in its aid projects, although as was becoming apparent, the closer integration of the Canadian and American economies made the disentangling of Canadian goods from their still substantial, and essential, US made component parts near impossible.\textsuperscript{116} As such, the Cabinet decided late in 1974 to revise Directive 9001 and loosen some of these restraints, especially where the US components were 20 per cent or less. By that time, much had changed. Gerald Ford was President, and his new administration was considering its own loosening of American Cuba policy.

The other export control issue that soon reared its ugly head was extraterritoriality. Relatively quiet since 1967, the few incidents during Trudeau’s first two mandates were minor and generated negligible publicity. Still, Ottawa was concerned that the Cuban Assets Controls still made US owned Canadian businesses shy about filling Cuban orders, with the measures thus serving as a brake on the Canadian economy.\textsuperscript{117} At least six times between 1970 and 1973, Canadian subsidiaries lost out on sales opportunities on account of jittery American parent firms.\textsuperscript{118} The issue rose again to prominence early in 1974, right as Canada’s trade with Cuba really began to balloon. At the center of the problem would be an intransigent Richard Nixon.

Late in 1973, the Montreal Locomotive Works (MLW), a subsidiary of the American firm Studebaker Worthington, received an $18 million order to sell 25 locomotives to Cuba, each with negligible US origin components. Replicating the 1967 Dana-Haynes case, the problem was that several MLW Directors were US citizens, concerned about facing possible prosecution when they returned to the United States.\textsuperscript{119} Neither State nor Treasury would exempt Studebaker Worthington from the Cuban Assets Controls. When Ottawa formally

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\item \textsuperscript{115} Memorandum from Program Manager, Latin American Division (Gabriel Dicaire) to attendees, “Record of the Sub Committee of the Cuba Aid Project,” August 29, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 11922, File 38-1-7-CUBA, pt. 2, LAC
\item \textsuperscript{116} Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Washington DC no GWU 0452, August 14, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.13838, File 36-18-2-CUBA pt. 5, LAC
\item \textsuperscript{117} In one example from 1970, Columbia Cellulose received a Cuban order for 5000 tons of bleached kraft pulp. The company was mostly US owned and managed. Parent firm got license from US Treasury Dept. after Ottawa reminded US officials about Canadian laws and commitments. A summary is in Memorandum from Deputy Minister of Industry Trade and Commerce (J.F. Grandy) to the Minister (Alistair Gillespie), February 28, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.13838, File 36-18-2-CUBA pt. 3, LAC
\item \textsuperscript{118} Memorandum from Deputy Minister of Industry Trade and Commerce (J.F. Grandy) to the Minister (Alastair Gillespie), “US Cuban Assets Control Regulations,” February 28, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 19, Vol. 5192, File 8780/US8-7 pt. 1, LAC
\item \textsuperscript{119} Memorandum from Under Secretary (A.E. Ritchie) to the Minister of External Affairs (Sharp) “US Meeting with Doctor Kissinger: Cuban Assets Controls Regulations”, February 8, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.13838, File 36-18-2-CUBA, pt. 3, LAC
\end{itemize}
petitioned the State Department on February 12, 1974, with Canadian hand Rufus Smith responding that United States needed to review the request and make a determination, as it was then doing for a similar case regarding the sale to Cuba of Chrysler automobiles manufactured in Argentina. A week later, the Canadian embassy was informed that the answer was “negative for now.”

The Trudeau government was understandably furious over the delay, correctly seeing it as an imposition on Canadian interests. Finance Minister John Turner was advised by one of his senior bureaucrats to caution Treasury Secretary George Shultz (with whom he had an excellent relationship) that the scenario was “exactly the kind of issue that prompts more extreme elements in Canada to call for more stringent controls on foreign ownership and investment.”

Shultz remained mum. To both governments’ chagrin, the story surfaced in the Canadian press, forcing Mitchell Sharp to disclose in the House of Commons the government’s petition to Washington. Under Secretary Ritchie informed the US embassy that especially problematic was that this MLW Worthington order was tied to Quebec jobs and therefore, to the national unity question. Cadieux told Smith and incoming US Ambassador William Porter that the Canadian government viewed Washington’s lack of cooperation as “an extremely serious development in relations between Canada and USA.” Smith offered what he deemed a personal suggestion – that the Canadian majority on the company’s board simply outvote their American colleagues, the latter of whom would be obliged to vote against the proposal. Harry Schlaudeman, a senior State Department Latin American expert, presented the same argument to

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123 Memorandum from Deputy Minister of Finance (Reisman) to the Minister of Finance (Turner), “MLW Sale to Cuba”, March 6, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 19, Vol. 5192, File 8780/U58-7, pt. 1, LAC. For press coverage see various Globe and Mail clippings in the same file – March 1, March 6 etc
124 Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no, 504, February 23, 1974 (Secret) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1974, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43
Canadian embassy officials two weeks later. In mid March, MLW went ahead and made the sale, following exactly the strategy that the State Department officials had quietly recommended.

Ambassador Cadieux wired Ottawa that “while it is natural for us to consider consequences of a negative decision in terms of public opinion in Canada, it is not/not too far-fetched to think of some consequences of a favourable decision here, considering what appears to be fairly considerable influence on the President exerted by Rebozo and the Florida Cubans.” Cadieux perceptively identified that the real obstruction was the President himself, a point confirmed by a conversation between Shultz and Kissinger in which the two Secretaries contrasted the Canadian case with that of Chrysler of Argentina. Nixon had stalled for months on the latter as well, and President Juan Perón had been threatening to nationalize his country’s automobile industry. Shultz and Kissinger were both frustrated at the President’s intransigence, which had neither served American interests nor stopped the MLW Cuba sale. Pressures from the Watergate scandal were now overwhelming Nixon and bringing out the worst in his character. He was almost certainly still angry with Trudeau over Canada’s Vietnam posture a year earlier, and was thus thoroughly disinclined to show Canada any favours. As his presidency crumbled, the stridently anti-Castro Rebozo was his main source of moral support. Nixon indirectly referred to Rebozo’s influence in asking Kissinger that the Argentine licence be issued discreetly, commenting “it’s a dead loser as far as anything here is concerned to indicate any backing down in regard to [Cuba]. It will raise a hell of a storm.” Loyal to conservative Cuban-Americans and contemptuous of Castro right to the very end, Nixon would override Kissinger and the State Department his last week in office by refusing visas permitting Cuban


128 Telephone Conversation between Henry Kissinger and George Schultz, March 20, 1974, (no classification marking) in Kissinger Telephone Conversations Collection, Document KA 12196, Digital National Security Archive

129 Telephone Conversation between Henry Kissinger and President Nixon, April 17, 1974, (no classification marking) in Kissinger Telephone Conversations Collection, Document KA 12309 Digital National Security Archive. Also available on the Department of State FOIA website, Henry Kissinger Telephone Transcripts Collection http://foia.state.gov/Search/Search.aspx
scientists to attend the World Energy Conference scheduled for September 1974 in Detroit.\textsuperscript{130} The climate would soon be easier with Gerald Ford in the White House, but as will be shown next chapter, there would be more Canadian-American turbulence to come over Cuba and subsidiaries. The incident also confirmed for the Trudeau government that as long as Nixon was in the White House, its freedom of action regarding Cuba was definitely limited.

Civil aviation also occupied a significant portion of the Canadian-American discourse on Cuba in first half of the 1970s. As with the other fields of Canadian-American cooperation, the bilateral conversation over Canada-Cuba air links lacked the intensity of the previous decade. Between 1968 and 1972, the dominant subtheme was containing subversion and espionage, although that too was fading. There was also the issue of hijacking, with Cuba the destination of choice for many air pirates in the United States but also Canada. In response, the two neighbours compared notes on parallel but separate negotiations with Havana aimed at eliminating this problem. As American concerns regarding a regular Canada-Cuba air service faded, Ottawa felt more confident to proceed first with tourist oriented passenger charters, which began after several false starts in March 1972, followed by the establishment of a regular passenger air service in 1976.

After years of getting nowhere with Ottawa on a regular passenger service to Canada, Havana believed with Trudeau now Prime Minister it had a new opportunity in this regard. Believing it prudent to start slowly, Cuba initially proposed renewing charter flights for diplomats, humanitarian passengers, freight and mail, which had not occurred on a regular basis since the World Wide airways flights ended in 1964.\textsuperscript{131} In addition, it also sought proposed interplaning rights at Gander, proposing that Cuban officials be allowed to deplane at Gander and transfer between aircraft, a privilege they had been thus far denied, save a few special VIP flights. Hoping for reciprocity, Canadian diplomats liked the proposal as a short cut from the long circuitous routes they had to take through Mexico to get to the island.\textsuperscript{132} The Canadian Transport Commission recommended limiting inter-planing for Montreal bound passengers only, and that Cubans in transit to and from Europe be denied such privileges for security.

\textsuperscript{130} Memorandum from Secretary of State (Kissinger) to Deputy Secretary of State, “Visas for Cuban Participation at the Ninth World Energy Conference” August 2, 1974 (Confidential) in NSC Latin American Affairs Staff Files, Box 3, Folder “Cuba – Scientists’ Entry Problems (Open Entry Policy) (2),” Gerald R. Ford Library
\textsuperscript{131} Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs no. 517, May 19, 1969 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 14846, File 42-8-1-1-2-CUBA, pt. 6.2, LAC
\textsuperscript{132} Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs no. 892, August 11, 1969 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 14846 ,File 42-8-1-1-2-CUBA, pt. 7 , LAC
reasons. Viewing such suggestions through a traditional Cold War lens, the RCMP and External Affairs Defense Liaison (2) personnel did not like these suggestions, especially the notion of Canadian diplomats flying on the airline of a communist country alongside that country’s diplomats. Citing background information provided by a Cuban intelligence source back in the mid-1960s, they believed that if Cuban diplomats had easier access to Montreal, it would enhance their propaganda and espionage activities at Montreal Trade Office. As well, there remained the looming question how would Canada’s American neighbour view such developments.

To obtain this all important answer, late in 1969 External Affairs officials consulted with Ambassador Edger Ritchie, who was uncertain. To minimize the risk that inter-planing would make it easier for Cuban or Soviet bloc intelligence agents to enter Canada, the Canadian government intended to restrict such permissions to the Montreal-Gander-Havana route and only for the so-called permanent Cuban diplomats. Recalling his surprise at Washington’s minimal response to the credit sales of cattle, Ritchie doubted any serious row would occur, but requested to be readied with instructions for the State Department. Canada’s decision to approve Havana’s request, subject to the above restrictions, was presented to the Americans at the end of January 1970. Once again, the latter offered no discernible objection.

Cuba’s vision extended beyond easier travel for diplomats. By 1969, the Castro government wanted to revive its once thriving tourist industry, which had been largely dormant since the revolution. Canada was seen as a leading market in the non-communist world for such travellers, and thus for foreign exchange. Save a few western businesspeople, journalists and missionaries, virtually all travel to the island in the mid-1960s consisted of politically motivated

133 Letter from Director, International Relations Branch, Canadian Transport Commission (Ralph Azzie) to Under Secretary for External Affairs (Cadieux), July 23, 1969 (no classification marking) in RG 25, Vol. 14846 File 42-8-1-1-2-CUBA pt. 6.2, LAC
137 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 57, January 9, 1970 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 14846, File 42-8-1-1-2-CUBA, pt. 7, LAC
group tours. In June 1969, Ambassador De Cossio broached the subject with P.A. Bridle of External Affairs’ Latin American Division, with the latter expressing doubt that sufficient demand existed to ensure profitability for Air Canada and other carriers. Citing the travel patterns of the past seven years, Bridle commented that Cuba`s tourist facilities, which the embassy had described as spartan and run-down, were suited for individuals from “friendly countries” whose interest was more “sociological than social,” but not for North American vacationers. De Cossio replied that this pattern was changing, and that his country wanted visitors for “sea bathing, sun and fishing.” 139

Several Canadian tour operators and organizations were interested in bringing Canadians to Cuba. These included Unitours of Toronto, Globe Tours of Vancouver, and also the World University Service of Canada (WUSC), although the latter was more about work and educational tourism. Making these happen required better air links. However, there were still security concerns, as well as that of the US reaction. The RCMP acknowledged WUSC had a long history, but noted that more recently it had an “activist political trend” (translate: leftist). 140 WUSC’s requested charter flights for academic exchanges to Cuba were eventually approved, although in the end they never materialized. 141 Globe Tours was flagged by the RCMP as a communist controlled organization; the story on its application is fragmentary, but it did not go ahead. Ottawa continued to lay roadblocks against other left-oriented tours of Cuba as in 1971, when the Montreal-based Friends of the Latin American Peoples was declined a charter flight.


after the RCMP raised “security concerns.”¹⁴² In this latter case, the possible United States’ reaction was influential in its decision.¹⁴³

The remaining operator, Toronto based Unitours, sought regular Air Canada charters to Havana during the winter season. While apolitical, that did not stop the RCMP from carefully scrutinizing the operator’s executives before determining that none of them appeared in its subversive indexes.¹⁴⁴ Although hoping to begin in 1970, the process took two years but ultimately, it was Unitours that commenced the first organized vacation travel from Canada to Castro’s Cuba. The inaugural tour in March 1972 brought to Cuba a motley crew of journalists, business people and curious Canadians.¹⁴⁵ With this precedent now set, over the next several years this operator brought over a steadily increasing stream of Canadians seeking relief from the long and cold winter, with some 800 in 1972 increasing almost tenfold to 6000 in 1974 and doubling again the following year. The Canadian government and Air Canada by then concluded that regular service made sense and would be profitable.¹⁴⁶

Unitours obtained Ottawa’s permission because it was conformed to its new policy on Canadian-Cuban charter flights, approved by Mitchell Sharp in April 1970. Designed largely with the United States in mind, the policy had four core requirements for approving a charter proposal: the passengers had to be predominately Canadian citizens or residents; Canadian carriers had to get their fair market share, External Affairs and other pertinent departments could review and comment on proposals and finally, that there had to be no overriding security concerns.¹⁴⁷ The first and last points served as an authority for Ottawa to refuse charters that

would likely upset Washington. In particular, the government was thinking of a request that previous winter by a left-leaning US group to charter an Air Canada flight to ferry members to the island.\footnote{Letter from Under Secretary for External Affairs to Chairman, International Transport Policy Committee, Canadian Transport Commission, “Charter Flights to Cuba,” April 10, 1970 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 28400, File 29-13-10-CUBA-1 pt. 1, LAC} It also thought of the Americans in deflecting a Cuban request for a scheduled mail and cargo service, with Under Secretary Ritchie disagreeing with the favourably inclined Kenneth Brown, arguing “we do not consider that politically speaking the time has yet come to establish a scheduled air service between Canada and Cuba.”\footnote{Letter from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Ritchie) to Deputy Minister of Transport (O.G. Stoner) February 26, 1971 (Confidential) RG 25, Vol. 14846, File 42-8-1-1-2-CUBA, pt. 7, LAC, For Brown’s view on Canadian indebtedness see Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 95, January 29, 1971 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8636, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 12, LAC} In September, the Department’s USA Division explicitly stated that any benefits to a Cuban-Canadian relations “would be overshadowed by the adverse effects such an action would have on Canada-United States relations,” especially in the tense bilateral climate following the Nixon shocks.\footnote{Memorandum from USA Division (K.W. MacLellan) to Energy, Transport and Communications Division, “Possible Scheduled Air Freight Service: Canada-Cuba,” September 30, 1971 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 17396, File 42-8-1-1-2-CUBA, pt. 8, LAC} Security concerns predominated until early 1975, when comprehensive aviation agreement talks with Havana finally began in earnest.

Canadian officials briefed the Americans about the new policy, emphasizing that Canada was not seeking the United States’ government’s permission for the charters, but was rather keeping it informed. George Clift of the Office of Cuban Affairs emphasized to the Canadians that its main concern was keeping American citizens, especially radicals, from using Canadian flights. On tourism in general, the American diplomat noted that while the United States was not partial to helping the Cuban economy, it did not see the charters in themselves causing a major strain on Canadian-US relations, provided they did not carry Americans.\footnote{Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 831, March 18, 1970 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 14846, File 42-8-1-1-2-CUBA, pt. 7, LAC} In a follow up discussion in April 1970, other State Department participants expressed concerns that Canadian security rules were inadequate to prevent Americans from flying to Cuba from Canada. To Ottawa’s consternation, the matter was referred to the White House, leading to the first of several postponements of the Unitours charters.\footnote{Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 1098, April 10, 1970 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 28400, File 29-13-10-CUBA-1 pt. 1, LAC, For the delay see Memorandum from Transportation, Communications and Energy Division (Reynolds) to Under Secretary for External Affairs} No record was found revealing what
transpired in the White House, but six months later, mid-October, the State Department’s new Coordinator for Cuban Affairs, Robert Funseth, requested that the Canadian government only allow Americans having passports validated for travel to Cuba to board the flights. Ottawa had already established that tour operators to Cuba would have to certify that their clients were Canadian citizens or residents, and that manifests were to be provided to Canadian authorities for review before each flight.

The question of manifests continued also to be one where External Affairs opted to placate the United States against its normal instincts. The RCMP, still easily the most wary, stubbornly insisted on obtaining flight manifests for all aircraft at either Gander or Montreal that were on technical stops en route to or from Cuba. While this had been the practice since October 1962, by the early Trudeau period, many in External Affairs believed the more relaxed international climate made such actions unnecessary, and in fact left Canada vulnerable to charges of discrimination under the ICAO. In early 1971 both Cubana and the Czech CSA challenged the manifest requirement, and Ottawa’s only recourse was to file a special ICAO “difference” exemption. The RCMP changed its mind on CSA later that spring, but as late as September 1972, Cubana manifests were still being collected at Gander, specifically for transmission to the United States. Such intelligence gathering likely contributed greatly to Washington’s muted response to inter-planning. Within the State Department, intelligence was explicitly identified as a reason for not protesting when in April 1972, Cubana sought to shift its Havana-Prague route over US territory so it could refuel in Montreal - a position Ottawa supported under ICAO auspices.

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(Ritchie) “Canada Cuba Air Relations,” April 14, 1970 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 13533, File 42-8-6-3-1-CUBA, pt. 1, LAC
155 Memorandum from Under Secretary of External Affairs to RCMP Commissioner, “Passenger Manifests,” April 5, 1971 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 14846, File 42-8-1-1-2-CUBA, pt. 7, LAC
156 Memorandum from Director, Transport, Energy and Communications (R.E. Reynolds) to Director, International Relations Branch, Canadian Transport Commission, June 10, 1971 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 17396, File 42-8-1-1-2-CUBA, pt. 8, LAC and Memorandum from RCMP Assistant Commissioner and Deputy Director General, Security Service (L.R. Parent) to Director General of Security and Intelligence Liaison [P.A.E. Johnson], September 24, 1972 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 28400, File 29-10-13-CUBA, pt. 1, LAC
157 Memorandum from Coordinator of Cuban Affairs (Norbury) to Assistant Secretary for Inter American Affairs (Crimmins), “Regular Cuban Overflight of the US: Information Memorandum,” April 27, 1972 (Secret) in RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files 1970-1973, Box 2223, File POL 31-1 CUBA, NARA
Finally, Canada and the United States exchanged information in their parallel but separate efforts between late 1969 and early 1973 to secure an agreement with Cuba on aircraft hijacking. Both countries desired such an accord as occurrences of armed passengers ordering flights diverted to Cuba were growing in number. Until 1968, when hijackings stemming from the Arab-Israeli conflict began to proliferate, most of the perpetrators were American radicals, including African-American militants, who saw the Cuban revolution as a desirable model. Rising slowly through the 1960s, such incidents jumped in 1968 and skyrocketed in 1969, with most of the affected airliners being American.\footnote{158} Canada however was not immune such attacks. In September 1968, an American hijacker hoping to reach Cuba forced an Air Canada flight en route from Moncton to Toronto to land in Montreal, abandoning his effort in exchange for asylum.\footnote{159} More spectacularly on Boxing Day 1971, a Toronto-bound Air Canada DC-9 from Thunder Bay, Ontario, was hijacked and diverted to Cuba by the American fugitive Patrick Dolan Critton. This incident generated a long and unsuccessful effort by Ottawa to obtain his extradition. Castro concluded Critton had legitimate political motives and did not want to see him in turn extradited to the United States as per a Canada-US treaty.\footnote{160} Sharing this problem, the two neighbours had a special impetus for continued Canadian–American cooperation, with the Americans asking Canada late in 1968 whether or not it intended to seek such an accord.\footnote{161}

The United States did not really begin such efforts in earnest until late in 1969, after State Department and White House officials, including Secretary of State William P. Rogers and Kissinger, convinced President Nixon that reaching a deal with Cuba on hijacking was in Washington’s interest. They emphasized that such a specific accord would not signify a change in overall US Cuba policy – a point Nixon would raise repeatedly the next three years.

\footnote{159} Globe and Mail, September 22, 1968 found in RG 25, Vol. 28400, File 29-13-10-CUBA-1, pt. 1, LAC.
\footnote{160} Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Ritchie) to the Minister of External Affairs (Sharp) “December 26 Hijacking to Cuba of Air Canada Flight 932,” December 28, 1971 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8637, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 15, LAC. There is much documentation on this particular episode in that folder, and the adjacent pt. 16 in the same volume. For a CBC summary story on Critton see http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/war-conflict/terrorism/terrorism-general/canadas-first-successful-plane-hijacking.html.
\footnote{161} Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 4450, December 24, 1968 (Secret/Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 28400, File 29-13-10-CUBA-1, pt. 1, LAC.
concerning this process. Yet Cuba saw little benefit in such an accord without a more comprehensive outcome. As Ambassador De Cossio told P.A. Bridle of External Affairs in June 1969, “Cuba [is] not in position to make [a] gesture to US as long as it maintains [the] embargo and treats Cuba as unfriendly.” Havana offered some leeway through the issuance of Law 1226, which promised to prosecute and possibly extradite all perpetrators of air or sea piracy, as well as immigration violators, with the catch being that Havana required bilateral agreements and retained the right to offer political asylum to hijackers. Cuba’s insistence that its law form the basis of any agreement, and that Cuban exiles living in the United States be deported made the issue a non-starter in Washington, especially given the President’s close connections to the Miami community. The US-Cuban hijacking initiative would go nowhere for the next three years.

Canada’s hijacking negotiations proceeded equally slowly. In early 1969, Canadian Embassy staff in Havana approached the Cuban Foreign Ministry about the problem. When Havana indicated a willingness to send back hijackers of Canadian aircraft to face prosecution in Canada, Ottawa sought to formally open a dialogue. In December 1969, it proposed its terms to the Cubans. Foreign Minister Roa told Ambassador Mayrand that his government was interested in bilateral negotiations with Canada on hijacking. Assuming the issue could be quickly resolved, the Canadian government appointed External Affairs Legal Advisor and Assistant Under Secretary P.A. Bissonnette at the beginning of 1970. Keen to start the process, Ottawa found itself facing numerous delays, to the embarrassment of De Cossio. As Roa would discreetly admit to the Canadians, the main problem was getting Fidel Castro, who ultimately had direct oversight of the process, to assign such negotiations a high enough

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163 Memorandum from Latin America Division (P.A. Bridle) to File, June 26, 1969 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8906, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 3, LAC
166 Memorandum from Legal Division to Press Division, “Aircraft Hijacking – Background Information for SSEA’s Television Interview,” November 4, 1969 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10464, File 42-8-9-3-1-CUBA, pt. 2
167 Memorandum to File [Untitled Summary on Canada-Cuba Hijacking discussions], [February 1970], in RG 25, Vol. 10464, File 42-8-9-3-1-CUBA, pt. 3
priority. With the Maximum Leader preoccupied with reaching the 10 million ton sugar
crop, all that the Cubans could offer were vague promises that such talks would start soon in
the future.

This problem continued for well over a year, even after the two sides held detailed
detailed bilateral discussions in Havana in February 1971. William Warden at the Havana embassy
described the Cubans as tough negotiators, with whom reaching a consensus would be
difficult. Like with the United States, Cuba sought a considerably more comprehensive
agreement than the Canadian government was then comfortable pursuing. Havana wanted to
revise an old Canada-Cuba extradition treaty signed on Canada`s behalf by the British in 1904,
an issue Ottawa then viewed as out of scope. Canada conceded to Cuban requests for
incorporation of its Law 1226 and the addition of maritime piracy, which was not a Canadian
concern. There would be a slew of other differences, including the role of international
conventions, the inclusion of military aircraft and the death penalty, with Canada opposing the
latter two positions. Nonetheless, in May 1971 a policy memorandum was drafted and
circulated to pertinent federal Departments. The consultation process took six months, and in
early December, Ritchie urged Sharp to approve the paper quickly and send it on to Cabinet,
alerting him “at any time we could face the hijacking to Cuba of a Canadian plane.”

American officials were interested and sought progress updates on Canada’s dialogue
with Havana, and External Affairs officials gave the State Department several briefings over the

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168 See Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 72, January 25, 1971
(Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8636, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 12, LAC
169 Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Havana, no. FLE-238, February 13, 1970
(Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10464, File 42-8-9-3-1-CUBA, pt. 3, LAC.
42-8-9-3-1-CUBA, pt. 4.1, LAC.
in RG 25, Vol. 10464, File 42-8-9-3-1-CUBA, pt. 4.1, LAC.
172 Draft memorandum for the Cabinet, “Canada-Cuba Hijacking Agreement: Negotiations with the Government of
Cuba” [ca. May 1971] (Confidential) and attached “Draft Agreement between Canada and Cuba Concerning
LAC.
173 Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (AE Ritchie) to the Minister of External Affairs
(Sharp), “Canada Cuba Hijacking Agreement,” December 6, 1971 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8637, File 20-1-2-
CUBA, pt. 15, LAC
174 Cabinet Conclusions, February 3, 1972 (Secret). in RG 2, Series A-5-a., Vol. 6395, LAC. Online at
http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/conclusions/index-e.html
course of 1971 and 1972. In the meantime, the Canadian government grew impatient with Havana’s repeated delays. One may speculate whether or not Castro was subtly giving Canada a taste of its own medicine for its stalling tactics on the passenger service. In the meantime, the hijacking agreement was added to Canada’s list of outstanding matters requiring resolution before further bilateral progress with Havana could be made.

The Castro government finally moved after a series of especially violent and publicized aircraft hijackings during late October and early November 1972. One of the aircraft, a Southern Airways DC-9, included a Toronto stop on its two day, multi-airport journey to Cuba. Castro’s exact motives for such dialogue are unknown, although with the landslide re-election of the perpetually hostile Richard Nixon, he may well have feared some form of US reprisal. The Cubans promised severe justice for the Southern Airways hijackers, whom they viewed as common criminals, and began through the Swiss immediate negotiations with the United States. By the end of the month, Secretary of State Rogers reported to Nixon that the Cubans had moderated their terms substantially from those tabled in 1969, obligating neither party to return offenders nor to prosecute those seeking political asylum. The Cuban proposal did suggest prosecuting at home individuals attempting to carry out violent acts against the other country—clearly having the Miami exiles in mind. Kissinger encouraged the President to proceed, now that Cuba was no longer insisting on the exiles’ return. With some minor revisions, an agreement on these terms was reached and signed on February 15, 1973. While Washington viewed this achievement as a success, at the President’s direction, officials repeated on numerous occasions that the accord did not extend beyond hijacking, and the American

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176 For the US incidents see Schoultz, Infernal Little Republic, 256-258. For the Mexican incident see Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Mexico City to Department of External Affairs no. 2031, November 10, 1972 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 28109. File 20-CUBA-1-3-MXICO, pt. 1, LAC
public, and especially Cuban-Americans, were reassured that no US-Cuba rapprochement was imminent. 180

The irony was that Cuba suddenly made securing an accord with its archenemy a priority, including relaxing its terms, while doing precisely the opposite to the much friendlier Canada. Ottawa was clearly annoyed by this development, and Malcolm Bow at External Affairs’ Latin American Division believed its negotiating position had suffered as a result of the US-Cuban talks. 181 Pressure mounted from the Canadian Air Line Pilots Association for Ottawa to terminate air service to countries that harboured hijackers – unmistakeably aimed at Cuba. 182 Ambassador Brown was instructed to meet with Cuban Foreign Ministry officials to register Canada’s disappointment at the lack of progress, adding that while Ottawa favoured Havana’s reaching an accord with Washington, it did not want its own efforts sidelined. 183 Sharp spoke to De Cossio on December 4, expressing Canada’s disappointment, although also recognizing the more immediate urgency Havana saw in reaching an accord with the United States. Still, the External Affairs Minister warned the Cuban diplomat that Canada did not want to be taken for granted, and that the Canadian public would not understand Havana’s behaviour, especially given their country’s recent expansion of trade, aid and tourism with the island. 184 While not explicitly saying so in the record, Sharp intimated to the Cuban ambassador that the contrast between Trudeau’s Canada and Nixon’s United States towards his country could not have been more apparent.

To demonstrate Canada’s commitment, Sharp dispatched several officials to Havana on December 14 to commence a new set of negotiations, on terms more or less similar to those

184 Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Havana, no. GWL-497, December 5, 1972 (Confidential/ Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 8637, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 20, LAC
sought by the United States. Encouraged by an audience with Foreign Minister Roa, and believing that the Cubans were finally ready to negotiate, Ambassador Brown left with the Cubans an aide-memoire outlining Canada’s position. Canadian officials believed that they were only likely to realize their most important objectives if the Cuba-United States accord was reached. In preparing for comparison conversations with the State Department, External Affairs concluded that the Cubans would probably only agree to extradite purely criminal hijackers (having no political agenda), and would want identical terms for agreements with Ottawa and Washington.

The final Canada-Cuba hijacking agreement indeed closely replicated the Cuba-US document. The day before the signing, Canadian embassy officials in Havana conveyed to Cuba’s Foreign Affairs Ministry that it was essential that both agreements be signed simultaneously, lest there be public criticism in Canada that Cuba had settled first with the United States. Pragmatically, External Affairs officials noted that if the two neighbours did not reach their agreements with Havana in tandem, Canada would be vulnerable as a new staging ground for would-be hijackers, especially from Americans. Ritchie in the end was satisfied that the two agreements were signed in tandem, eliminating any gap that would-be air pirates could exploit. Still, the accord was a hollow success for Canada, exposing the limits that it had on either the United States or Cuba. When push came to shove, neither country consulted with Canada or genuinely considered its interests, or even its relevance.

Apart from air piracy and aviation in general, Canada and the United States continued in the early 1970s to cooperate on other Cuba related matters pertaining to subversion and terrorism, with the foreign policy bureaucracies, law enforcement and intelligence communities, regularly consulting with one another when issues arose. The interest in Castro’s Cuba of the

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various arms of the New Left in both Canada and the United States peaked between 1967 and 1970, with some politically active groups still seeking a first-hand view of its revolution for several years thereafter, whether on organized tours or academic exchanges. After the semi-regular Unitours charters began in 1972, it was easier for the merely curious to visit the island. Some American youth also managed to get to Cuba, although such travel remained illegal for Americans without special dispensation from the State Department. Most who did so went motivated by politics, as an act of dissent against their own government, and in some cases, also to further the revolutionary cause.

The Trudeau government gave mixed messages about the presence in Canada of American radicals and other foreign leftists. Trudeau himself was not in principle adverse to allowing dissenters and radicals to visit the country and speak on its campuses, provided they did not intend to conduct criminal or disruptive activity. A prime example was in late 1968, when Canadian organizers hosted in Montreal a three day Hemispheric Conference to End the War in Vietnam. The list of speakers for this event was a who’s who of leading left wing activists such as the Black Panthers’ Bobby Seale, US Yippie leader Jerry Rubin, former Guyana President Cheddi Jagan and Chile’s Socialist leader (and future President) Salvador Allende. Trudeau and Justice Minister Jean Marchand took significant heat in the Canadian press, and from the opposition benches in the House of Commons, for allowing such individuals into Canada. Especially vocal was John Diefenbaker, now only a Progressive Conservative Member of Parliament, who denounced several of the conference invitees as “riff raff.”

The Montreal police also called for their exclusion from Canada.

A memorandum to the Acting External Affairs Minister (Sharp was then on his Latin American tour) from R.E. Collins of the Security and Intelligence Division supported Canadian policy of admitting “those sponsored by ‘well-known organizations’ in Canada, who came without criminal or subversive intent.” However, he advised against permitting the Soviet Union’s delegation from attending, given its nearly complete control and influence over the

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190 See Globe and Mail, November 14, 1968, clipping found in RG 76, Vol. 1448, File 295-1, pt. 1, LAC. There are numerous clippings on this event. A general commentary on the conference is in Bryan D. Palmer, Canada’s 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 58.

191 See Globe and Mail, November 14, 1968, clipping found in RG 76, Vol. 1448, File 295-1, pt. 1, LAC. There are numerous clippings on this event in this file from the Dept. of Immigration’s Intelligence section.
Communist Party of Canada. Seeing Cuba somewhat differently, Collins argued that it lacked the degree of control and influence over its Canadian support groups, a debatable point as the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, although only having a fraction of its earlier membership, was by then essentially an arm of the Cuban government in Canada. Ottawa had apparently “warned off” Cuba from attending the antiwar conference over its allegations of connections with Quebec separatists. Many attendees naturally supported and admired Castro, and the event closed with calls for both a Viet Cong victory and Quebec independence.

A more obvious Cuba connected challenge from the American left came late in 1969 with the establishment of the Venceremos (we shall overcome) brigades. Set up by Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the leading student protest organization in the United States and one of the New Left’s driving engines, in this initiative work brigades of students and youth, ranging from 100-500 in number, would travel to Cuba and assist Castro in achieving his much publicized 1970 Ten Million Ton sugar harvest. The first such group arrived via Mexico in December 1969 and stayed for eight weeks, six of which were five and half day work weeks cutting cane with Cubans and visiting North Vietnamese macheteros. In the remaining time, the students toured the island and engaged in so-called “cultural activities.” Ambassador Mayrand met a number of the Venceremos travellers, who he described as naive and the recipients of a highly skewed picture of Cuban life, as evidenced by their ability to spout off revolutionary propaganda in praise of Castro and the Viet Cong. Receiving considerable coverage in the official Cuban press, not all Cubans were so enamoured with the Venceremos groups; even dedicated Cuban Communist officials described the behaviour of the American students to Canadian diplomats as “revolting.” In June 1971, after several more Venceremos groups had come and gone, Cuba’s Culture Minister denounced the “hippie culture” of American youth, which he found contrasted sharply with the puritanical discipline emphasized by Castro and

193 While initially grass roots organizations, the Fair Play for Cuba Committees in Canada could be considered arms of the Cuban government. They were however much smaller, and lacked the overall influence on Canadian-Cuban relations that that the Communist Party had in affecting Canadian-Soviet relations. For the “warned off” see Memorandum from R.E. Collins to Acting Minister of External Affairs, “Hemispheric Congress to End Vietnam War,” November 18, 1968 (Secret) in RG 76, Vol. 1448, File 295-1, pt. 1, LAC
194 Montreal Gazette, December 2, 1968, clipping found in RG 76, Vol. 1448, File 295-1, pt. 1, LAC
many other communist regimes. At the same time, Ambassador Brown reported that the Venceremos groups were a valuable propaganda tool for Castro, as American youth had chosen to assist the Cuban revolution in defiance of their own government. Neither the youths nor their Cuban hosts endeared them to the Nixon White House or to the majority of Americans.

The Venceremos groups became a potential headache for Canada in the early winter of 1970. After the Mexican government learned that Cuba’s “special diplomatic flight” was actually carrying American radicals to Cuba, it refused them return transit visas. The Americans would have to return home by another country – and they chose Canada. As there were then no charter flights, direct Cuba-Canada travel had to be over water and to ice free ports, which on the east coast were Halifax and Saint John, New Brunswick. Early in February 1970, some 212 of the brigades boarded the Cuban cargo ship “Luis Arcos Bergnes” en route to Saint John, where after dropping off the Americans and Cuban exports, it would return with Canadian goods, along with another cohort of 500 Americans. Security was less stringent for maritime than for air travel, and the only border restrictions for Americans at the time applied to individuals with criminal records. Thus, the Canadian government could do relatively little to prevent such travel, even though immigration officials had been tipped off by a confidential source (possibly the FBI) that busloads of students were ultimately heading for Cuba. One group was turned back when border guards disbelieved its claim to be heading on a ski trip; no ski equipment was found on the bus, and the travellers’ belongings suggested a warmer destination. Other buses did successfully enter Canada as in-transit passengers. With the

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200 See Memorandum from Officer in Charge, Intelligence Unit Windsor (S.E. Hurst) to Chief Intelligence Officer, Canada Immigration Division, “Subversive Activities - Canada General,” February 11, 1970 (Confidential) in RG 76, Vol. 1449, File 295-3, pt. 1, LAC See also United States Department of Justice Immigration and Nationalization Service Intelligence Report, NW Region, February 16, 1970 and Montreal Gazette, February 11, 1970, both in the same file.
201 See Memorandum from Officer in Charge, Intelligence Unit Windsor (S.E. Hurst) to Chief Intelligence Officer, Canada Immigration Division, “Subversive Activities - Canada General,” February 11, 1970 (Confidential) in RG 76, Vol. 1449, File 295-3, pt. 1, LAC
Cuban ship’s cargo entirely non-strategic, there was no other security provision to deny the students access to the Saint John port.\textsuperscript{202} Thus some 500 American cane cutters sailed from Canada to replace the first crew, arriving in Cuba before the month’s end. A third Venceremos group would leave in the summer of 1970, followed by a fourth in the spring of 1971. The numbers shrank for these later tours, but over a thousand Americans had reached Cuba through Canadian seaports by mid-decade.

Both Canadian and American immigration and law enforcement personnel had serious security concerns. Apart from embarrassment and overall distaste for the brigades’ ideology, concerns mounted that among the Venceremos students were members of the Weather Underground, a violent, radical Marxist offshoot of the Students for a Democratic Society that carried out numerous armed robberies and bombings in the United States between 1969 and 1975.\textsuperscript{203} Inspired by the Cuban revolution, especially the guerrilla warfare teachings of the late Che Guevara, many Weather Underground members spent time in Cuba, some travelling there as Venceremos brigade members. An FBI assessment reported that 16 Weather Underground members were among the group departing Saint John aboard the “Luis Arcos Bergnes” that February. In addition, one of the group’s organizers had apparently greeted returning members of the first Venceremos group.\textsuperscript{204} Canadian immigration and RCMP officials did not take these concerns lightly and were keen to cooperate, especially as Ottawa feared potential links between left wing extremist Americans and the violent fringes of the Quebec separatist movement, such as the FLQ. The FBI report mentioned that it regularly received the passenger lists for the Cuban ships leaving Saint John. While the sources were not mentioned, the manifests were almost certainly were forwarded to the Americans by Canadian RCMP or immigration officials.


\textsuperscript{203} See Memorandum from Officer in Charge, Intelligence Unit Windsor (S.E. Hurst) to Chief Intelligence Officer, Canada Immigration Division, “Subversive Activities - Canada General,” February 6, 1970 (Confidential) in RG 76, Vol. 1449, File 295-3, pt. 1, LAC


The departure of this second Venceremos group, along with the return via Canada of the first group, received press coverage both in Canada and the United States, including the *New York Times*, the *Detroit News* the *Globe and Mail*, the Montreal *Gazette* and several other Canadian daily newspapers. All highlighted the students’ enthusiasm for Fidel Castro and socialism, whose cause they were aiding.\(^{206}\) Concerns heightened when in March the *Detroit News* printed a story that it attributed to a Canadian government source claiming that Venceremos members were not in Cuba just to harvest sugar cane, but also to learn guerrilla warfare.\(^{207}\) George Clift at the State Department brought this article to the attention of Canadian Embassy staff when he met with them in mid-March to discuss Canadian-Cuban air travel. That same week, the Weather Underground claimed responsibility for several terrorist acts in the United States. Clift indicated he could not corroborate the reports about paramilitary training, but he believed the allegations likely had some veracity.\(^{208}\) The External Affairs’ Security and Intelligence Division denied hearing any such report from a Canadian official; it could certainly confirm that all Venceremos visitors received substantial indoctrination while in Cuba, but not guerrilla training, although it could not discount that some select members might have received the latter. The Department shared these conclusions in a letter to the US Embassy in Ottawa.\(^{209}\)

The State Department seemed satisfied that the Canadian government was doing what it could to assist the United States regarding such groups, especially with providing ship passenger manifests. That still did not stop Congressional representatives, Senators and journalists from reporting how radical Americans were reaching Cuba by way of Canada. Republican New Hampshire Congressman Louis C. Wyman stated that Canadian-US relations were being strained by such travel.\(^{210}\) In the Senate, conservative Mississippi Democrat James Eastland, an early foe of the Cuban revolution (and of civil rights) described the connection between Castroism and the recent violence at home, and also mentioned how American youth had boarded Cuban ships at a Canadian port; disclosing that he had their names from the passenger manifest.

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\(^{206}\) See clippings from the above mentioned newspapers in RG 76, Vol. 1449, File 295-3, pt. 1, LAC

\(^{207}\) *Detroit News*, March 22, 1970 found in RG 25, Vol. 8906, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 3 LAC.


By the spring of 1970, Canadian immigration intelligence reports and ship manifests were regularly sent to Mr. A.L. Tarabochia of the Senate Internal Security Sub-Committee, as well as providing the FBI on request the names, ages and addresses of such persons when entering Canada. There is no evidence of any further protest by the United States government. Such silence suggests it was satisfied that Canada was cooperating within its legal parameters, and the US was gaining valuable intelligence on its leftists, including a record of those who had gone to Cuba. Venceremos tours continued for many years afterwards as a humanitarian movement, but by mid-decade, they were no longer seen as a major security concern.

The Venceremos episodes contained all the necessary ingredients for a serious bilateral row. Nixon disliked Trudeau, loathed Castro, deeply resented the presence of draft dodgers in Canada and reserved a special venom for the youth counterculture and anti-war movement, all of which he had infamously denounced in May 1970 as “these bums... blowing up the campuses.”

Despite the brigades’ subversive, even defiant nature, this author found no evidence that this subject was ever escalated beyond the working levels. Whatever doubts the White House and FBI Director Hoover might have had about Trudeau, the United States government bureaucracy was certainly confident of the pro-American instincts of senior External Affairs bureaucrats like A.E. Ritchie and Marcel Cadieux, not to mention the RCMP and related departmental intelligence personnel.

Radical students and activists were not the only Cuba connected challenge from the left. The RCMP and many in the Department of External Affairs Defence Liaison and Security and Intelligence Divisions also believed that Cuban officials in Canada were carrying out espionage activities on behalf of the Soviet Union. In December 1968, a memo from External’s Security and Intelligence staff, citing a source deemed reliable, reported that the KGB had directed Havana to use its representatives in the west to collect intelligence, especially on technology; Canada was seen as a relatively easy target country for this purpose. While not specifically mentioning Canada, Vasil Mitrokhin’s account of the KGB operations, based on archives he copied and smuggled out of Russia to the west, supports the notion that Cuban intelligence acted

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as an important Soviet surrogate at that time, and that the relationship between the two services grew especially close during the 1970s.\footnote{214}{See Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, \textit{The World was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World} (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 90-94.}

A special concern was industrial espionage. The Canadian security community believed that Cuba, and therefore the Soviet Union, hoped to gain access to western technology and know-how by means of Canadian aid projects and university exchanges, both of which Havana enthusiastically encouraged. In early 1972, the Canadian Universities Services Overseas (CUSO) sponsored a Cuban visit by University of Toronto computer science faculty. This event greatly worried the RCMP, as computer technology was particularly sensitive, was aggressively sought after by the Soviet Union, and was largely of American design.\footnote{215}{Memorandum from Director General, Bureau of Security and Intelligence Liaison (A.F. Hart) to Secretary of Interdepartmental Visits Panel (G.R. Skinner) “CUSO Programme – Cuba – Computer Research,” no. PSP-392, February 8, 1972 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8637, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 16, LAC} The government allowed the tour to proceed, but RCMP views carried sufficient weight that University of Toronto administrators were cautioned about ensuring that certain sensitive technical topics were avoided.\footnote{216}{Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Havana GEA-82, February 9, 1972 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8637, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 16, LAC}

Business exchanges generated similar concerns. In 1969, Havana requested visas to allow Cuban technicians to spend six weeks with the Vancouver firm Spilsbury and Tindall, purportedly to master the assembly of radio sets imported from that firm. Canadian officials believed that one of the visitors was a Cuban intelligence (G-2) operative, and that Havana’s real goal was to gain access to confidential blueprints so that imitations could be made in Cuba.\footnote{217}{Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 1257, December 4, 1969 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 21183, File 83-1-CUBA, LAC and also Telegram from the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce to ITC liaison, Canadian Embassy Havana, no. 12706, July 28, 1970 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 21183, File 83-1-CUBA, LAC} To minimize the risk without completely putting off the Cuban government, Ottawa restricted the time the Cubans could spend at the Vancouver plants to two weeks.\footnote{218}{Memorandum from Canadian Embassy Havana (William T. Warden) to Defence Liaison (2) “Spilsbury and Tindall – Possible Industrial Espionage,” no 495, August 19, 1969 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 21183, File 83-1-CUBA, LAC} External Affairs advised Havana embassy staff to liaise with any Canadian businesses intending to allow Cuban visitors, to be certain such visa applicants had the appropriate reference letters from the
firms in question. The record suggests Ottawa’s concerns about business visas and industrial espionage diminished after 1971, likely as its concerns about security risks were outweighed by the economic benefits to Canada of extending trade and exchanges with Cuba.

Canadian officials also remained wary of the behaviour of Cuban personnel in Canada, especially the Montreal Trade Office. As that city had been a hotbed of radical activities in the late 1960s, the RCMP clung tightly to suspicions that Cuban trade officials were distributing Marxist propaganda to students and activists, as well as having possible contact with the FLQ. As late as 1972, the RCMP reported to External Affairs that Cubans still had contacts with violent separatists, citing information provided by a Hungarian defector (of unknown reliability). At this time, the Cuban government, as a favour to Canada, was hosting the kidnappers of British Trade Commissioner James Cross, and the Havana embassy staff evidently devoted significant time to monitoring these exiles. The Canadian embassy believed that by 1971, Cuba was no longer interested in “interfering with Canadian sovereignty,” as its government had prohibited the FLQ kidnappers from activity against Canada. In turn, the radical separatists grew disillusioned with Cuba for its seeming lack of interest in their cause. In November 1972, Under Secretary Ritchie aptly reassured the Americans Canada’s lessening concerns about the left and Cuban subversion in stating: “we had at one time been concerned about certain security aspects of our relationship with Cuba. Worries in this regard have now diminished.”

While the cross-border activities favouring Cuba’s revolution were minimal after 1972, its parallel regarding the regime’s opponents carried on for several additional years. American based anti-Castro groups continued their campaign of violence against Cuban targets in Canada, as well as Canadian ones in the United States, with sufficient frequency and severity that the

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219 Telegram from the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce to ITC liaison, Canadian Embassy Havana, no. 12706, July 28, 1970 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 21183, File 83-1-CUBA, LAC
221 There are numerous documents on this in the RG 25, File 20-1-2-CUBA files for 1971 and 1972. The kidnappers later opted to return to Canada to face justice.
223 Meeting between Mr. E.A. Ritchie, Under Secretary of State for External Affairs and Mr. John N. Irwin II, Under Secretary of State, Conference Room, State Department, November 15, 1972 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 24952, File 20-1-2-USA, pt. 29, LAC
United States government eventually had to distance itself from them, even though President Nixon personally sympathized with their cause. The RCMP received regular threats in 1968-1969 against Cuban ships in Canadian harbours. Canadian travel offices in New York and Air Canada offices in Miami were fire-bombed in 1968. The Cuban consulate in Toronto suffered damage in a small explosion in early December 1970. The following July, another explosive device was found at the Cuban Trade Office in Montreal, matching one that used to attack Cuban UN offices in New York.

The situation heated up substantially in the spring of 1972. In March, leading members of an exile group at George Washington University, the Cuban National Youth, protested in front of the Canadian embassy in Washington after Canadian diplomats in Havana had refused asylum for two men, both appearing as mentally ill, who brought arms onto the embassy grounds and tore down the Canadian flag. External Affairs instructed embassy officials to grant members of the group their request for a meeting. In the ensuing conversation, one of its leaders remarked threateningly that it was good that Canada did not have a consulate in Miami. A few days later, members of another rightist Cuban student group known as Abdala followed up with a protest note. Talking in the same vein, the Abdala members warned the Canadians that if harm come to the rejected refugees, the exile community would hold their country responsible, and could bring about “direct action.” The Embassy’s First Secretary wrote the State Department about the protests and suggested that US law enforcement be prepared to handle pickets at Canada’s consulates in New York and Chicago, as well as at Air Canada’s Miami office. In the meantime, after learning that Cuban-American students intended to have him declared

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224 Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Havana POP-441, December 5, 1970 (Confidential) in RG 18, File HQ Div [PDR] 86-3659 “Cuba Threats” Vol. 1 (ATIP Request A2010000153), LAC
227 Letter from First Secretary, Canadian Embassy, Washington DC (L.S. Clark) to State Department Coordinator for Cuban Affairs (Joseph Norbury) March 17, 1972 (no classification marking) in RG 25, Vol. 8637, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 16, LAC. An identical letter to Canadian Affairs Coordinator William M. Johnson is in the same file.
persona non grata, Ottawa postponed a Georgetown University lecture by Cadieux on the Canadian foreign service. By that time, the Cuban exiles had made good on their threat.

In the last week of March, an unexploded bomb was discovered near the Cuban ambassador’s residence in Ottawa, with a second device found days later outside the Cuban embassy. The main event occurred in Montreal on April 4, when a bomb detonated at the Cuban Trade Office. In the worst such incident to date, a Cuban security guard was killed, and briefly, there was a significant strain in Canadian-Cuban relations, to the great delight of the perpetrators. Pamphlets found in Miami pointed to a group known as La Joven Cuban, a derivative of another violent anti-Castro group, the Frente de Integracion Nacionalista, which took credit for the explosion and promised more such events.

This Montreal bombing exposed actual and alleged intrigue on both sides, as well as the limits of trust between Ottawa and Havana. The Castro government was enraged that Montreal police officers had entered its diplomatic premises, an action seen as a serious breach of protocol. In turn, Canadian ire was raised by Montreal police reports that Cuban officials were found with unregistered and illegal firearms, and as a consequence several were detained a few days. In a long angry speech, Castro sharply criticized Canada’s response, and hinted that the Canadian embassy might not be protected from the wrath of the Cuban people, a threat that led Ambassador Brown to destroy sensitive documents. Ottawa apologized to Cuba for the Montreal police’s diplomatic oversight, and offered condolences and compensation for the slain Cuban official, along with dropping the weapons charges. Havana was slow to accept Canada’s

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231 For an outline of the steps taken and the interplay of levels of government see Memorandum from Deputy Solicitor General (Robert Bourne for E.A. Cote) to Solicitor General, “Quebec Minister of Justice – Remarks on Government Handling of Cuban Bombing in Montreal,” April 7, 1972 (Confidential) in RG 18, File HQ Div [PDR] 86-3659 “Cuba Threats” Vol. 1, (ATIP Request A2010000153), LAC

apology, and Ritchie told the Americans in November that Castro had overreacted to the Montreal bombing and had not received well Canada’s subsequent gestures, which were within international protocol.233

There was more to this story, as well as some lingering fallout. Immediately after entering the Cuban premises, the Montreal police also found the Cubans destroying sensitive documents – a surprising action considering that the office’s function was supposed to be exclusively for trade promotion. Long suspecting that it doubled for espionage and propaganda operations, the RCMP believed it now had proof of inappropriate Cuban intrigue.234 Suspicions about cloak and dagger activities also pointed in the other direction. During the 1975 Congressional investigations into the US intelligence community, Congressman Ronald V. Dellums accused the RCMP of staging the firebombing in collaboration with the CIA as a cover to gain access to the Cuban facility.235 Reports subsequently emerged that the RCMP had removed confidential code books, which were subsequently at CIA headquarters within 24 hours.236 Authoritative confirming documentation will remain off limits to research for decades to come, if ever released. Given the sensational revelations in the 1970s about the illegal and unethical activities of both the Canadian and American intelligence services, such allegations are not completely far-fetched, although FBI and RCMP records clearly point to Cuban exiles who were keen to take responsibility.237 Even two years after the Montreal attack, the FBI was still investigating the Miami connection, directing its local field office to compile information on exile groups and suspects for sharing with the Canadian government, with the caveat that any documents originating from other agencies (i.e. CIA) be cleared by the appropriate American

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233 Meeting between Mr. E.A. Ritchie, Under Secretary of State for External Affairs and Mr. John N. Irwin II, Under Secretary of State, Conference Room, State Department, November 15, 1972 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 24952, File 20-1-2-USA, pt. 29, LAC
235 See Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Department of State, no. 3816 June 24, 1975 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1975, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43.
236 See Robert Wright, Three Nights in Havana, 114. Also see J.L. Granatstein and David Stafford, Spy Wars: Espionage and Canada from Gouzenko to Glasnost (Toronto: Key Porter, 1990), 189-190.
237 RCMP Memorandum from DDG (Deputy Director General) to Director of Criminal Investigation, “Acts of Aggression against Cuba in Canada,” August 23, 1972 (Confidential) in RG 18, File HQ Div [PDR] 86-3659 “Cuba Threats,” Vol. 1 (ATIP Request A2010000153), LAC
agency. The most likely explanation on the code books incident is that Canadian and US intelligence officials exploited the immediate post-explosion chaos for their own purposes.

What it clear is that the United States government was keen to cooperate readily with Canada on anti-Castro threats following the Montreal attacks, as well as to track and prosecute the responsible perpetrators. The timing of this incident, overlapping closely with Nixon’s visit to Ottawa, would have been embarrassing for the United States. Also by this time, even the Nixon administration was fed up with the loose cannon aspect of the exiles. The RCMP was tipped off by “reliable sources,” almost certainly the FBI, that further attacks on Canadian targets were expected in May, and that Cuban facilities in Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa needed extra police protection. The May attack never materialized, but new exile threats appeared in August, as an FBI telegram found in the RCMP file reported that the Frente de Integracion Nacionalista was planning another attack. All Cuban facilities in Canada were placed on 24 hour guard and port authorities were alerted about possible attacks on Cuban ships. Such bilateral cooperation was needed for another few years. A Montreal based company that forwarded mail parcels to Cuba was bombed in December 1972. In early January 1974, Ambassador De Cossio reported to Canadian officials that members of the anti-Castro Alpha 66 group were in Canada, and before the month was out, another unexploded device was found in a

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239 The RCMP file on this incident held at the Library and Archives Canada was requested and received by the author under the Access to Information Act as RG 18, File HQ Div [PDR] 86-3659 “Cuba Threats” Vol. 1, ATIP Request A2010000153. Like all RCMP files at LAC, it was subject to CSIS review as part of this process, with large portions withheld. For the most part, CSIS will not disclose intelligence sharing arrangements with foreign governments on principle. The CIA and FBI, under Executive Order 13526 Section 3.3(h) will no longer review records for declassification from foreign requesters.
241 FBI Telegram from Acting Director to Legat Ottawa NR 550-8, August 19, 1972 (classification unknown) in RG 18, File HQ Div [PDR] 86-3659 “Cuba Threats,” Vol. 1 (ATIP Request A2010000153), LAC
suspicious package near the Cuban embassy.\textsuperscript{243} Even the Prime Minister’s wife Margaret had apparently received death threats from the Cuban community while vacationing in Florida only weeks after accompanying her husband on their much publicized visit to Cuba, a threat the RCMP could not confirm.\textsuperscript{244}

The climactic event of anti-Castro Cuban violence was the October 6, 1976 bombing in Bridgetown, Barbados of a Cubana DC-8 airliner, leased from Air Canada, a horrific act that killed all 73 passengers on board.\textsuperscript{245} Flush with damning revelations about past CIA misdeeds, the now President Castro gave a vitriolic denunciation of the United States, which he blamed for the crash, and suspended the 1973 hijacking agreement.\textsuperscript{246} Normally loath in principle to confirm or deny any matters relating to the intelligence community, American officials went out on a limb to publicly refute Castro’s charges, primarily to reassure the hemispheric community that the United States was not behind this atrocity.\textsuperscript{247} A year later, Castro told US Senator Frank Church that he did not believe the United States government was directly behind the airliner bombing, but pointed out the responsible terrorists had been CIA trained (which was true).\textsuperscript{248} While the deadliest, this event represented the last major terrorist attack by anti-Castro Cubans. Washington would clamp down on their activities, and soon the Cuban-American community

\textsuperscript{243} Memorandum from A.F. Hart to File, “Cuban Counter-revolutionaries,” January 8, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 28484, File 29-21-2-CUBA, pt. 1 and Telegram from RCMP Commissioner to Commanding Officers in “C” (Montreal) and “O” (Toronto) Divisions, January 29, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 18, File HQ Div [PDR] 86-3659 “Cuba Threats,” Vol. 1 (ATIP Request A2010000153), LAC
\textsuperscript{244} Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 720, February 23, 1976 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43
\textsuperscript{245} Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 2367, October 8, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 19360, File 37-22-1-CUBA, pt. 3
\textsuperscript{246} Memorandum from David Lazar to President’s Advisor for National Security Affairs (Scowcroft), “Castro’s Charges and Termination of Hijacking Agreement – Your Memorandum of October 19,” November 2, 1976 (Confidential) in National Security Advisor: Presidential Country Files for Latin America, Box 4, Cuba (8), Gerald R. Ford Library. On President Castro, Fidel official assumed that title in 1976 with a constitutional change when he became Head of State, a role previously held by the retiring Oswaldo Dorticos. Long-time Foreign Minister Raul Roa also stepped down at the time.
\textsuperscript{247} Memorandum from David Lazar to President’s Advisor for National Security Affairs (Scowcroft), “Castro’s Charges and Termination of Hijacking Agreement – Your Memorandum of October 19,” November 2, 1976 (Confidential) in National Security Advisor: Presidential Country Files for Latin America, Box 4, Cuba (8), Gerald R. Ford Library
\textsuperscript{248} See Memorandum from Senator Frank Church to President Carter, Secretary of State Vance and Special Advisor for National Security Affairs Brzezinski, “Conversations with Fidel Castro,” August 12, 1977 (Confidential), in Records of the National Security Advisor, Country Files Cuba, Box 13, File “Cuba 5-10/77,” Jimmy Carter Presidential Library. Also available in Carter Library version of the CIA CREST Database, Document NLC 24-11-3-17-2. For more on the crash and its perpetrators, see also Ann Louise Bardach, \textit{Cuba Confidential: Love and Vengeance in Miami and Havana}, (New York: Vintage, 2002), 183-190.
changed tactics away from violence and towards political activism by becoming aligned with conservative Republicans, who would take power with the Reagan administration in 1981.

By the summer of 1974, Canada and the United States appeared to be entering a new era regarding Cuba, one that gave Trudeau’s government considerable confidence that it could broaden its relationship with Cuba at minimal cost to Canadian-United States relations. The Prime Minister had a solid new electoral mandate in July, and a month later the chief obstacle in the United States to closer Canadian-Cuban relations, Richard Nixon, would be out of office, resigning to avoid almost certain impeachment over his role in the Watergate cover up. Early indications were that the new President, Gerald R. Ford, under the influence of Secretary of State Kissinger, who continued on in the new administration, might be prepared to turn a corner with Cuba, or at least to moderate US policy. Bilateral cooperation was by now routine and well established. Aside from ongoing flare-ups concerning the ever prevalent extraterritoriality, the other regularly occurring challenges regarding aviation, the control of subversion from the left and violence from the right had either disappeared or were in retreat. Trudeau and his External Affairs Department now believed they were in a safer position to take bolder steps forward in Canadian-Cuban relations.
Chapter 10: From the Summit to Square One: Pierre Trudeau, the United States and Cuba: August 1974 to December 1980

After the five challenging years of the Nixon presidency, the arrival of Gerald Ford in the White House was a welcome development in Ottawa, one that proved positive for Canadian-American relations. Freshly re-elected, Pierre Trudeau once again had the confidence of Canadians, and now had the space to set an agenda for the next several years (he would not face the electorate again until May 1979). Trudeau found the Michigan Republican to be a President who was familiar with Canada, was largely sympathetic to Canadian concerns, and was personable and reasonable to deal with. The sailing in Canadian-US relations was certainly less turbulent than under Nixon, although it was not exactly smooth. In the mid-1970s, the two neighbours both faced serious economic challenges, with skyrocketing energy prices, resulting in both high inflation and a recession. These pressures were exacerbated by domestic political challenges in each country. The United States bipartisan consensus began to fragment and polarize as the country struggled to move forward after Vietnam, Watergate and a decade of civil and social turbulence.\(^1\) Canada coped with labour strife, federal-provincial turf wars and, most centrally, the national unity question.\(^2\) These political pressures naturally pulled their respective governments inward, although the energy and economic crises revealed that the two neighbours were more interdependent than either might have liked to admit.

In contrast to the Nixon years, Trudeau developed a strong personal rapport with Ford, probably his closest with an American President. This development was surprising given that on the surface they also appeared to be a mismatch, with Trudeau being a philosophical and occasionally flamboyant liberal intellectual, and Ford being a less colourful, straight forward, pragmatic conservative, although on the moderate wing of his party. Ambassador Cadieux, who thought Ford was somewhat ill-prepared for the presidency but favourably disposed towards Canada, advised Trudeau to be sure to engage the President, rather than Kissinger, at their first

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meeting in Washington in December 1974. By this time, Trudeau was a familiar entity in Washington, and Kissinger had over the years come to understand and even admire him. Trudeau was elated after his first meeting with Ford, viewing it as a great success. The fondness that Trudeau developed personally for Ford is plainly evident in his correspondence with the President, and their personal friendship continued after Ford left office, with Trudeau even joining him on a ski vacation in 1977. Trudeau had reached out to Nixon by providing reports of his visits to the USSR and China, and by offering moral support as Watergate unravelled. He received little in return, save a Presidential telephone call during the height of the October 1970 FLQ crisis, for which Trudeau repeatedly expressed his gratitude (even though before the call Nixon privately denounced the Prime Minister to Kissinger as “that skunk”). His correspondence with Ford was much warmer. Trudeau promptly congratulated Ford on triumphs, such as the July 1975 Apollo-Soyuz space flight, and expressed concern and sympathy following a September 1975 assassination attempt (one of two such incidents that month). Trudeau felt genuine sorrow following Ford’s electoral defeat in November 1976, and

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3 Memorandum from Western Hemisphere Division to File for Prime Minister’s Meeting with President of the United States, “President Ford: A Suggested Approach [Canadian Embassy, Washington DC Telegram 3320, November 12, 1974],” November 21, 1974 (Confidential), in RG 25, Vol. 9246, File 20-CDA-9-TRUDEAU-USA pt. 1, LAC. When Ford, Kissinger and Trudeau met December 4, as Cadieux predicted, Kissinger grew bored with the bilateral portion of the discussion and read State telegrams, even skipped the last 30 minutes of the meeting. Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 3592, December 4, 1974 (Confidential/ Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 9246, File 20-CDA-9-TRUDEAU-USA pt. 2, LAC

4 Memorandum of Conversation between Prime Minister Trudeau and Deputy Chief of Protocol (State) Stuart W. Rockwell, December 4, 1974 (Limited Official Use) in National Security Files, VIP Visits, Box 3, Folder 12/4/74 Canada – Prime Minister Trudeau (2),” Gerald R. Ford Library


7 Letter from Prime Minister Trudeau to President Ford July 17, 1975 and Telegram from President Ford to Prime Minister Trudeau, September 19, 1975, White House Central Files, CO 28, Box 11, Canada, 7/1/75 to 9/30/75, Gerald R. Ford Library
a grateful President warmly responded that the success of Canadian-American friendship was “a model for the world.”

The US ambassadors in Ottawa at the time found Trudeau more challenging. William Porter, less than two years in the post, infamously complained in his December 1975 farewell dinner remarks how Ottawa’s nationalist oriented investment, energy and cultural policies had caused “a bad turn” in bilateral relations, infuriating Trudeau and greatly embarrassing Kissinger. 

His successor Thomas O. Enders, who had more direct contact with the Prime Minister, found him equally frustrating, and described him to Kissinger as having a “condescension towards the mere mortals he rules,” as well as prone to “off-the-top-of-his-head philosophizing along Galbraithian/ Club of Rome lines.” Still, Kissinger and his boss were determined to keep Canadian-United States relations on an even keel, with the former inviting External Affairs Minister Allan MacEachen (who succeeded Mitchell Sharp in September 1974) to telephone him in Washington over any concerns. The most significant, and lasting outcome of the improved disposition towards Canada in Washington was Ford’s support for Canadian membership among the newly forming group of industrialized nations (G7), which France had strongly opposed. For this effort, Trudeau was especially grateful.

Trudeau and Ford did not discuss Cuba at their December 1974 White House meetings, although both leaders had briefing documents restating their traditional positions on trade with Cuba and the Cuban Assets Controls. The beginning of the Ford presidency paralleled the

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8 Letter from Prime Minister Trudeau to President Ford November 9, 1976 and Letter from President Ford to Prime Minister Trudeau, January 18, 1977, White House Central Files, CO 28, Box 11, Canada, 7/1/76 to 1/20/77, Gerald R. Ford Library

9 A brief account of this incident is in Lawrence Martin, _The Presidents and the Prime Ministers_, (Toronto: Doubleday, 1982), 259-260. For the Porter comment see Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Canadian consulates in United States, no. UNFC 3485, December 16, 1975 (Unclassified) in RG 25, Vol. 26844, File 20-1-2-USA, pt. 43, LAC... Days after the speech, Trudeau publicly rebuked Porter and refused to grant him a farewell call. For Trudeau’s response, see Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Consulates in the United States, no. GWU-681, December 16, 1975 (Unclassified) in RG 25, Vol. 26844, File 20-1-2-USA, pt. 43, LAC

10 Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 3186, August 6, 1976 (Secret) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43


beginning of the most active and expansionary period in Canada’s relations with Cuba. With the improved Canada-US rapport at the top, these differences were not overly problematic, even as that country became a higher priority issue for both neighbours in the 1974-1976 period. The rate of increase in Canada’s trade and tourism to Cuba at this time was peaking in those years, with the former tripling from $98.4 million for 1973 to $321.3 million for 1976.\textsuperscript{13} By the spring of 1975, the first Canadian Cabinet Minister had visited Cuba, reciprocated six months later in Ottawa by the Cuban Vice President. After years of delay and deflection, the Cuban government finally convinced Canada to negotiate that long coveted scheduled passenger air service between the two countries. Topping it off, Pierre Trudeau accepted Fidel Castro’s invitation to become the first NATO leader to officially visit Cuba since the revolution.

Touted then and today by many as an extremely bold move by Trudeau, and as perhaps one of the most exemplary moments of Canada asserting its own interests in foreign policy, the reality is that Trudeau’s trip to Cuba was for all intents and purposes a non-event in the United States. Amazingly, the visit generated little serious fallout either in Washington or in the American media. Even more astonishing is that the Prime Minister met Castro face-to-face in Havana with such little consequence precisely at a moment when Cuban-United States relations were souring after an unsuccessful reconciliation effort, a failure that was aggravated over Castro’s bold intervention on behalf of the communist cause in southern Africa. Ultimately, the United States’ government understood Trudeau’s psychological and political need to occasionally take a different path from the United States, while not actually opposing it. As well, it understood the overall nature of Canadian foreign policy to a much better degree than it has been given credit.\textsuperscript{14}

Gerald Ford’s ascent to the American presidency not only offered the promise of better Canadian-American relations. It also offered new hope that relations between the United States

\textsuperscript{13} John Kirk and Peter McKenna, \textit{Canada-Cuba Relations: The Other Good Neighbour Policy} (Gainesville Fla: University of Florida Press, 1997), 107.

\textsuperscript{14} This was confirmed by Denis Clift, who handled Canadian issues on the National Security Council Staff during the Ford Administration, as well as serving as National Security Advisor for Vice President Walter Mondale during the Carter administration. Interview with Denis Clift, June 2, 2010, Annapolis MD. Clift makes no mention of the Trudeau Havana trip, or Cuba as a concern, in his memoir, \textit{With Presidents to the Summit} (Fairfax Va: George Mason University Press, 1993).
and Cuba might finally move towards a genuine thaw, now that the primary obstacle on the
American side, Richard M. Nixon, was out of the White House. The day after Nixon’s
resignation, Kissinger told Senator Jacob Javits, who was planning to go on a fact finding trip to
Cuba with his colleague Claiborne Pell, that he had no reservations about the visit, and would
approve travel permits provided the Senators allowed a few weeks pause to minimize
speculation of an imminent policy shift.\footnote{Telephone Conversation between Henry Kissinger and Senator Jacob Javits, August 10, 1974, (no classification marking) in Kissinger Telephone Conversations Collection, Document KA 12732, Digital National Security Archive.} Only days into the Ford presidency, Kissinger raised Cuba with his new boss. Considering the quickening groundswell of support in Latin America and the Caribbean for restoring Cuba back into the hemispheric fold, Kissinger bluntly told Ford: “we have to loosen up or we risk isolating ourselves.” Forswearing a direct meeting with Castro, which Kissinger indicated the Cuban leader badly wanted, the Secretary advised the President to proceed slowly, with low visibility.\footnote{Memorandum of Conversation between President Ford, and Henry Kissinger and Brent Scowcroft, August 15, 1974 (Top Secret–Nodis), National Security Adviser's Memoranda of Conversation, Box 5, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library (GRFL). Available Online at http://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0314/1552750.pdf}

Ford had less of a personal axe to grind with Castro than his predecessor, and was
certainly more amenable to a change. At the same time, he shared Kissinger’s hesitation to rush
forward, and domestic political factors would make him even more cautious. At an August 1974
press conference, the new President hinted that a US policy change was possible if Havana in
turn changed its attitude towards the United States and its policies in the hemisphere.\footnote{Schoultz, That Infernal Little Cuban Republic, 262.} At the
OAS meeting held in Quito, Ecuador three months later, the United States abstained rather than
opposing a motion to reverse the 1964 ban on diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba.\footnote{Ibid, 262-263.} In a
memorandum to the President, then Deputy National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft
suggested the United States support as a revised goal “to limit Castro’s influence and to prevent
the Cuban issue from disrupting our effort to build a new and more cooperative relationship
with Latin America.”\footnote{Memorandum from Deputy National Security Advisor (Scowcroft) to President Ford, “Cuba Policy: The US Vote at the Quito Conference,” November 5, 1974 (Confidential/Nodis), in National Security Advisor, Latin American Staff Files, Box 2, Folder “Cuba – Political-Military (1)”, Gerald R. Ford Library} Acknowledging the embargo still caused some difficulties for US allies, Scowcroft did not then advocate its complete lifting, given strong opposition to such a move by conservatives in the Republican Party and the Cuban-American community. At the same time,
liberal Democrats had prevailed in the recent Congressional elections, with a number advocating relaxing US-Cuban relations. Matters appeared to be moving forward when at a press conference on March 1, 1975, Kissinger declared: “we see no virtue in perpetual antagonism between the United States and Cuba.”

In the meantime, the United States and Cuba held several highly secret meetings exploring how to improve their relationship. Apart from limited focus discussions on immigration in 1965 and the Nixon-era hijacking negotiations, these were the first comprehensive conversations between Havana and Washington since the early Johnson administration. Held in the United States, the conversations revealed that it would be a challenge to bridge the great gulf between the two countries. The only consensus from the first two sessions, held in January and July 1975, was to have more dialogue. Two additional meetings would be held in January and February 1976, but these had a strictly limited focus - the reunification of families. In the intervening period, Cuba had intervened militarily in Angola, an action that ended genuine progress. Even prior to Angola, the two sides were greatly suspicious of one another, and failure seemed a foregone conclusion for another key reason: incompatible negotiating style differences. The Cuban government made ending the American boycott the “sine qua non” which had to be completed before it would consider any formal rapprochement negotiations; in its view, allowing otherwise denied the prospect of equality between the parties. In turn, the United States would not unilaterally not lift the embargo, its principal bargaining chip, but was open to an incremental give and take approach, which included in the mix compensation for expropriated property and an end to Cuba’s call for Puerto Rican independence – the latter being an issue Castro latched on to for much of the mid and late 1970s. As will be shown, this scenario would replay itself almost exactly during the Carter administration in 1977-1978, with the same unfortunate outcome.

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20 Ibid.
21 Lars Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Republic*, 263.
Mutual suspicion, incompatible negotiating styles and Cuban involvement in Africa were certainly the most critical factors for the normalization’s failure, but domestic politics in the United States were also in part to blame. Voices on the American right, growing louder after the defeat in Vietnam and believing that detente had favoured the Soviet Union and international communism, found any talk of restoring US-Cuban relations heretical. Canadian diplomats in Washington picked up on this point. The recently arrived Ambassador Jake Warren identified the Cuban issue as a key flashpoint for the American right wing. Following Kissinger’s March 1975 statement, the White House received a flurry of letters from Cuban-Americans and other conservative groups urging Ford not to normalize relations with the Castro government. Among the most frequent correspondents was William Pawley, the ex-diplomat and Bay of Pigs era operative who was also a personal friend of President Ford; Pawley, representing a fairly extreme position, was still in 1976 advocating an invasion of the island. Most public of all was former California governor Ronald Reagan, who actively courted the Miami Cuban community in his campaign to unseat Ford as the Republican Party’s 1976 presidential nominee. Opposing detente as a sell out to the Soviet Union, the ex-actor and future President was firmly against any talk of lifting the embargo against Cuba, let alone restoring diplomatic relations, believing Castro had failed to meaningfully reciprocate US efforts at improved ties. The Reagan wing would sharply criticize Havana’s activities in Angola. Such currents at home pushed Ford, and

Docs, Tels 1975”, NARA. Also in DDRS Document CK3100534753 For the family reunion discussion see State Department Briefing Memorandum from Lawrence Eagleburger and William D. Rogers to Secretary of State (Kissinger) “Cuban Family Visits,” January 12, 1976 (Secret/Nodis/Eyes Only) in DDRS Document CK3100534767. A summary of all the meetings are in Memorandum “Summary of Four Conversations between Officials of the United States Government and the Government of Cuba,” [undated but 1977], (Secret) DDRS CK3100509804


25 Schoultz, 263-264. For the invasion comments see Letter from William D, Pawley to National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, March 25, 1976 in National Security Advisor Latin American Staff Files, Box 2, Folder “Cuba – Correspondence (7)” Gerald R. Ford Library. The letters in the seven Cuba-Correspondence folders in this series are overwhelmingly against normalization.

26 See “Let’s Listen to Reagan” article featured in The Vail Trail, January 31, 1975 in Presidential Handwriting File, Box 6, Folder “Countries, Cuba,” Gerald R. Ford Library. (there are other documents covering Reagan’s denunciation of Ford’s Cuba policy in this file). See also Schoultz, 285.
Kissinger, to the right on Cuba. By early 1976, better Cuban-US relations would be off the table until after the November election.

Canada was not unaffected by rumours of improved United States-Cuba relations. Officials in the Department of External Affairs, as well as in the Prime Minister’s office (chiefly his foreign policy advisor Ivan Head) closely monitored these developments, which would naturally impact, perhaps greatly, the course of Canada’s own relations with Havana. A rapprochement would mean Canadian firms having to face American competitors, although positively it would also mean the removal of a now long standing irritant in Canadian-United States relations. Canadian embassy officials in Washington were naturally anxious to confirm any rumours of a move in Havana’s direction. As far back as November 1973, with Nixon still in the White House, embassy staff heard allegations that Kissinger had ordered a study of Cuba, which the State Department dismissed as unfounded rumours. 27 Ottawa’s interest picked up again in the summer of 1974 on account of several promising signals, including a visit to Cuba by Senate Foreign Affairs Committee staffer Pat Holt in July, followed by President Ford’s references to Cuba in his first month in office. In late August, the State Department’s Cuban Desk Officer told Canadian embassy staff that American policy would not change before the OAS did, a point the Canadians found revealing. 28 The Washington Embassy reported that Ford would be limited in his ability to liberalize US-Cuban relations on account of resistance in Congress by many fellow Republicans. 29 Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter American Affairs Harry Schlaudeman told Canadian diplomats in November that he thought a change in US-Cuban relations was certainly possible, but would proceed more slowly than expected. Embassy officials subsequently concluded that restoring relations with Cuba was a considerably lower priority for Secretary Kissinger than more pressing issues concerning the Middle East, energy, and arms control. 30

Ambassador Malcolm Bow in Havana found Kissinger’s’ real views on US-Cuban relations to be “obscure,” but thought that attitudinal shifts by other Latin American countries

27 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 3678, November 5, 1973 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 4, LAC
28 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 2555, August 30, 1974 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 4, LAC
29 Canadian Embassy, Washington DC Numbered Letter no. 1514, September 18, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 4, LAC
30 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 3537, November 29, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 4, LAC
could move him reluctantly towards a policy change.\textsuperscript{31} Seeking clarity through the ambivalent messages about Cuba coming from Washington, Ambassador Cadieux was instructed in January 1975 to assess whether or not he believed Kissinger had “a grand strategy” for normalizing US-Cuban relations, along the lines of the China initiative.\textsuperscript{32} All that Cadieux could draw out from United States officials was that aspects of US Cuba policy were “under review.”\textsuperscript{33} Schlaudeman told the Canadian Ambassador he was unaware of any such strategy, but would not put it past Kissinger to pull off some spectacular diplomatic manoeuvre after secret preparations, as he had in China in 1971. Cadieux advised MacEachen to avoid discussing a possible US policy revision on the floor of the House of Commons, lest Canada be put in an embarrassing position with the United States.\textsuperscript{34} After Kissinger hinted in his March speech that Cuba had to assume “mutuality of obligation,” an External Affairs official scribbled on his transcript copy of the remarks that “the ball is now in [the] Cuban court.”\textsuperscript{35}

Canadian officials also monitored the Cuban viewpoint, knowing well how reluctant the Castro government was to move forward with the United States.\textsuperscript{36} The Cubans were wary of Kissinger, blaming the Secretary along with Nixon for the fall of their socialist ally in Chile, and feared that the American right would ultimately set the agenda, at least until the 1976 election.\textsuperscript{37} Castro described the Secretary of State’s March 1 statement to Industry, Trade and Commerce Minister Alastair Gillespie as “helpful”, but indicated genuine progress required an end to the United States’ “unilateral and coercive” embargo, adding that Cuba would be glad to sell sugar to the United States.\textsuperscript{38}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{31} Canadian Embassy, Havana Numbered Letter no. 1210, July 25, 1974 Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 4, LAC
\bibitem{32} Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Washington DC, no.GWP-1, January 14, 1975 (Confidential/ Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 28, LAC
\bibitem{33} Telegram from Secretary of State to US Embassy, Ottawa no. 11645, January 17, 1975 (Confidential) and also Telegram from Secretary of State to US Embassy, Ottawa no. 28580, February 7, 1975 (Limited Official Use) both in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1975, NARA. Available online via \texttt{http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43}
\bibitem{34} Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 175, January 17, 1975 (Confidential/ Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 4, LAC
\bibitem{35} Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. 473, March 3, 1975 (Unclassified) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 4, LAC
\bibitem{36} Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no 522, May 26, 1972 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA pt. 4, LAC
\bibitem{37} Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Washington DC, no.GWP-1, January 14, 1975 (Confidential/ Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 28, LAC
\bibitem{38} Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State no. 1104, March 24, 1975 (Unclassified) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1975, NARA. Available online via \texttt{http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43}
\end{thebibliography}
or later” he would have to reconcile with the United States with an unmistakable “later.”

However, the Cubans also gave mixed signals; unattributed sources credited Raul Castro with suggesting that his government saw a possible rapprochement opening with Nixon’s resignation.

Ambassador De Cossio urged External Affairs officials in November 1974 to quicken the pace of Canadian-Cuban ties “before the Cuban government gets immersed in talks with the US” - a position Canadians officials astutely perceived as a retreat from a month earlier, when the Cuban diplomat even more urgently encouraged Canada to hurry up “before the Americans come back.”

While Canadian officials concluded that the progress between Cuba and the United States would not proceed quickly, they nonetheless heeded De Cossio’s advice, with trade jumping substantially through late 1974 and 1975 and the number of tourists almost doubling. An October 1974 Inter Departmental policy document on Cuba acknowledged that Cuban-US relations might improve, and recommended that Canada transfer of capital technology to Cuba through lines of credit, development aid tied to Canadian trade interests, a regular scheduled air service, and ministerial level visits. Specific actions to accomplish these outcomes would be set in motion during the early months of 1975.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, these technology transfers for aid projects required a loosening of Canada’s export control regulations for Canadian made goods having significant US components, Principally, this was to reduce the cumbersome and detailed analyses needed before such of products could be exported. By the fall of 1974, such a revision was deemed a reasonable risk, given the hopeful signals of a relaxed US Cuba policy.

Not wanting to undermine the favourable climate generated by the Ford-Trudeau meeting, Ottawa made it clear that it would not export to Cuba goods that were entirely American or that were strategic in nature. The changes were aimed at civilian goods that had American parts but were reconstituted in Canada. As per the Cabinet’s direction, Washington received “a technical

40 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. 1407, September 19, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 4, LAC
41 Memorandum from John Higham to the Minister of External Affairs (MacEachen) “Follow-up with the Cuban Ambassador,” November 1, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 28, LAC
42 See Memorandum for Secretary of State for External Affairs, Minister of Industry Trade and Commerce, Minister of Finance, Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Transport “The Future Course of Canadian Relations with Cuba” October 1, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8638, 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 28, LAC
43 The policy was approved in Cabinet Conclusions, December 12, 1974 (Secret) in RG 2, Series A-5-a. Vol. 6436, LAC. Online at http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/conclusions/index-e.html
In doing so, the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce promised to alert the US Commerce Department about any pending export permits for US origin goods. The evidence does not suggest that these changes brought Ottawa any serious repercussions in the United States. Within a year, Washington itself was prepared to waive its insistence on licences where the goods going to Cuba were non-strategic and had US made components of 20 per cent or less.

While Ottawa and Washington appeared to reach a mostly satisfactory understanding on the export of US components, the same could not be said regarding Canadian subsidiary firm sales to Cuba. After the Montreal Locomotive Works-Worthington incident of the previous spring, the issue resurfaced in December 1974 with reports that Litton Business Equipment, a Canadian subsidiary of the California based Litton Industries, had backed away from a $500,000 Cuban order for office furniture because its parent company would not apply for a Treasury Department licence; as all the firms’ directors were American citizens, such an application would be turned down. Without the application, the State Department could do little. In the meantime, Litton Business equipment told the Cubans the sale was cancelled, even though the proposed exports were 95 per cent Canadian and thus well within the permissible Export Control guidelines.

Industry, Trade and Commerce Minister Gillespie was livid, using this incident to publicly criticize US policy and to call for the Canadianization of all corporate boards in the country. He also urged the passage of amendments to the Combines Investigation Act, which would make it illegal for firms in Canada to comply with foreign legislation against Canadian

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45 Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 580, February 13, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1975, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43.


47 Memorandum from Deputy Minister of Finance (Reisman) to the Minister of Finance (Turner),“Sale of Office Furniture to Cuba,” December 27, 1974 (Confidential) in RG 19, Vol. 5192, File 8780/U58-7, pt. 3, LAC

interests. Simon Reisman, the Deputy Minister of Finance, issued a memo to all Ministers outlining how the Litton furniture case had made Canadian trade with Cuba once again a public issue, posing “severe strains on our relations with the United States.” Reisman advocated resolving the matter by quiet diplomacy, but also supported revisions to *Combines Investigation Act*, although he admitted this would only provide a partial solution. Such legislation was passed in October 1975 and had the force of law by year’s end, but nonetheless did not eliminate the more fundamental difference in Canadian versus American interpretations on the scope of such laws’ reach.

Neither government wanted to address this issue at this time. Cuban orders from Canadian companies were growing, Washington and Havana had began their secret dialogue, and both Ottawa and Washington wanted to continue the bilateral goodwill on the heels of the successful Trudeau-Ford meeting. On January 3, Arthur Hartman, who handled Canadian affairs at the State Department, expressed concerns that if Litton, which now had applied for the licence, received as such, other companies would try to bypass the embargo through their foreign subsidiaries, and that Cuba might exploit the situation to frustrate Canadian-American relations. He advised letting Canada know that the broader subsidiary question was under review, but Canadian cooperation and above all, discretion, was needed to keep the matter out of the media. Kissinger approved this approach January 14. Ambassador Porter told MacEachen that the United States “was getting on with it” regarding Litton, but asked that the issue be handled in a “low key” manner, without public references suggesting an American policy review was under way.

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54 Telegram from Secretary of State to US Embassy Ottawa no. 11645, January 17, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1975, NARA. Available online via [http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-](http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-).
MacEachen agreed to discretion, but saw the issue as important enough to warrant his raising it directly with Kissinger. Porter responded favourably to MacEachen, who he described as more understanding than other so-called “nationalists” overseeing Canadian commerce – namely Gillespie, Agriculture Minister Eugene Whelan and Energy Minister Donald Macdonald. The Ambassador added:

I assume Canadians of moderate persuasion understand that US laws are not designed to place restraints on Canadian commerce; and that my second assumption is that Canadians of the same persuasion do not expect Americans who have made large investments and who have thus created many thousands of jobs in Canada to ignore the laws of the United States and thus incur the risk of legal penalties.

Inter American Affairs Assistant Secretary William D. Rogers told Kissinger that “a heavy load of pressure from the Canadians” had been brought to bear on this issue. Not feeling encumbered by Ford, Kissinger pushed through the licence approval with Treasury and Canada was informed on February 7, concluding “relations with Canada were of sufficient importance to give affirmative response.” Canada had once again successfully asserted its position with sufficient resolve that its immediate goal was accomplished – a Canadian registered business could satisfy orders from a legitimate client.

Ottawa wanted a more comprehensive resolution to the extraterritoriality question, and on this point the United States remained evasive, given the complications outlined by Porter. All such occurrences would continue to be handled case by case. Taking their cue from this incident and similar cases in Mexico and Argentina, the Under Secretaries Committee of the National Security Council recommended modifying the Cuban Assets Controls to enable US

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56 Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 201, January 17, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1975, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43
57 Not William P. Rogers, former Secretary of State under Nixon (1969-1973)
58 Telephone Conversation between Henry Kissinger and William D. Rogers, January 29, 1975, (no classification marking) in Kissinger Telephone Conversations Collection, Document KA 13231, Digital National Security Archive
59 Telegram from Secretary of State to US Embassy Ottawa no. 28782, February 7, 1975 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1975, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43
subsidiaries to trade with Cuba if the host country supported such trade.\textsuperscript{61} Kissinger was weary of dealing with this issue, and did not want to see US firms nationalized. In a meeting with President Ford on Cuba late in February 1975, Kissinger laid out the difficulties the United States was experiencing with its allies:

Kissinger: On Cuba --it is a matter of the OAS vote. On corporations in third countries, they should follow the laws of the country where they're domiciled.
President: But we must be firm that our policy change would come only from a change in Cuban policy.
Kissinger: We are in an intolerable situation on American corporations.\textsuperscript{62}

This issue dragged on for a number of months, while Washington remained in a wait and see posture on Cuba, with the clandestine talks and the impending OAS review of the embargo being the key variables. In the meantime, the United States elected to continue handling these issues case by case. Reaffirming this approach, Porter wrote in his April 1975 review of his first year in the Ottawa post:

We feel the US should continue to review on its merits each application for a treasury license for proposed exports to Cuba by US-controlled firms located in Canada. However, we feel that the USG internally should be pre-disposed to grant such exemptions. Such a procedure will not remove the irritant entirely (which serves a certain purpose) but will blunt its cutting edge and minimize the possibility that Canadians will claim we blocked such trade in order to save the Cuban market for ourselves at such time as we may resume normal relations with Cuba.\textsuperscript{63}

With Cuba related requests for machinery exports containing little to no US parts piling up, Gillespie cornered Treasury Secretary William Simon at an Inter American Development Bank meeting about immediately ending subsidiary restrictions.\textsuperscript{64} Growing irritated, future Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger quipped that the United States had to find a way to cease “being

\textsuperscript{61} Memorandum from Chairman, NSC Under Secretaries Committee (Robert Ingersoll) to the President, “Cuba Policy – Our Constraints on US Subsidiaries,” February 25, 1975 (Confidential/Nodis), in National Security Advisor Latin American Staff Files, Box 2, Folder “Cuba – Economic, Social - Sanctions (2),” Gerald R. Ford Library


\textsuperscript{63} Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State no. 1333, April 11, 1975 (Secret) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1975, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43

\textsuperscript{64} Telegram from US Secretary of State to US Embassy Tokyo (for Assistant Secretary Rogers) no. 120768, Action Memorandum from Rogers to Kissinger on Outstanding Applications for Licenses for Cuba trade by Subsidiaries, May 23, 1975 (Secret) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1975, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43
nickled and dimed to death by the Canadians.” With several firms risking the loss of their bids, licences were granted to two Canadian applications, Babcock-Wilcox for steam generators (which would have increased Cuban power production by 50%) and Borg-Warner, for centrifugal pumps. The former was seen to be a larger and more substantial request than Litton, and Rogers reported that rejecting this offer might spurn an even greater outcry in Canada.

At Kissinger’s request, Porter asked MacEachen to refrain from pushing for decisions on the outstanding requests, in anticipation that after the OAS lifted the hemisphere wide embargo, the United States would soon be lifting the regulatory restrictions. MacEachen responded that he had to consider the implications of this request, and Under Secretary Basil Robinson advised him to reply affirmatively, provided it did not become public, with the Minister initialing his approval. When Assistant Secretary Rogers again expressed concern about possible strains on Canadian-US relations, Kissinger dismissed Cuba as being of low importance and added: “the Canadians want to show that they can make the Secretary back up.” On specific cases, but not in general, Canada succeeded in doing just that.

When the OAS voted at the end of July to lift mandatory sanctions against Cuba, even the United States supported the motion, although it opted to leave its own embargo intact.

Kissinger subsequently advised President Ford to remove restrictions on subsidiary sales if the host government permitted trade with Cuba. Following inter-departmental consultations, the new policy was codified as National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) 305, which was signed by Kissinger on September 15 with Presidential backing. This directive formalized what Kissinger recommended to the President, along with terminating sanctions on countries having ships or aircraft involved in the Cuba trade; it did not apply to strategic goods. Kissinger presented the revised approach as being in response to the OAS, and not a shift in bilateral

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65 Telegram from US Secretary of State to US Embassy Tokyo (for Assistant Secretary Rogers) no. 120768, Action Memorandum from Rogers to Kissinger on Outstanding Applications for Licenses for Cuba trade by Subsidiaries, May 23, 1975 (Secret) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1975, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43

66 Ibid


68 Schoultz, 266.

relations with Cuba. Kissinger explained the changes formally to MacEachen in a letter, telling the External Affairs Minister that he hoped Washington’s steps would “resolve the difficulties we have had in the past.”

Ottawa was to be disappointed. After delays in responding to Canadian embassy queries, on August 21, Rogers held a press conference announcing the routine granting of licences granting for subsidiaries to trade with Cuba, which he presented as a policy roll-out in response to the OAS vote. These measures fell well short of what the Canadian government had hoped for, as neither the Cuban Assets Controls nor their extraterritorial extension had been revoked. External Affairs instructed Ambassador Warren to express appreciation that the granting of licences would be more routine and quicker, but to point out that the most fundamental problem still remained.

On August 29, Canadian embassy officials met with the State Department’s Deputy Director of Canadian Affairs and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, expressing Ottawa’s disappointment. As a lame consolation, the Americans stated that Canada was the first foreign government to be consulted, and they promised the quick routine granting of licences for non-strategic goods, non-US made goods, or those comprised of 20 per cent or less in American made components. They admitted requiring more extensive reviews for Canadian subsidiaries of GTE International, Chrysler and Marconi, where the US portion would be larger. Canada’s disappointment would be accentuated in early October, after revisions to the Cuban Assets Controls as per NSDM 305 were published in the Federal Register. Rather

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71 Communication from Kissinger to MacEachen is in Telegram from Secretary of State (Kissinger) to US Embassy Ottawa, no. 197804, August 20, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1975, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43. Another copy is in RG 25, Vol. 13838, File 36-18-2-CUBA, pt. 5, LAC
73 Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Washington DC no GWU 469, August 27, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.13838, File 36-18-2-CUBA pt. 5, LAC. See also Memorandum from Under Secretary (Robinson) to External Affairs Minister (MacEachen), “Cuban Assets Control Regulations,” August 27, 1975 (Confidential) in the same file.
than resolving contentious issues, matters were made worse in Canada’s eyes by shifting the burden for compliance with US law from Americans citizens on Canadian boards to the parent companies – giving the latter in effect a veto over Cuban orders from Canadian businesses.\textsuperscript{76} MacEachen and Gillespie opted to make the issue a high priority discussion item when Kissinger came to Ottawa October 14-15 (after several postponements).\textsuperscript{77} Meeting with the Secretary, MacEachen and Ambassador Jake Warren complained about the compounding effect the Cuban Assets Control revisions had made for Canada, an outcome Kissinger replied was the opposite of what Washington had intended. Kissinger promised to “look into” the matter as far as Canada was concerned, but added the measures would not be lifted until Cuba offered a reciprocal gesture. MacEachen persevered in protesting its extraterritorial impact, getting the Secretary of State to concede that the United States would never tolerate another country’s laws extending on its soil.\textsuperscript{78} When Kissinger met Prime Minister Trudeau later that visit at a luncheon, Cuba did not enter the discussion- neither this matter nor his impending January 1976 visit to that country.\textsuperscript{79}

Following the Kissinger meeting, MacEachen urged Warren to follow up with the State Department about Kissinger’s promise to address Ottawa’s concerns.\textsuperscript{80} The External Affairs Minister’s persistence had some impact, as Kissinger had ordered an Inter-Agency review of the regulation revisions to consider the Canadian perspective.\textsuperscript{81} There would yet again be further delays, and in the end little changed. In January 1976, with the Prime Minister preparing to meet Castro in Havana, Rogers privately reassured Canadian embassy staff that there would be licences for non strategic goods and within the 20 percent rule. Intervening international and

\textsuperscript{76} Memorandum from Deputy Minister of Industry Trade and Commerce (O.G. Stoner) to Minister of Industry Trade and Commerce (Jamieson) “US Cuban Assets Control Regulations,” October 9, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.13838, File 36-18-2-CUBA, pt. 5, LAC

\textsuperscript{77} See Memorandum from Under Secretary (Robinson) to Minister for External Affairs (MacEachen), “Trade with Cuba: Cuban Assets Control regulations, September 26, 1975 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol.13838, File 36-18-2-CUBA pt. 5, LAC Also Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no UNTD 2648, October 7, 1975 (Unclassified) in same file. Ottawa had been frustrated by the delays. For a list of seven previous attempt.s to get Kissinger to Ottawa compiled by the Department of External Affairs see in RG 25, Vol.9300, File 20-USA-9-KISSINGER, pt. 2, LAC

\textsuperscript{78} Record of Discussions; Visit of Dr. Henry Kissinger to Ottawa, October 15, 1975 (Secret /Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 9301, File 20-USA-9-KISSINGER, pt. 5, LAC

\textsuperscript{79} Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. UNGR 2767 (Confidential) October 17, 1975 in RG 25, Vol. 9301, File 20-USA-9-KISSINGER, pt. 5, LAC

\textsuperscript{80} Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Washington DC no GWU-569 October 21, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 9301, File 20-USA-9-KISSINGER, pt. 5, LAC

\textsuperscript{81} Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Washington DC no GWU 571, October 23, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.13838, File 36-18-2-CUBA, pt. 5, LAC
domestic political developments made the Ford administration loath to make any gesture deemed favourable to Cuba. 82

Indeed that January, Trudeau was heading to Havana, the culmination of a process that was two years in the making. In January 1974, Fidel Castro, delighted at recent progress in Canadian-Cuban relations, which he attributed largely to Trudeau’s leadership, told Ambassador Bow that he would welcome having the Prime Minister in Havana. The Prime Minister’s office replied that Trudeau was delighted with the invitation, which he accepted on principle. 83 A Prime Ministerial visit to Cuba would be an unmistakable sign of the extent of the warming between the two countries. However, Trudeau was not in a rush to go to Havana. Having at this time only a minority government (since October 1972), and with Nixon still in the White House, a Cuba visit at that time seemed excessively risky politically. Ivan Head in the Prime Minister’s office confirmed as much in his instructions to the External Affairs Department’s Latin American specialists and to Ambassador Bow, stating that “the Prime Minister regards a visit to Cuba as not only a low priority but of some considerable risk domestically and therefore not to be considered in present electoral circumstances.”84 A more favourable climate emerged soon enough in the summer. Sensing a favourable shift in domestic opinion, Trudeau engineered his own defeat in the House of Commons over the federal budget in May, and his Liberal Party was returned to power in July with a majority government.85 More significant was President Nixon’s resignation a month later.

Continuing to take the lead, the Cuban government followed up that fall by pushing for an exchange of ministerial level visits between the two countries.86 These happened soon enough, when in March 1975 two members of the Trudeau Cabinet, Gillespie and then almost immediately afterwards Health and Welfare Minister Marc Lalonde (who was personally very close to Trudeau) both made successful visits to Cuba. These trips events brought forward new

84 Letter from Director General, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (J.S. Nutt) to Canadian Ambassador in Havana (M.N. Bow) March 4, 1974 (Personal and Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 9293, File 20-CDA-9-TRUDEAU, pt. 5, LAC
85 For details see John English, Just Watch Me, 232-239.
commitments for even greater Canadian trade and investment on the island, as well as exchanges in nursing and hospitals.87 Another outcome of the Gillespie visit was a commitment to reach a bilateral aviation agreement for regularly scheduled service, which the Cabinet had approved in principle in January.88 A briefing paper on Cuba for Trudeau’s spring 1975 visit to the Commonwealth Caribbean identified the island republic as Canada’s fourth largest Latin American market, arguing the climate was ripe for a Prime Ministerial visit.89 Such a voyage aligned well with the goals of the Third Option, which included developing fruitful connections between Canada and governments with divergent ideological outlooks. 90 Head wrote MacEachen in mid-June about a proposed Trudeau visit to Mexico, Cuba and Venezuela for late January 1976, and the wheels were soon put in motion.91

Trudeau’s Latin American tour was announced in September, just days before Cuban Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez arrived in Ottawa to sign the Canada-Cuba bilateral air agreement, with scheduled passenger service to begin in early 1976. The Cuban government was delighted, and Rodriguez told Bow, now Director of Security and Intelligence for External Affairs, that the forthcoming Trudeau visit would be “the beginning of an important new phase in the relationship.” 92 Looking forward to the visit, Castro praised Canada during a 12 hour speech before the First Cuban Communist Party Congress, commending it for not having been a colonial power or imposed an embargo on Cuba, even though he still described it as an economy of “great monopolistic capital.”93 The Cuban leader and his cadres prepared to welcome Trudeau with flair when he arrived in Havana a month later.

91 Letter from Special Advisor to the Prime Minister (Ivan Head) to Secretary of State for External Affairs (MacEachen) June 11, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 9293, File 20-CDA-9-TRUDEAU, pt. 7, LAC
92 Memorandum from Director of Security and Intelligence (M.N. Bow) to Director of Latin American Affairs, “Conversations with Cuban Vice Prime Minister Carlos Rafael Rodriguez,” September 30, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 28, LAC
With the fact of the trip publicized and in the planning stage, the natural question in Ottawa was how the United States’ government would receive this announcement. American officials were first privately informed in August that Trudeau intended to include a Havana stop on his forthcoming Latin American tour.\textsuperscript{94} With the September 19, announcement, the State Department’s immediate response was muted, seeing the action through the lens of the Third Option as “indicative of Canada’s continuing to diversify its foreign relations.”\textsuperscript{95} External Affairs USA Division Director Glen Shortliffe later reported that American officials conceded that Trudeau’s timing was perfect, aligning well with the US-Cuban dialogue then under way.\textsuperscript{96} Thus, the Americans had little obvious concern with the Trudeau Havana trip in itself. Nothing in the record suggests that Kissinger raised the Prime Minister’s travel plans during his October 1975 Ottawa visit. The available State Department cables suggest the US embassy in Ottawa did not mention it at all between the September 1975 announcement and early January 1976, with the first relevant telegram from on the topic in the new year previously referencing a September communication. When on January 5, National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft wrote President Ford a memo on sticking points in Canadian-US relations in the wake of Ambassador Porter’s stormy departure from Ottawa, nothing concerning Cuba or the impending Prime Ministerial visit to Havana appeared on the list.\textsuperscript{97} Early in January, US embassy staff met with Cuban experts from the Department of External Affairs to discuss possible agenda items on the visit. In a conversation mostly centering on trade issues, the Canadians told the American diplomats that they believed Cuba needed Canada for legitimacy in the region. Commenting on its objectives, the Canadian officials argued:

\begin{quote}
[the] entire trip is less designed to further specific objectives, sign agreements or conclude other bilateral business; rather, trip is opportunity for PM to show Canadian interest in Latin America,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{94} See Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no UNGR 2091, August 6, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 9293, File 20-CDA-9-TRUDEAU, pt. 7, LAC.

\textsuperscript{95} Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 3581, September 22, 1975 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1975, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43.

\textsuperscript{96} Memorandum from Director, USA Division (G Shortliffe) to File, “Prime Minister’s Trip to Cuba: Angola,” January 8, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 9243, File 20-CDA-9-TRUDEAU LATAM, pt. 2, LAC.

to establish or strengthen personal relationships with leaders of countries visited, and just possibly to thaw a few Canadians bones in the midst of the Ottawa winter.  

The Prime Minister saw visiting Castro in Havana as in the spirit of detente, and believed it might add an additional impetus for the US-Cuban dialogue then under way. Trudeau noted that he had preceded the United States in opening relations with China and visiting Moscow, suggesting that the United States might again follow in his footsteps regarding Cuba.  

What would change everything was Cuban intervention in Angola. Dick Post, the Political Counsellor at the US embassy in Ottawa, admitted that the Ford administration had all but forgotten about the trip because of the Angola crisis, but he anticipated “stomach grumbling” in Washington once the reminder about it went out. Castro’s support for the Marxist MPLA movement in the former Portuguese colony commenced late in the summer of 1975 and moved ahead full stream in November, after South Africa also intervened in the developing civil war, backing opposing non-communist forces that had also been covertly supported by the United States. The pre-trip briefing materials prepared for the Prime Minister in December, which stressed Canada-Cuba bilateral objectives, made little mention of Angola. Under Secretary Basil Robinson criticized his staff for giving the matter short shrift, anticipating that Trudeau would be questioned on it as the conflict rapidly ballooned into a major Cold War proxy war, one that would not only derail the US-Cuban dialogue but threatened detente itself. In early January, Robinson advocated to MacEachen that Canada call on the three warring parties in Angola to renounce the use of force and for foreign

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98 Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 71, January 8, 1976 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43


100 Kirk and McKenna, Canada-Cuba Relations, 110.

101 Memorandum from Director, USA Division (G Shortliffe) to File, “Prime Minister’s Trip to Cuba: Angola,” January 8, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 9243, File 20-CDA-9-TRUDEAU LATAM, pt. 2, LAC


104 Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (H Basil Robinson), to PDF “Prime Minister’s Visit to Mexico, Cuba and Venezuela,” December 29, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 9293, File 20-CDA-9-TRUDEAU, pt. 8, LAC
governments to immediately terminate support for the factions.\textsuperscript{105} This clearly applied to Cuba, although it also did for South Africa, the Soviet Union and the United States.

Ivan Head, as the leading Canadian official overseeing the trip apart from the Prime Minister himself, anticipated that the Ford administration would have some difficulties with the trip occurring in the midst of this escalating conflict. However, cancelling the Cuba leg of the tour at this late stage in planning would now be extremely difficult. Sandwiched between stops in Mexico and Venezuela, such an eleventh hour cancellation would have great repercussions in Canadian-Cuban relations. Still of greater significance to Ottawa were Canadian-American relations. Head informed Dick Post at the US embassy that he had advised his boss that he would have to mention Angola in his conversations with Castro.\textsuperscript{106} To prepare for such an encounter, Head requested the latest US intelligence on the conflict, and asked that it be forwarded directly to the Prime Minister’s Office. State diplomats feared that with such a departure in protocol, “Extaff’s nose would be far out of joint.”\textsuperscript{107} Denis Clift, the NSC staff lead on Canadian and Western European affairs, underlined in a memo for Scowcroft that the urgency and sensitivity of the situation meant that the White House should deal directly with Head, rather than the usual route via External Affairs.\textsuperscript{108} Officially, the Ford administration preferred that Trudeau either cancel or postpone his trip, lest Castro conclude he could intervene abroad with impunity. At a minimum, it wanted the Prime Minister to voice both publicly and privately Canada’s disapproval of its African involvement to the Cuban leadership. Clift also recommended that Head be quietly informed that the US-Cuban dialogue was being shelved as a result.\textsuperscript{109} While the Americans thought Trudeau would be reluctant to raise such a contentious issue, US embassy staff in Ottawa were sufficiently confident that Trudeau opposed the

\textsuperscript{105} See Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Robinson) to Minister of External Affairs (MacEachen), “Angola,” January 8, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 11089, 21-3-ANG, LAC
\textsuperscript{106} Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State no. 80, January 8, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43. Another copy of this telegram is also in NSC Presidential Country Files for Europe and Canada, Folder Canada (8), Box 2, Gerald R. Ford Library
\textsuperscript{107} Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State no. 80, January 8, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43.
\textsuperscript{108} Memorandum from Denis Clift to Brent Scowcroft, “Trudeau’s Visit to Cuba – Angolan Connection” January 10, 1976 (Confidential) in (Confidential/Sensitive) in NSC Presidential Country Files for Europe and Canada, Box 2, Folder Canada (8), Gerald R. Ford Library
\textsuperscript{109} Memorandum from Denis Clift to Brent Scowcroft, “Trudeau’s Visit to Cuba – Angolan Connection” January 10, 1976 (Confidential) in NSC Presidential Country Files for Europe and Canada, Box 2, Folder Canada (8), Gerald R. Ford Library
presence of Cuban and other foreign troops in Angola, and was thus inclined to support Washington in this regard. They also believed that Castro did not want to “put a kink in the growing Canadian-Cuban entente,” and would at least hear the Prime Minister out on Angola. Thus, the State Department and the Ford White House saw the Canadian Prime Minister as an indirect mouthpiece for the United States.

Scowcroft forwarded the requested intelligence to Head on January 19, accompanied by a cover letter describing how Castro’s action was “Soviet-sponsored” and destabilizing the international climate. The seven page CIA background memorandum reiterated this point, concluding that the Cuban intervention “probably was made as a result of pressures from the USSR, which had no intentions of sending its own troops,” although it also represented a renewal of Cuban adventurism abroad. Such conclusions were largely erroneous. Cuba had a proven track record of intervening on its own accord in Africa on behalf of leftist causes (the Algeria-Morocco war of 1963 and Che Guevara’s involvement in the Congo in 1965-1966). Havana saw its role in southern Africa in 1975-1976 as carrying forward its revolutionary, anti-colonial mission in the Third World, and its main commitment was in response to that of apartheid South Africa. Officials such as Geoffrey Pearson later argued along such lines in an intra-Departmental debate on the Soviet Union’s influence in the conflict, with others aligning with Scowcroft. A secret report American officials passed on to Head in June offered a more nuanced assessment, acknowledging Castro’s historic interest in Africa but also that Cuban foreign policy was far more in line with Moscow than it had been a decade earlier, and that whatever differences existed pertained to tactics and strategy, not overarching goals.

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110 Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State no. 80, January 8, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43
111 Letter from President’s Advisor for National Security Affairs (Brent Scowcroft) to Assistant Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister (Ivan Head) January 19, 1976 (Confidential/Sensitive) in NSC Presidential Country Files for Europe and Canada, Box 2, Folder Canada (8), Gerald R. Ford Library
112 Memorandum, “The Background and Status of Cuba’s Intervention in Angola,” [January 1976] (Confidential/Sensitive) in NSC Presidential Country Files for Europe and Canada, Folder Canada (8), Box 2, Gerald R. Ford Library
113 The main argument in Gleijeses Conflicting Missions.
114 See Memorandum from Chairman Policy Analysis Group (Geoffrey Pearson) to Intelligence and Security Liaison Division, “IAC Special Assessment 8/76: Cuban Intervention in Angola,” May 5, 1976 (Secret/Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 11431, File 20-CUBA-1-3, pt. 12, LAC
115 See Memorandum from Special Advisor to the Prime Minister (Ivan Head) to Under Secretary of State for External Affairs (Basil Robinson), June 2, 1976 (Secret) with attached US State Department Bureau of Intelligence and Research, “Cuban Objectives in Africa,” (Secret/Canada-US Only), in RG 25, Vol. 11431, File 20-CUBA-1-3, pt. 12, LAC
As Head readied Trudeau to discuss Angola, with American encouragement, some External Affairs officials, especially the Ambassador in Havana, James Hyndman (since October 1975), and his immediate predecessor Malcolm Bow, worried that discussing Angola would undermine the trip’s main purpose of celebrating the momentum in Canadian-Cuban relations. Hyndman recommended that Ottawa issue a statement calling for an African solution, without mentioning of Cuba, and instead talk about detente and development. Bow was equally reticent, and thought Trudeau should avoid mention of Angola, anti-Americanism, or the more radicalized rhetoric of latest Cuban Communist Party Congress, lest he receive a tongue lashing from the Cuban leader. Recalling his experiences, Bow described Castro as intelligent but very sensitive, highly suspicious of the Americans and almost certain to take offense to any outside challenge to policies he considered as “non-negotiable” – such as support for like-minded revolutionaries abroad. He added that the Cuban leader would interpret a lecture from Trudeau on Angola as made in Washington. In his view, any such conversation had to be raised privately in a sidebar discussion, which the Prime Minister could do easily with his proficiency in Spanish. Bow and Hyndman encouraged Trudeau to be positive, even “lavish” in praising the Cuban revolution’s remarkable accomplishments in health care, literacy, nutrition and human resource development. Trudeau largely followed the advice of his diplomats, and the stage was now set for the “vivas” to come.

The Prime Minister indeed would discuss Angola, and all the above mentioned issues, with Fidel Castro in his famous three day visit to Cuba that commenced on January 26, 1976. Travelling with his wife Margaret and their infant son Michel, Trudeau developed a lasting personal friendship with the Cuban revolutionary leader, and the anecdotal details, richly covered in Robert Wright’s *Three Nights in Havana*, need not be revisited here. The minutes of Trudeau’s official meeting with Castro on January 27, 1976 conveyed not a hint of anti-Americanism. That meeting focussed mostly on trade and economic issues, although Trudeau justified the trip under the Third Option, stating poignantly that “Canada does not wish to turn its back on the United States. However, in order to preserve Canada’s national identity we have

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117 Memorandum from Director of Security and Intelligence (M.N. Bow) to Under Secretary for External Affairs (Ritchie), “Prime Minister’s Visit to Cuba,” no, PSP-34, January 13, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 9243, File 20-CDA-9-TRUDEAU-LATAM pt. 2, LAC
concluded that it is necessary to increase our ties elsewhere.”

In the conversation, Castro again praised Canada’s non-colonial past, describing how: “its ‘empire’ lies within legitimate boundaries.” As Washington requested, and Head recommended, Trudeau privately brought up Angola with Castro, offering his perspective that Cuba’s intervention served neither its own interests nor that of Angola, and restated Canada’s opposition to any external involvement in the conflict. While agreeing in principle with non-intervention and a negotiated settlement, the Cuban leader emphasized the decision had been his own, and he believed Cuban support was necessary to protect the MPLA from South African and Zairean (now Congolese) forces. On this issue, Trudeau was not persuaded and the two leaders agreed to disagree. Still, both men viewed the visit as a success, and Trudeau thanked Castro in writing a few weeks later not only for his hospitality, but that “we were able to discuss with such vigour and such frankness issues on which our policies were divergent.”

Surprisingly, Trudeau’s visit generated a much quieter reaction in the United States than would be expected, particularly given Angola. There was certainly very little response from the White House or State Department. During Trudeau’s three days in Cuba, the US embassy staff in Ottawa monitored the visit, but did not treat it as a sensitive issue. Nearly every available telegram discussing the trip had either a low level classification or was an unclassified press summary. The declassified portions of the CIA’s National Intelligence Bulletin and Central Intelligence Bulletin dating from those last three days of January 1976 make no mention of the trip, although it is possible that the relevant sections remain redacted.

In a Congressional hearing on Canadian-American relations occurring that very week, Richard D. Vine, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs handling the Canada file, testified that the Prime Minister’s decision to proceed with the visit was “reasonable” given its planning stages, adding that he did not see Trudeau’s presence in Havana as either compromising Canadian-American

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120 Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Delegation to NATO no. GWL-101, February 9, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 9243, File 20-CDA-9-TRUDEAU-LATAM, pt. 4, LAC
121 Letter from Prime Minister Trudeau to Prime Minister Castro, February 16, 1976 in Pierre Trudeau fonds, MG 26, Series O-7, Vol. 557, File 140727.1 C962 (1975-1976), LAC
123 These daily issued documents are available through the CIA CREST Database accessible though the Agency’s FOIA webpage. See National Intelligence Bulletin, January 29, 1976 (Top Secret) See CIA-RDP79T00975A028500010048-3.
relations or indicative of a fundamental departure in Canadian foreign policy towards neutralism. When Florida Congressman Dante Fascell, whose constituents included many Cuban exiles, questioned Vine further, he responded as having “no axe to grind.” Fortunately for Trudeau, he did not face the slew of hostile challenges in the US Congress about Canadian policy that John Diefenbaker had to endure a decade and a half earlier.

The State Department and White House were certainly interested in what Trudeau accomplished in Havana, and sought whatever useful intelligence and insight it could glean from Canadian officials. There would be at least two series of senior level conversations in the winter and spring of 1976, although none personally involved either Trudeau, President Ford, or Kissinger. Eager to cooperate with the United States, the Prime Minister’s Office arranged for an External Affairs-State Department debriefing, including Head. In preparing for the meeting, State Department Counselor Helmut Sonnenfeldt instructed Assistant Secretary Rogers, who was to be sent to Ottawa, to stress that while Washington understood “Canadian needs for their own identity,” Canada should not minimize American concerns over Angola, and warned that “there is potential for real difficulty if there is a deliberate and demonstrative Canadian policy of courting Castro in the midst of Cuban actions in Africa and elsewhere.”

In other words, the United States tolerated the Trudeau trip but did not want to see another anytime soon. Wanting to keep these Canadian-US consultations out of the public eye, Kissinger asked the US embassy in Ottawa not to confirm the Rogers visit, even after the Globe and Mail reported that such a meeting had indeed taken place. In the meeting itself, Rogers

124 Wright, 230.
126 In the Trudeau papers there is a reference to Ivan Head’s discussion of a Cuba item with Brent Scowcroft including an item President Ford wanted passed on to the Prime Minister. The attachment was not found in the file and thus the matter is inconclusive but judging from the main concerns that spring likely dealt either with intelligence about Angola or Canada-Cuba civil aviation matters. See Memorandum from Ivan L. Head to the Prime Minister, “Cuba” April 26, 1976 (Confidential/ Canadian Eyes Only) in Pierre Trudeau fonds, MG 26, Series O-7, Vol. 532, File 12/C962/6.3 (1976), LAC.
127 Memorandum from Undersecretary for External Affairs (Robinson) to the Minister of External Affairs (MacEachen), “Prime Minister’s Trip to Latin America: Briefing of USA Authorities,” February 5, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 9243, File 20-CDA-9-TRUDEAU LATAM pt. 4, LAC.
129 Telegram from Secretary of State to US Embassy, Ottawa no. 36715, February 14, 1976 (Limited Official Use) and Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State no. 582, February 12, 1976 Limited Official Use) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43
met with Head, Latin American Division Head Pierre Charpentier and J.S. Nutt, Director of the Western Hemisphere Bureau. The conversation centred on Angola and Castro’s assessment of US Latin American policy, the latter of which the Cuban leader characterized as “more careful,” under Ford, citing American moves concerning Peru, Venezuela and Panama. Rogers responded that the Cuban leader’s assessment was perceptive.\textsuperscript{130} On Angola, Head suggested that Castro might actually be “an uncontrollable embarrassment to the Soviets,” and suggested that if Washington could encourage South Africa to withdraw, Cuba might reciprocate.\textsuperscript{131} The Canadians reported that Castro refrained from anti-US tirades, although he was still bitter over Chile and indicated that one day “the USG would have to eventually recognize the reality of Cuba.”\textsuperscript{132} Rogers and Kissinger were pleased to have this briefing as they prepared for their own Latin American trip later that month.

The Ford White House and State Department got a second debrief from Head in late April, when the latter met with Scowcroft and Sonnenfeldt. Their talks touched on the Trudeau-Castro Angolan discussion and Canada-Cuba passenger airliner overflights of the United States – an issue that had resurfaced in February.\textsuperscript{133} In the discussions, Jamaica, not Cuba, featured more prominently, and Scowcroft sought to reassure Trudeau’s advisor that the United States was not trying to undermine the government of Prime Minister Michael Manley, a Trudeau friend who had recently shifted his government substantially leftward.\textsuperscript{134} Neither the White House nor State Department expressed much further interest in Canadian Cuba policy. Ford did not write or telephone Trudeau about his Havana visit. When Trudeau visited the President again in June 1976 to mark the US bicentennial, Scowcroft referenced the Prime Minister.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[131] Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State no. 524, February 9, 1976 (Secret/Nodis) in NSC Presidential Country Files for Europe and Canada, Folder “Canada – State Department Telegrams to SECSTATE Nodis (2)”, Box 3, Gerald R. Ford Library. Declassified to author under Mandatory Review request.
\item[132] Ibid.
\item[133] Memorandum from Denis Clift to President’s Advisor for National Security Affairs (Scowcroft), “Your April 21 Luncheon meeting with Ivan Head,” April 20, 1976 (Secret) in National Security Advisor: Presidential Country Files for Europe and Canada, Box 2, Canada (11), Gerald R. Ford Library
\item[134] White House Telegram from Brent Scowcroft to US Ambassador in Ottawa (Enders) [ca, April 21, 1976] (Secret/XGDS – Eyes Only) in Documents from National Security Advisor NSC Europe Canada and Ocean Affairs Staff Declassified for Remote Archive Capt.ure (RAC) Program, Box 5, Gerald R. Ford Library. Also see Canadian Embassy, Washington DC Numbered Letter 744, “Cuba in Africa and Jamaica: Head/ Sonnenfeldt Conversation April 21, 1976,” May 3, 1976 (Confidential/ Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 11431, File 20-CUBA-1-3, pt. 12, LAC. This is a rare moment when a senior Canadian official directly asked his American counterpart about the possibility of US covert action against a country.
\end{footnotes}
favourably in his briefing papers for Ford for criticizing Cuban intervention in Africa. Neither Cuba nor Angola came up in the Oval Office discussions the two leaders held on June 16 – their last such meeting as President and Prime Minister. Such was a testimony to the state of the Canadian-United States relationship, Canada’s track record of cooperation on Cuban issues, and Trudeau’s personal rapport with Ford and Kissinger. Such a public, political posture as a Prime Ministerial visit to Havana would have been unthinkable for Diefenbaker, Pearson, or even Trudeau during the Nixon years, or if the latter’s successor had been John Connally or even Ronald Reagan, without very serious and perhaps lasting damage in Canada’s relations with its all important and ever present neighbour.

Matters for the most part went smoothly with the executive branch in the United States. Relations with the US press would be trickier, and Ottawa’s bureaucrats readied themselves for a possible backlash south of the border. Even before the Prime Minister’s departure, External Affairs officials’ first step in minimizing fall out was to ensure that no return Castro visit to Canada took place until after the 1976 Presidential elections (it would never occur). A list of media responses regarding the visit, including why the infamous “viva” statements were uttered, were prepared for the Washington embassy and all Canadian consulates in the United States. Key among the points were the advantages of direct leader-to-leader communication, the very bad manners of an last minute cancellation, Trudeau’s “frank and brutal” critique of the Angolan intervention, and finally, the vivas - the latter were described as a gesture of politeness, reciprocation and respect for Cuban oratorical traditions, matching those made by Castro.

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To Ottawa’s surprise and relief, the American media response was considerably more tepid than might be expected. Still, Trudeau’s tour did not entirely escape negative coverage in the United States press, with some of it being quite harsh. Particularly bewildering for Americans were the “viva Fidel” pronouncements. One Pittsburgh editorial described the trip as “a bold swagger expressive of his ill-concealed contempt for the United States.” Even then, there were exceptions, such as in liberal minded San Francisco, where the Canadian Consul General reported that local newspapers had depicted the Prime Minister as “a star.” It would be at home where Trudeau received much greater than expected criticism, both in the print media and the House of Commons. Much of the negative coverage focussed on the behaviour of Margaret Trudeau, who had flirted with Castro and to the stunned horror of External Affairs officials, sang to the wife of Venezuelan President Andrés Pérez. Critical press coverage continued for some months, as when in early May the Ottawa Journal lambasted Trudeau for mismanaging the American file, decrying his “wretchedly timed trip to Cuba and his effusive praise of Prime Minister Castro at the very time of Cuba's Angolan adventure have shaken the American public's attitude toward the Trudeau government, if not Canadians.” Such reporting was duly noted by US Ambassador Enders in his telegrams to Washington, who saw as a welcome consequence a push by Trudeau’s foreign policy advisors towards “areas of greater tangible interest to Canada rather than on countries in which Canadian interest seems to derive

139 Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Posts, USA, GWL-085 February 5, 1976 (Unclassified) in RG 25, Vol. 9243, File 20-CDA-9-TRUDEAU LATAM, pt. 4, LAC
140 “Trudeau’s Trip to Cuba Questioned,” Pittsburgh Press, February 6, 1976 clipping found in 1976 in Pierre Trudeau fonds, MG 26, Series O-7, Vol. 557, File 140727.1 C962 (1975-1976), LAC. This is the only negative US clipping in this file of the Trudeau papers – indicative that the Prime Minister was either not concerned about US press criticism or that there was not much of it. There are also relatively few such clippings in the pertinent files of the Department of External Affairs. For more on US press responses see Wright, 229-230.
142 See Wright, 208-213, 226-228 and also English, Just Watch Me, 316-319, who writes that Ivan Head opposed Margaret accompanying her husband, believing her to be unpredictable. One piece of favourable correspondence to the Prime Minister was from the Reverend David S. Fearon of St. Mark’s United Church in Sudbury, Ontario. The clergyman commended his Cuba visit as “positive” and wrote warmly of Castro’s efforts to improve life for most Cubans as well as Margaret Trudeau for having the courage to be “a loving human being”. See Letter from Rev. Devid Fearon to Prime Minister Trudeau, February 6, 1976 in Pierre Trudeau fonds, MG 26, Series O-7, Vol. 557, File 140727.1 C962 (1975-1976), LAC. Trudeau’s March 1 reply to Rev. Fearon in the same file indicates that Margaret received over 1200 letters, mostly approving of her “warm spontaneity.”
143 Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State no. 1810, May 6, 1976 (Unclassified) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43
from an ideological dilettantism outside the mainstream of Canadian thought and/or from the US."  

Along with the press, in the House of Commons Progressive Conservative Members of Parliament, especially former Prime Minister Diefenbaker, led the jeers against Trudeau. The architect of Canada’s independent posture on trade and relations with Cuba saw it as one thing to carry on normal relations and to further Canadian commercial interests, but quite another to be “cuddling up to Castro,” a leader Diefenbaker had grown over the years to personally despise. In a fractious debate on February 3, Trudeau’s first day back on the Commons floor, the former Prime Minister pushed Trudeau hard to disclose what he and Castro privately discussed regarding Angola, with Trudeau needling his predecessor in reply that that Canada had not changed its relations in Cuba during the 1962 missile crisis. Such attitudes clearly frustrated the Prime Minister, and he vented as such to Enders in their first meeting a month later:

there are always people in the Conservative Party who say I am mismanaging relations with the US, screwing up Cuba or something lack that, and in the NDP to say I’m selling out to the US. Somebody’s trying always to score points.

Ottawa knew that despite their surprisingly tepid response to Trudeau’s Cuba visit, President Ford and especially Secretary Kissinger were incensed over the presence of Cuban troops in Angola. Kissinger felt personally stung after having gone out on a limb to seek improved US-Cuban relations. Believing the United States could not afford any more humiliations in the wake of Watergate and the spring 1975 defeat in Southeast Asia, and with the President under pressure from Reagan and the right wing within his own party, Kissinger adopted a very hawkish posture towards Cuba that spring. In several secret meetings, he blustered about the need to “smash Cuba” or give it a “bloody nose” once the 1976 elections were over.  

Rumours regarding possible US military involvement or a renewed CIA covert

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144 Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 3186, August 6, 1976 (Secret) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43

145 For coverage of these exchanges see Wright, 222-226.


action campaign against Havana continued for several weeks before quieting down in May.\textsuperscript{148} External Affairs policy analysts in Ottawa were aware of Kissinger’s thinly veiled threats to Cuba and saw them as a serious mistake, worrying that American credibility would suffer even further should Kissinger’s bluff be called.\textsuperscript{149} Their greater concern was the erosion of superpower detente, the international development that would dominate the late 1970s.

Aware of the rumblings out of Washington, and wanting to carry forward the good will with Canada established by Trudeau’s visit, Castro communicated regularly with the Canadian ambassador and with Trudeau himself that spring and summer, recognizing that Ottawa might also act in a reverse role as Cuba’s informal mouthpiece to the United States. Late in April, Castro summoned Ambassador Hyndman for a confidential follow-up to his conversation with Trudeau on Angola. The Cuban leader repeated that his forces were counter acting those from South Africa, and that once the MPLA government in Luanda could stand on its own, Havana would withdraw its troops, a process he indicated had already commenced at a rate of 250 soldiers per week.\textsuperscript{150} This optimism was premature, and Cuban forces would remain there until the end of the Cold war, as well as in a second conflict in the Horn of Africa. Castro exchanged several private and confidential messages with Trudeau, covering Angola and other issues. In one such message sent in August, Trudeau again thanked Castro for his hospitality and for gifts sent to him via the Canadian Embassy, and noted how pleased he was at Castro’s willingness to confide in Ambassador Hyndman on important issues. Congratulating Castro on his early withdrawals from Angola, Trudeau held firmly to his position that the optimal solution was the recall of all foreign troops.\textsuperscript{151} One can only speculate whether or not Castro believed his messages would find their way to Washington. He liked and trusted Trudeau, while still

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acknowledging Canada’s closeness to the United States. In turn, Trudeau wanted to maintain Castro’s trust.

There was however, an element of intrigue and indirect messaging in Canadian-Cuban discourse that summer. Cuban Vice Prime Minister Carlos Rafael Rodriguez shared with Hyndman late in June revelations from Spanish and Guyanese diplomats that Kissinger “would never forgive Fidel Castro for Cuban action in Angola,” and had blamed Cuba for undermining his “grand strategy of balance of power and peaceful competition with the USSR.” Rodriquez expressed some optimism, shared by Hyndman, that US-Cuban normalization efforts might resume after the US election, particularly with a Democratic party win, but he repeated Havana’s standard precondition that the US President had to remove every aspect of the embargo that lay within his executive power. Rodriguez minimized the political advantages of normalization, arguing that it would restrict Cuba politically, although this might be offset by improved commercial relations with the west. Even then, he believed Cuba would still pursue close trade relations with the Soviet Union.

Western Hemisphere Bureau Head James Nutt concluded after reading Hyndman’s telegram that Rodriguez surreptitiously wanted Canada to pass this message on to the United States. Hyndman disagreed, countering that the Vice Prime Minister was privately confiding in him. To avoid undermining trust with the Cubans, Hyndman advocated transparency and prior consultation to see if they objected to relaying their views to the Americans. Replying to the Canadian ambassador, Rodriguez did not object in principle to sharing the basic content with Kissinger, provided the latter maintained confidentiality and understood that Havana was not attempting to send the United States a backchannel message. In addition, Rodriguez asked that before doing so, that Canada sanitize out his uncharitable comments about Gerald Ford’s leadership.

152 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 1481, June 28, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 4, LAC
153 Ibid.
154 Memorandum from Western Hemisphere Bureau (McNutt) to Latin American Affairs Division (T.A. Williams) “Cuba/US Relations,” June 30, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 4, LAC
155 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 1561, July 9, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 4, LAC
156 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 1753, July 29, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 5, LAC
Weighing the pros and cons of such a liaison role, the Department of External Affairs concluded that such a scenario did not serve Canada’s interests. While it had awkwardly broached the possibility of sharing these diplomatic conversations with Washington, the Department thought the better of it and concluded that Canada’s decision not to mediate had served it well with the United States, as the latter had repeatedly rejected such a Canadian role as unwanted. An External Affairs’ assessment memo stated “a go-between role would get us actively involved in relations between two arch enemies and therefore may prevent us, continuously or in specific cases from pursuing our own policies.”157 The subject of Cuba was absent from remaining senior Canadian-American interchanges, including Kissinger and MacEachen’s mid-August Washington meetings.158 Trudeau had enough at home to deal with that second half of 1976: labour disruptions, including a crippling air traffic controllers strike over the use of French, the Montreal Olympics, and the unexpected election victory of René Levesque’s separatist Parti Québécois in November. With the new Quebec government intent on a referendum on sovereignty, the national unity question would preoccupy the Prime Minister more than any other issue the following four years.

The Angolan affair was a political issue that had affected the progress of Canadian-Cuban relations and ground the US-Cuban conversation to a standstill, but it had limited impact across the 49th parallel in the purely political sphere. However, Angola touched on, and re-ignited, concerns about Canada’s civil air links with Cuba, and to a lesser degree, export controls. In the available record, American officials, including President Ford himself, paid as much if not more attention to these seemingly more routine theatres than they did the Prime Minister’s visit with Castro. It would be on issues of leasing US made aircraft, along with landing and overflight rights for unscheduled flights, that Washington expected Canadian cooperation. To counterbalance any fallout from the Trudeau visit, Canadian officials showed themselves all too keen to do so.

The long awaited regular air service between Havana and Montreal was scheduled to commence in the spring of 1976, and both Air Canada and Cubana airlines had been readying themselves since late 1975 to commence the flights. For the Cuban government in particular,

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157 Memorandum to File from Latin American Division (T.A. Williams), “Ambassador Hyndman’s Discussions with Carlos Rafael Rodriguez,” September 3, 1976 (Confidential/ Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 5, LAC
158 See the two memoranda of Conversation between Kissinger and MacEachen, August 18, 1976 (Secret) in Digital National Security Archive, Kissinger Transcripts Collection, Documents KT 02027 and KT 02029
after the symbolic Trudeau visit, this was the most important recent accomplishment in its relationship with Canada. After the Canadian government and its principal passenger carrier arrived at the conclusion that a that regular service to Cuba now made sense and would be profitable, Air Canada took some extra convincing from Trudeau himself that this should be done in order to keep the momentum between the two countries. With more Canadian tourists wanting to go to the island, and with the decline of earlier security concerns, the timing was right to proceed.

The Cuban national carrier did face one key challenge: the lack of long range aircraft. Still relying on aging turboprops, Cubana needed to lease jet aircraft from Canada to meet its agreement requirements. Air Canada agreed to provide up to three MacDonnell Douglas DC-8s that it had purchased from the American aviation giant in 1961; such aircraft were now aged and obsolete, and the Canadian airline was then phasing them out of its regular fleet. Air Canada owned the DC-8s outright, but an understanding existed that Ottawa would consult with the United States before re-exporting them to a third country. Thus, Ambassador Warren was instructed to inform the State Department about the leasing proposal. Invoking a technicality, he informed the Americans that “the Canadian government had no intention of encouraging what in effect would amount to pass-through of goods of USA origin to Cuba.” At the same time, Warren presented the view that Air Canada purchased the aircraft before the embargo, and had made many repairs and upgrades in Canada. The US Commerce Department saw the issue

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159 See Memorandum to Cabinet, “Approval of the Air Transport Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Cuba,” September 19, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 12, Vol. 4005, File 2-8-7-115, [Minister’s Office Canada/Cuba file], LAC. For a State Department report discussing Trudeau’s earlier direct intervention see Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State no. 3955, September 30, 1976 (Secret) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43 . Evidence in External Affairs and Transport Departmental files on the agreement indeed suggests Air Canada was still talking charters in 1975. For example see Letter from director, Transport, Communications and Energy Division (D.W. Fulford) to Secretary, Air Transport Committee, Canadian Transport Commission, January 23, 1975, in RG 25, Vol. 13518, File 42-8-3-1-CUBA, LAC and also Memorandum from Deputy Minister for Transport (Sylvain Cloutier) to the Minister (Otto Lang), “Re: Mr. Benson’s Letter of January 20 Concerning Canadian Charter Flights to Cuba,” February 17, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 12, Vol. 4005, File RG 12, Vol. 4405, File 2-8-7-115, LAC.

160 Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Washington DC, no. GWU-535, October 3, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 12, Acc 82-83/70, Box 9, File 650-23-8, LAC and also Memorandum from Energy, Communications and Transport (I.M. Hall) to File, “Leasing of Air Canada Aircraft to Cuba,” October 8, 1975 (Restricted) in RG 12, Acc 82-83/70, Box 9, File 650-23-8, LAC
differently, maintaining it had the right to review and licence the export, although it replied affirmatively in mid-November.\footnote{Memorandum from M.E. Butler to Deputy Minister of Transport, “Leasing of Air Canada Aircraft to Cubana,” October 22, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 12, Acc 82-83/70, Box 9, File 650-23-8, LAC. For Commerce Department approval see Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. UNTD 3153, November 18, 1975 (Confidential) in the same file.}

In the meantime, Cuba intervened in Angola, and concerns arose about the aircrafts’ usage. Canada’s agreement with Cuba restricted the passengers to civilians, and Air Canada retained inspection rights to the DC-8’s flight logs. Ottawa also sought assurance from Havana that the aircraft would not be used for paramilitary purposes. The Cubans were cagey on the latter, only offering vague promises about their “honourable intentions.”\footnote{Memorandum from Energy, Communications and Transport (I.M. Hall) to File, “Air Canada Cubana Lease,” December 29, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 12, Acc 82-83/70, Box 9, File 650-23-8, LAC} Once the presence of Cuban forces in Angola had become public, a particular concern was that two of the DC-8s had been granted permission to service the west African destinations of Liberia and Guinea.\footnote{See Memorandum from Chief, Export and Import Permits Division (Dennis Evans) to General Director, Western Hemisphere Bureau, Department of External Affairs (L.J. Taylor) “Export Controls – Air Canada – Air Cubana,” December 12, 1975 (no classification marking) in RG 12, Acc 82-83/70, Box 9, File 650-23-8, LAC} Flights so close to the conflict zone sparked concerns in Ottawa, as Canadian officials feared setting off alarm bells in the United States, especially should this fact become public. Basil Robinson reminded MacEachen that Canada traditionally opposed providing military goods to conflict zones. While he supported the Cubana lease, as well as the sale of six De Havilland Buffalo aircraft to Zaire (Congo) - which was also involved in Angola - the understanding was that Canada did not support either their direct or indirect deployment in the war.\footnote{Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Robinson) to the Minister of External Affairs (MacEachen), “Export of Transport Aircraft to Zaire and Cuba,” December 23, 1975 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.14784, File 37-22-1-CUBA, pt. 2. LAC} MacEachen concurred with the Under Secretary, and both Cuba and Zaire were subsequently asked to sign confidential notes of understanding excluding use of the aircraft for military or paramilitary use. Havana remained ambivalent, again only assuring Ottawa on January 17 “of its highest and distinguished consideration.”\footnote{Note from Cuban Embassy, Ottawa No. 5 to Department of External Affairs, January 17, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.14784, File 37-22-1-CUBA, pt. 2. LAC}

American officials did learn through Canadian newspaper reports that two of Air Canada’s leased jets could potentially transport Cubans to Angola. The State Department had serious concerns that the destination range, including west Africa and the Caribbean basin, could support subversion, especially as the flight range and seating capacity of the DC-8’s
greatly exceeded Cubana’s aged turboprops. With all this unfolding on the eve of the Trudeau trip, Ottawa realized it was in a potentially vulnerable position. Reviewing the lease agreement with US embassy staff on January 9, External Affairs officials confirmed that permitted destinations indeed included Conakry and Freetown, but emphasized that Canada was seeking further assurances from Havana that the DC-8s would not be used for military purposes. A week later, the Canadians briefed their American counterparts on Ottawa’s diplomatic note to Havana. The Americans were unimpressed, with State Department Executive Secretary George Springsteen warning Scowcroft that:

we would be derelict, however and subject to criticism were we to appear to remain indifferent to Canada’s seeming disregard for our bilateral export control in this particularly sensitive instance and if we failed to register our concern that all possible measures be taken to assure that the transfer does not lead to the use of the aircraft in connection with Cuba’s Angola operations.

Scowcroft was asked to speak directly with Head on the matter. While a record of that conversation was not located, Deputy Assistant Secretary Vine told the Canadian Deputy Chief of Mission that the United States was “disturbed” about allowing flights to Latin America and Africa. Indirectly accusing Ottawa of being evasive, Vine added “this kind of discrepancy complicates our efforts to be forthcoming on these matters.” Canada would subsequently be more forthcoming, and this fact, along with Trudeau’s communications to Castro, likely influenced the Ford administration not to escalate the issue.

The question of military uses by DC-8’s resurfaced in September, when Barbados allowed a Cubana flight en route to Luanda to refuel at Bridgetown. Hearing a rumour that Canada might follow its fellow Commonwealth state’s path by loosening destination and military use restrictions, Ambassador Enders left Under Secretary Robinson an aide-memoire stipulating in no uncertain terms that Washington would view such a development as “very

166 Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State no. 106, January 9, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43
167 Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State no. 183, January 15, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43
168 Memorandum from Executive Secretary of Department of State (George S. Springsteen) to President’s Advisor on National Security Affairs (Brent Scowcroft), “Transfer of US Origin DC-8 Aircraft from Canada to Cuba,” January 21, 1976 (Confidential) in White House Central Files, Box 7, File TA 3/CO 28 (Executive), Gerald R. Ford Library
169 Telegram from Secretary of State to US Embassy Ottawa, State no. 20199, January 27, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43
disturbing and could be a source of embarrassment in United States Canadian relations.”\(^\text{170}\) Canada kept the restrictions intact, and Enders was reassured that the flight logs were regularly scrutinized, and that the DC-8s had not been used in the African flights.\(^\text{171}\) One of them would never get the chance in any case – it would be downed on October 6 in Barbados by Cuban exiles, killing everyone on board in the worst act of anti-Castro terrorism.

If the DC-8 leases to Cuba were contentious enough, what made matters even more precarious with the United States was the unscheduled technical landings at Gander on January 13 and 14 of two Cubana aircraft en route to and from Africa.\(^\text{172}\) The Canadian government made an informal demarche to Joaquin Mas Martinez, who replaced Fernandez De Cossio as Cuba’s ambassador in mid-1975, reminding him that the ICAO rights applied only to civilian flights, and any other unscheduled landings would be subject to search. Tight lipped, the Cuban diplomat’s only comment was that he would pass Ottawa’s message on to Havana.\(^\text{173}\) Why Castro undertook such a risky action so close to the Trudeau visit is difficult to determine, although he likely believed it would either not be detected, or it would be overlooked in deference to the trip. As he had been known to do in the past, the Cuban leader again trod close to the very margins of acceptable diplomatic behaviour. After the Canadian government made its views known, there were no more such incidents, and the next Cubana flight to land in Gander would be in February, carrying Castro himself en route to the Soviet Union. By that time, the Trudeau visit had just wrapped up and at least in terms of the interpersonal relations at the top, Canadian-Cuban relations were on a genuine high.

The Americans were also aware of the unscheduled Gander landings, with CIA reports suggesting Cuba had also done so a month earlier.\(^\text{174}\) Other reports soon emerged, attributed to

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171 Memorandum from Director of Transport, Communications and Energy Division (Laberge) to Under Secretary (Robinson) Our Memorandum of September 9: Air Canada leased DC-8s to Cuba,” September 16, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 17396, File 42-8-1-1-2-CUBA, pt. 8, LAC and Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State no. 3955, September 30, 1976 (Secret) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via [http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43](http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43)
172 See Memorandum from Under Secretary (Basil Robinson) for the Acting Minister “Cuban Use of Gander Airport,” January 23, 1976 (Secret / Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 17396, File 42-8-1-1-2-CUBA, pt. 8, LAC
173 Memorandum from Under Secretary (Basil Robinson) for the Acting Minister “Cuban Use of Gander Airport,” January 23, 1976 (Secret/Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 17396, File 42-8-1-1-2-CUBA, pt. 8, LAC
“high level sources,” that hospital evacuees, presumably Cuban soldiers wounded in the fighting, had been seen at Gander. The US embassy reported hearing about up to four such flights, and sought to alert Ivan Head, then with Trudeau in Mexico, hoping to add this issue to the Prime Minister’s list of discussion topics with Castro. Trudeau was briefed, but no evidence suggests he discussed these particulars with the Cuban leader, unless he did so off the record. After a detailed investigation, External Affairs’ Security and Intelligence officials concluded there had been two, but only two flights, and that the various reports about wounded soldiers failed to corroborate. Western Hemisphere Bureau chief J.S. Nutt told US embassy officials that while ICAO rules permitted unscheduled landings at Gander for civilian flights, Cuba had rarely exercised such a right, and by doing so twice in short succession, it had made Ottawa suspicious. Nutt updated the Americans on his government’s communications with the Cuban Ambassador, opining that Castro was unlikely to permit additional incidents with Trudeau en route to Havana.

The third and final issue concerning airplanes, Cuba and Canada was again a re-visitation of an old controversy: the overflight of United States territory by Cubana airlines. As with the DC-8s and the unscheduled Gander landings, questionable Cuban behaviour triggered the problem. The Cuban national carrier was scheduled to commence its Montreal service in March, with Air Canada to follow suit two months later. On January 28, while Trudeau was in Cuba, Canadian Embassy staff met with the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, Culver Gleysteen

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175 Memorandum from Intelligence and Security Liaison to USA Division (Glen Shortliffe), no. PSI-343, February 6, 1976 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 17396, File 42-8-1-1-2-CUBA, pt. 8, LAC
176 Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State no. 280, January 23, 1976 (Secret) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43.
177 For fact Trudeau was briefed see Memorandum from Under Secretary (Basil Robinson) for the Acting Minister “Cuban Use of Gander Airport,” January 23, 1976 (Secret / Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 17396, File 42-8-1-1-2-CUBA, pt. 8, LAC For overview of Trudeau-Castro Angola talk see Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Delegation, NATO, no. GWL-101, February 9, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 9243, File 20-CDA-9-TRUDEAU-LATAM, pt. 4, LAC. That the Havana embassy was not aware of the landings being raised see Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 240, February 2, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 17396, File 42-8-1-1-2-CUBA, pt. 8, LAC
178 Memorandum from Intelligence and Security Liaison to USA Division (Glen Shortliffe), no. PSI-343, February 6, 1976 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 17396, File 42-8-1-1-2-CUBA, pt. 8, LAC
179 Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to Secretary of State no. 298, January 23, 1976 (Secret) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43
180 Memorandum from Deputy Minister, Transport Canada to the Minister of Transport, “Some Issues Arising with Canada’s Air Relations with Cuba,” January 30, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 12, Vol. 4005, File 2-8-7-115, LAC.
to discuss the forthcoming flights. Gleysteen hoped Cubana would submit its flight path request for American approval in a timely fashion, and that such flights had to avoid sensitive military areas.\textsuperscript{181} Ottawa’s position was that it was the Cubans’ responsibility to secure their own permission rights with the United States. The Canadian government believed the ICAO convention stipulated overflight obligations for signatories, but that the United States was well within its rights to designate certain areas as militarily sensitive and off limits to all foreign carriers, including those from Canada.\textsuperscript{182}

Washington had no difficulty with Air Canada crossing US territory to fly to Cuba, provided it filed its flight plan in advance with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as per US federal aviation regulations. Cubana however was viewed differently. Between 1967 and early 1976, the FAA had recorded 22 instances of Cuban aircraft flying over the United States (including Puerto Rico), ten being en route to Canada and not all having proper approvals.\textsuperscript{183} The State Department now expected Havana to give two days notice for permissions, as outlined in a 1973 US-Cuban bilateral understanding\textsuperscript{184} As John Rouse of the State Department’s Canadian Desk put it to his opposite at External Affairs, Glen Shortliffe: “if Cubana is denied overflight, he hoped the Canadian government would realize USA actions had nothing to do with USA-Canada relations and everything to do with USA-Cuba relations,” to which the Canadian responded positively.\textsuperscript{185}

On February 25, a Cubana airliner en route to Montreal, one of the two leased DC-8s, flew over the United States. The FAA was asked for clearance permission, but the request occurred in mid-flight, believing it had already had State Department permission for regular transversals.\textsuperscript{186} This was not the case, and Washington ordered a stop to further such overflights

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\textsuperscript{181} Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC, to Department of External Affairs, no. UNTD0304 January 30, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 12, Acc 82-83/70, Box 9, File 650-23-8, LAC
\textsuperscript{182} Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Washington DC, no ECT 0216, February 4, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 12, Acc 82-83/70, Box 9, File 650-23-8, LAC
\textsuperscript{183} Memorandum for the Record, “Cuban Aircraft Overflight of US Airspace,” April 15, 1976 (no classification marking) in NSC Latin American Affairs Staff Files, Box 2, Folder “Cuba – Cubana Airlines Overflights (2),” Gerald R. Ford Library
\textsuperscript{184} Telegram from Secretary of State to US Embassy, Ottawa 27828, February 5, 1976 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via \url{http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43}
\textsuperscript{185} Memorandum from USA Division (Shortliffe) to Under Secretary (Robinson), “Canada-Cuba Air Routes,” February 24, 1976 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 17396, File 42-8-1-1-2-CUBA, pt. 8, LAC
\textsuperscript{186} Fact Sheet on Cuban Commercial Overflight of the US,” annotated by President Ford February 26, 1976, in Presidential Handwriting File, Folder “Countries – Cuba”, Box 6, Gerald R. Ford Library
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until Cubana received the proper permission. The Americans decided to make Cubana wait, forcing the airline to divert its return flight on a long, circuitous path along the St. Lawrence River to Nova Scotia and over the Atlantic, thus avoiding US airspace. Assistant Secretary Rogers reminded Kissinger that as some 35 to 50 US commercial flights crossed Cuban airspace via a designated corridor daily, it would be tricky legally, let alone politically, for the United States to indefinitely postpone such approvals for the Havana-Montreal flights.

However, President Ford inserted himself directly into the issue. Furious at Castro over Angola, Ford saw denying Cubana access to American airspace as a relatively low cost way to express his displeasure, even if it meant annoying Canada. In a memo on permitting Cubana’s to cross the United States, the President scribbled at the bottom “we should not grant.” Meeting with Kissinger, Scowcroft and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on February 26, the President was adamant about such denials, even it meant American carriers had to be re-routed over the Caribbean. This overflight question is the only documented Canada-Cuba related issue receiving Presidential attention that winter and spring.

Ford’s intransigence threatened the implementation of Canada’s air agreement with Cuba. Twice in March, Cubana submitted permission requests to the FAA, without receiving a reply, even though Havana was prepared to assert its position that ICAO Article 5 made such requests redundant. Concerned about US diplomatic and commercial interests, Scowcroft outlined to Ford on March 25 that the United States was legally in a difficult position denying such permissions, and recommended quietly relenting as a technical and not political matter. Ford’s Legal Counsel Jack Marsh argued the opposite perspective and supported the President’s

187 Telegram from Secretary of State to US Embassy Ottawa, no. 46640, February 26, 1976 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43
188 Telegram from Assistant Secretary of State Rogers to Secretary of State no. 49298, “Briefing Memorandum – Cuban Overflights,” February 28, 1976 (Confidential Exdis Priority) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1976, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43
189 “Fact Sheet on Havana message of March 5, 1976” in National Security Advisor: Presidential Country Files for Latin America, Cuba (5) Box 3, Gerald R. Ford Library
191 See Informal Translation of Havana message of March 5, 1976 in National Security Advisor: Presidential Country Files for Latin America, Cuba (5) Box 3, Gerald R. Ford Library
192 Memorandum from the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Scowcroft) to President Ford, “Cuban Overflight Request,” March 25, 1976 (Confidential/XGDS) in National Security Advisor: Presidential Country Files for Latin America, Cuba (5) Box 3, Gerald R. Ford Library
refusal, even when presented with strong legal arguments to the contrary. Scowcroft did not mention relations with Canada at all, likely as Canada could be readily be criticized for implementing this air agreement at such a politically sensitive time, a time during which Sonnenfeldt described Trudeau as “politically exposed” for going to Havana. The records make it clear Ottawa was loath to push the Ford administration, likely for the same reasons.

The President stalled for a number of months, and reports about his denial of Cubana’s requests soon leaked out to the press. The Trudeau government veered clear of what it saw as a US-Cuban matter. Preparing for his April meetings with Ivan Head, Scowcroft’s intended response if asked was that the overflight requests were “under review,” and that the United States appreciated Canada’s provision of the Nova Scotia-Atlantic alternative route. The available record indicates that Head and Scowcroft did not discuss the issue. Canada put no pressure on the White House, although the Air Transport Association of America certainly did, worrying that Havana would revoke the air corridor over the island used by US carriers, which it deemed “extremely valuable and important to US air commerce.” As with the broader embargo, US business interests were overruled by larger political considerations. Ford did not finally acquiesce until November 18, when as a defeated and lame-duck President, he finally agreed to allow Cubana three round trip flights to Montreal per week over US airspace. Finally all the barriers to a Canada-Cuba air service had been lifted, allowing for the tourism boom that would develop over the following decades.


195 Memorandum from Denis Clift to President’s Advisor for National Security Affairs (Scowcroft), “Your April 21 Luncheon meeting with Ivan Head,” April 20, 1976 (Secret) in National Security Advisor: Presidential Country Files for Europe and Canada, Canada (11), Box 2, Gerald R. Ford Library

196 White House Telegram from Brent Scowcroft to US Ambassador in Ottawa (Enders) [ca, April 21, 1976] (Secret/XGDS – Eyes Only) in Documents from National Security Advisor NSC Europe Canada and Ocean Affairs Staff Declassified for Remote Archive Capt.ure (RAC) Program, Box 5, Gerald R. Ford Library

197 See Letter from Vice President of International Affairs, (Donald C. Comish) to Director, Office of Aviation, Department of State (Michael H. Styles) May 11, 1976 in National Security Advisor: Presidential Country Files for Latin America, Cuba (7) Box 4, Gerald R. Ford Library

198 Memorandum from the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Scowcroft) to President Ford, “Cuban Request for Approval of Overflight for Scheduled Airline Service,” November 18, 1976 (Confidential/GDS) in National Security Advisor: Presidential Country Files for Latin America, Box 4, Cuba (9), Gerald R. Ford Library
Gerald Ford narrowly lost the 1976 election to Jimmy Carter, whose ascent to the presidency offered the country new opportunities in domestic politics and foreign relations alike. The former Georgia Governor came to Washington as an outsider, and Americans saw him as a fresh face, a person of faith and integrity who would restore to the White House honesty and grass roots democracy following the traumas of Vietnam, Watergate and related scandals. Sensitive to what he believed was the marred image of the United States abroad, especially in the hemisphere after decades of military interventions, intrigue and support for repressive dictatorships, the new President was determined to make morality and human rights central tenets of his policies. According to historian Gaddis Smith, Carter was elected on a philosophy of “repentance and internal reform,” and had ridden a groundswell calling for a fresh, outside face and for a restoration of morality and values in American domestic and foreign policy.199

Carter’s election was also welcomed as a breath of fresh air in Ottawa, particularly during the new administration’s early months. Ironically, the southern Democrat, the product of a vastly different society than Pierre Trudeau’s Quebec, was probably the most naturally compatible American President he ever dealt with in terms of intellect and shared values. They had both had taken office as relative political outsiders, were strongly driven by ideas and principles, especially on human rights and concerns regarding Third World poverty, and shared concerns about global resource scarcity. Both leaders attempted, with ultimately limited success, to fundamentally change the precepts of their respective countries’ foreign policies, before later moving back to more familiar terrain. Both men spoke Spanish, an obvious asset in dealing with Latin American leaders. The inexperienced President recognized that the Canadian Prime Minister was now a seasoned veteran in international affairs, if not yet an elder statesman, and a potentially valuable ally.200 Carter grew to genuinely appreciate Trudeau’s perspective, confiding to his diary during the May 1977 G7 meeting: “I was surprised at the strength of Pierre Trudeau, who seems to be at ease with all the others, quite uninhibited in his expressions

of opinion, and they seemed to listen to him quite closely.”

The Ottawa embassy reported after their initial Washington meeting that the Carter-Trudeau rapport appeared to be more promising than the previous Presidents (overlooking the good Trudeau-Ford relationship).

After a second Washington visit in September, one that focussed on Latin America and the signing of the Panama Canal Treaty, Carter again wrote warmly of Trudeau in his diary, noting “Pierre and I have a very easy personal relationship. I like him very much.” Despite occasional differences, Carter’s admiration for Trudeau remained throughout his Presidency, and beyond. He would later represent the United States at Trudeau’s funeral in October 2000, sitting in close proximity to Fidel Castro (an encounter that earned the ex-President an invitation to Havana in May 2002).

Trudeau’s early impressions of Carter were equally favourable. The new President appealed to his philosophical and principled side in exploring how the game of international politics might be changed, in contrast to Carter’s Republican predecessors, who appealed more to the Prime Minister’s realist side. After the two leaders first met in Washington in February 1977, Trudeau told his British counterpart James Callaghan (with whom he was also close) by telephone that his first meeting with Carter was “enjoyable and very congenial.” Reflecting on the idealism of his early days in office, Trudeau added: “he’s a reborn Christian and he’s that in every way. He talks gently and is modest and eager. It’s a beautiful experience. I guess it happens to all of us when we’re fresh in politics.” While welcoming the focus on human rights, Trudeau betrayed his opposite realpolitik side in describing Carter’s views as “generous but not always practical,” telling the British Prime Minister that the President would have to become more “hard-nosed” in some areas, a direction in which his National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski would influence him.

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202 Telegram from US Embassy Ottawa to Secretary of State, no. 1243, March 3, 1977 (Confidential) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1977, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43
204 For an overview of the Carter-Trudeau friendship see John English, *Just Watch Me*, 324-325.
205 Record of Conversation between the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Canada on Monday, February 28, 1977 (no classification marking) in PREM 16/1168, “Prime Minister’s Visit to Ottawa in March 1977,” UK National Archives
206 Record of Conversation between the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Canada on Monday, February 28, 1977 (no classification marking) in PREM 16/1168, “Prime Minister’s Visit to Ottawa in March 1977,” UK National Archives
reverted after 1979 to a more orthodox containment position, the Prime Minister came to find him as too much of a Cold Warrior for his taste, especially his very strong anti-Soviet stand following Moscow’s military intervention in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{207} The last year of the Carter presidency paved the way for Trudeau’s even greater challenges with Ronald Reagan.\textsuperscript{208}

Trudeau was grateful that the new President seemed genuinely interested in Canada, and was eager to establish a solid relationship from the outset. Carter not only invited Trudeau to Washington for meetings in the oval office, but also opened the way for the Prime Minister to address both Houses of Congress, which he did on 22 February 1977, making the case for Canadian unity against the Quebec separatist threat.\textsuperscript{209} State Department and NSC officials advised the President of Trudeau’s sensitivity regarding Canadian sovereignty, and also recommended he disavow the notion of a “special relationship” between the United States and Canada.\textsuperscript{210} Still there was optimism that the new President would work well with the seasoned Prime Minister. While a relatively benign period in bilateral relations, what was accomplished in the four years of the Carter presidency fell short of what Ottawa and Washington had hoped, and indeed the old “special relationship” was not rekindled.

During the Carter years, Cuba was again relegated to being a sleeper issue in Canadian-United States relations, much as it had been during the Nixon presidency. The range of theatres for cooperation on Cuba shrunk as the issue faded from view and the two neighbours were more closely aligned than they had been on Cuba for some time.\textsuperscript{211} Both remained committed to

\textsuperscript{207} See John English, \textit{Just Watch Me}, 269.
\textsuperscript{208} One author who clearly places the origins of Reagan’s hardline anti-Soviet policies, including rearmament and fighting the left in Central America in the late Carter administration is CIA, NSC and Defense veteran Robert Gates. See Robert M. Gates, \textit{From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider’s Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War}, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), Ch. 9.
\textsuperscript{209} For an overview of these developments see Bothwell and Granatstein, \textit{Pirouette}, 365-376, and English, \textit{Just Watch Me}, 592-603.
\textsuperscript{210} A summary is in John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall, \textit{Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies}, 4\textsuperscript{th} edition (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008), 248-249. See also documentary references re: avoiding the term “special relationship” are in Memorandum from Department of State Executive Secretary (C. Arthur Borg) to Zbigniew Brzezinski, February 16, 1977 (Limited Official Use) and attached paper “Canadian Sensitivities,” in White House Central Files, Box CO-14, File “CO 28, 1/20/77 to 2/28/77 (Executive),” and also Memorandum from Department of State Executive Secretary (Peter Tarnoff) to Zbigniew Brzezinski, September 8, 1977 (Unclassified)” in White House Central Files, Box CO-14, File “CO 28, 6/1/77 to 9/30/77 (Executive),” Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.
\textsuperscript{211} The available documentation at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library suggests that interchange between Ottawa and Washington on Cuba was very sparse during the Carter years. The Central Files of the State Department, the most important documentary source for working level American policy and transactions, only became open for 1977 in February 2014, very late in the writing stage. The 1978-1980 files are still unavailable. This author did submit a FOIA request to that Department for records dealing with both Canada and Cuba for the Central files from
minimizing any potential friction in this regard. Regular air service between Canada and Cuba was now a fait accompli, and in March 1977, Carter loosened the US travel ban to Cuba. Concerning the hemisphere, the left in both countries shifted their focus from support for Cuba to opposing rightist dictatorships in the Southern Cone and Central America, which for the short term aligned well with Carter’s human rights emphasis. The US Justice Department finally cracked down on violent Cuban exiles, and even informed the Cubans about an impending plot in July 1977, thoroughly fed up with that community after the Cubana airliner bombing and the September 1976 assassination in Washington of former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier. One of the suspects in the latter would be the infamous Ignacio Novo, a veteran of attacks within Canada a decade earlier. 212

Also at this time, the United States re-opened its dialogue with Cuba in another effort to end the long estrangement. The two countries came closer to mending fences in 1977 and 1978 than at any time since 1961, although once again the process ended in frustration, suspicion and disappointment. Carter took this initiative, first by putting out feelers in February 1977 (which included sending a Congressional envoy to Havana, who debriefed with Ambassador Hyndman), and then a month later by taking important unilateral actions, such as lifting the travel ban and quietly ending reconnaissance flights over the island (the latter would be resumed in November 1978 after US intelligence learned that Cuba acquired new Soviet MIG 23 aircraft). American officials were authorized to explore resolutions to bilateral issues as a starter.213 Carter and his Secretary of State Cyrus Vance hoped that as trust developed, the process of normalization might be realized. These efforts met with some success, including a US-Cuban accord on maritime boundaries and fishing rights, a matter made urgent by the

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1977-1980, yielding only 5 records. In the Canadian files, Canadian-US interchanges on Cuba drop sharply from 1977 onwards, both in the more general political file series and more specific files on export controls and civil aviation. The transfer of additional files to the various archives and later declassifications may bring about some revision to these conclusions, although this appears unlikely.
United States’ new 200 mile territorial waters limit.\textsuperscript{214} Later efforts secured the release of American prisoners. Most significantly, in August 1977 Cuba and the United States exchanged Interest sections, which served as de-facto embassies that enabled direct bilateral communication. As a consequence, Washington’s need for Canadian embassy reports declined substantially.

Tragically, the same hurdles that had plagued the Ford administration’s earlier failed attempt at normalization again prevailed, although the Carter initiative lasted longer, and produced more lasting results. After a promising start, the dialogue was once again hampered by serious and essentially incompatible differences in negotiating styles and values, all reinforced by nearly two decades of animosity, disappointment and mistrust. Like Ford, Carter hoped that a gradual give and take approach would build trust and facilitate reciprocity. The Castro regime maintained its all-or-nothing approach regarding the US embargo, which Castro lambasted as “a dagger at Cuba’s throat.”\textsuperscript{215} It would permit no talk of rapprochement without the embargo’s termination. Still, Castro held out some hope based on his admiration for the new President, recalling in his memoirs that Carter stood out as “a man of ethical principles based on sincere religious beliefs” who had at least attempted to consider the Cuban viewpoint – such views from the Cuban leader were likely the product of considerable retrospection, considering what came later.\textsuperscript{216} Still, Canadian diplomats at the time reported that Castro minimized Carter’s responsibility for ongoing Cuba-US difficulties, instead blaming his officials and envoys.\textsuperscript{217}

The United States had its immovable positions as well. Castro had to renounce advocating for Puerto Rican independence and had to withdraw his military presence in Africa, which by 1978 included not only Angola but also Ethiopia. These developments steered Carter towards the hard line viewpoint of Brzezinski, who from day one mistrusted the Cubans and was skeptical, if not outright opposed to the US-Cuban dialogue. Wayne S. Smith, the former US Havana embassy staffer and later a staunch proponent of normalization, reluctantly conceded at the time that while “[the Cubans] value the normalization process with us, but they value what

\textsuperscript{215} Memorandum from Peter Tarnoff (State) and Robert Pastor (NSC) to President Carter, “Our Trip to Cuba December 2-4, 1978,” December 4, 1978 (Secret/Sensitive/Eyes Only) in DDRS Doc CK3100509746
\textsuperscript{216} Fidel Castro with Ignacio Ramonet \textit{My Life}, 405. For more on Castro’s criticism of US officials, especially Robert Pastor, see Schoultz, \textit{That Infernal Little Republic}, 322-324.
\textsuperscript{217} Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 2692, December 15, 1978 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 5, LAC
they perceive to be important political gains in Africa even more.” In the end, there was no meeting of minds. Save for the release of American political prisoners in 1979, by late 1978 the talks had stalled and it was clear there would be no rapprochement, even though officials from both sides continued to talk well into 1980. In December 1978, National Security Council Latin American expert Robert Pastor reported after several long and frustrating meetings in Havana: “[the] Cubans do not trust the negotiating process; they do not believe in a free vote or democracy;” he also lamented “we missed each other.” Adding to the mix was Cuba’s acquisition of the Soviet MIGs and evidence of its renewed support for leftist causes in the Caribbean basin. In September 1979, Carter would once again declare continuing US sanctions against Cuba to be in the national interest. He would not surrender the United States’ principal means of leverage, and the two antagonists were simply too far apart on core, non-negotiable issues.

Ivan Head and Zbigniew Brzezinski both supported putting Cuba on the agenda for the first Trudeau-Carter meetings, the first time a US President intended to talk to a Canadian Prime Minister about Cuba since Lyndon Johnson met Lester Pearson in 1966. Head promised the National Security Advisor that Trudeau would give his impressions of Cuba, as well as on southern Africa and on the Caribbean region (particularly Jamaica), where Castro’s influence loomed large, with Brzezinski informing Carter on what to anticipate. Carter was keen to hear Trudeau’s perspective, hoping that the experienced Canadian leader might provide insight that could inform him on what Washington’s next moves should be. On the Canadian side, Ambassador Hyndman, fresh from briefing Carter envoy Congressman Jonathan Bingham, enthusiastically encouraged such discourse, excited about the prospect of a renewed United

218 Quoted in Lars Schoultz, That Infernal little Republic, 320. For an overview of Smith’s experiences see Smith, The Closest of Enemies, Ch. 4-8.

219 Memorandum from Robert Pastor to David Aaron and Zbigniew Brzezinski, “Cuba Conversation,” December 19, 1978 (Top Secret/Eyes Only) in DDRS Doc CK3100519336 and also Memorandum from Peter Tarnoff (State) and Robert Pastor (NSC) to President Carter, “Our Trip to Cuba December 2-4, 1978,” December 4, 1978 (Secret/Sensitive/Eyes Only) in DDRS Doc CK3100509746

220 For the official edict see “Embargo Regulations under the Trading With the Enemy Act,” Memorandum From the President” September 12, 1979 in Public Papers of the Presidents. Online at American Presidency Project http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=31278&st=cuba&st1=embargo

221 Memorandum from Robert Hunter to Zbigniew Brzezinski “Meeting with Ivan Head on February 21-23 Visit of Prime Minister Trudeau,” February 10, 1977 (Confidential) in White House Central Files, File “CO 28, 1/20/77 to 1/20/81 (Confidential),” Box CO-14, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library

222 Memorandum from Zbigniew Brzezinski to President Carter, “The Broad Strategy for the Visit by Prime Minister Trudeau,” February 18, 1977 (Confidential/GDS), Records of the National Security Advisor, Staff Files for Europe, USSR, East/West, File “Trudeau (Canada) Visit 2/16-21/77,” Box 16, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library (Declassified to author in MR 2011-064).
States-Cuba dialogue. Hyndman believed the Cuban leader was motivated by wanting to regain some independence from Moscow, as well as to secure better access to resources for his country’s struggling economy. The time appeared right for Canada and the United States to talk about Cuba, in the hopes that finally there were closely shared goals.

It was Carter who brought up Cuba, together with Jamaica, when he and Trudeau met in the White House on February 21. With the latter discussed first, Trudeau acknowledged his admiration for Michael Manley but admitted that the Jamaican Prime Minister had failed to contain the radical left in his country. On Cuba, Carter was equally candid, admitting that the United States “had perhaps a paranoia about Cuba,” but that he hoped for improved relations. Trudeau added little else about Cuba in the meetings, although the two leaders talked about it again, along with Jamaica and Belize, while at dinner. Exactly what advice Carter took from Trudeau is uncertain, although one hint comes from a fall 1979 Special Coordinating Committee meeting on the Caribbean Basin. In that discussion, Carter acknowledged that some US officials had advised him to “knock the hell out of Manley and support a moderate group,” a recommendation he admitted considering before relenting, primarily on account of a warning from his United Nations ambassador Andrew Young about negative fallout in the region. Given Carter’s respect for Trudeau and his keen interest in Canadian views on Cuba and the Caribbean, it is not implausible that the Prime Minister’s perspective may have also been influential in halting covert plans against Manley. Carter added that “we need to treat even the small islands in the Caribbean with respect,” sentiments that the Canadian Prime Minister certainly shared.

Less than a month after Trudeau’s Washington visit, the State Department invited External Affairs officials to confer with them on the Commonwealth Caribbean, an area that the new administration believed the United States had neglected. The Americans indicated they

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223 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs no. YYGR 356 February 16, 1977 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 5, LAC
224 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 370, February 18, 1977 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 5, LAC
228 Minutes of Presidential Meeting, “Central America and the Caribbean,” October 19, 1979 (Secret) in the Carter Library version of the CIA CREST Database, Document NLC 17-83-9-8-5.
wanted a less interventionist but “more realistic and progressive policy” that would foster better relations in the region, and thought they could learn from Canada’s experiences. In these conversations, Cuba was not mentioned save a brief conversation over whether Havana was trying to divide CARICOM. Ottawa had specifically ruled out as discussing Canadian Cuba policy. Canada was also invited in May to discuss African issues, again without there being any serious discussion of Cuba.

In the meantime, the United States quietly kept Canada informed of its efforts to improve relations with Castro’s Cuba. In mid-March, Canadian embassy officials received a highly confidential briefing about the State and NSC policy review based on NSC Review 6 (the document itself was not shared), which authorized the lifting of travel restrictions, and the United States’ willingness to talk to the Cubans without preconditions. Seeking to dispel Canadian hopes that the embargo would imminently disappear, the US officials emphasized the process would begin with bilateral issues such as expropriation claims and fishery boundary disputes before the larger issues were discussed. Ambassador Enders briefed External Affairs Minister Donald Jamieson (who replaced MacEachen in the fall of 1976 and was known to have a pro-American outlook) about the fishing zone talks and the hopes for progress in other areas such as a restored hijacking agreement. Enders described Washington’s objectives as obtaining a “proper but not cordial” relationship with the Castro regime. Several weeks later, William H. Luers, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs described the initial talks to the Canadians as being “good and businesslike” and while he anticipated rapid progress on the fishing boundary matter, the Cubans were not yet ready for formal normalization negotiations. Trying to reassure the Canadians that this was not a repeat of the Kissinger linkage strategy, which made Angola a deal-breaker, Luers emphasized that for the new administration “the fact

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232 For Jamieson’s outlook see J.L. Granatstein and Robert Bothwell, Pirouette, 100.

233 Memorandum from Senior Departmental Assistant Derek H. Burney to Under Secretary Basil Robinson, “Message from Secretary Vance re Cuban/US Relations” March 24, 1977 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol.10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 5, LAC,
USA disagrees with Cuba on some things does not/not mean they did not/not try to agree on anything.”

Canada also followed progress from the Cuban perspective, both through the Swiss ambassador in Havana and Cuban diplomats themselves. Cuban Foreign Affairs Minister Isidoro Malmiércar, who had recently succeeded the long serving Raul Roa, told Hyndman that Cuba differentiated between specific bilateral agreements and normalization, with the embargo remaining the linchpin issue. Vice Premier Carlos Raul Rodriguez told the Canadian ambassador a few weeks later that he was optimistic that progress would be made with the Americans, although not in the short term, and he reported that Castro would be prepared to discuss all topics once the embargo had been lifted, but not before. Regarding Africa, Hyndman interpreted Rodriguez’s position to be that the United States could play a useful role in stabilizing the situation, which would more readily facilitate a Cuban withdrawal. Yet in a later Havana embassy report, Canadian officials observed that while Castro was ready to explain his African policy, it was not a negotiable matter, and he would not withdraw his troops under American pressure. Canadian diplomats concluded that Havana’s priorities regarding the United States in the summer of 1977 were limited to resolving bilateral issues with the United States. Without some give on either the embargo or Africa, little more would be accomplished.

Carter invited Trudeau back to Washington in September for the signing of the Panama Canal treaties, the President’s highest hemispheric priority and principal accomplishment in the region. Inviting Trudeau to join Latin American and Caribbean leaders was an acknowledgement that the United States saw Canada as a hemispheric player, despite its non-membership in the OAS. The two men had their most extensive conversation on the region, with Carter bluntly telling Trudeau that “nothing would please us more than to have you play a more active role in the Hemisphere.” In particular, Carter wanted Canadian assistance regarding human rights, nuclear proliferation and relations with the Caribbean, with Trudeau responding

234 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. UNGR 1334, April 7, 1977 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 5, LAC
235 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 978, May 4 1977 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 5, LAC
236 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 1668, July 18, 1977 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 5, LAC
that he had helped especially in the latter.\textsuperscript{238} Carter recorded in his diary that Trudeau was not negatively disposed to the idea of Canadian OAS membership, provided that such a development was a desirable one for the Latin American members.\textsuperscript{239} Anticipating that Carter might broach the OAS issue, the Prime Minister told the Americans that while not objecting in principle, Canada would not join until he was convinced “it was the right thing to do” adding the caveat that a scenario in which Canada and Latin American states coalesced together against the United States might not be in Washington’s interests.\textsuperscript{240} Cuba was naturally the prime example of such a scenario.

This time Carter and Trudeau did not discuss Cuba at all. The only indirect reference to it was Trudeau’s expression of dissatisfaction at how Washington continued to handle the extraterritoriality question, an issue the two leaders had discussed back in February.\textsuperscript{241} After that meeting, as a good will gesture towards Canada, Carter agreed to send Attorney General Griffin Bell to Ottawa to discuss the broader problem with Canadian officials, with the meeting occurring June 17.\textsuperscript{242} An External Affairs briefing paper framed the problem in terms of differences between Canada and the United States on rules, interpretations and clashes of policy, with the Cuban Assets Controls cited as just one example of the latter.\textsuperscript{243} With the US-Cuban dialogue then in progress, External Affairs officials hoped the problem would soon disappear. Bell was instructed to limit his discussions to general principles and anti-trust legislation, leaving the Cuban Assets Controls for another day – also perhaps anticipating a breakthrough with Havana.\textsuperscript{244} Bell’s meeting with Jamieson, Justice Minister Ron Basford, and Consumer and Corporate Affairs Minister Tony Abbott in Ottawa yielded few tangible results, save a broad bilateral commitment to communicate and to consider the other country in making

\textsuperscript{238} Memorandum of Conversation “President’s Meeting with Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada,” September 8, 1977 (Secret/Sensitive/XGDS). Records of the National Security Advisor, Box 35, Subject Files: “Memocons President 9/1-18/77,” Jimmy Carter Presidential Library (Declassified to author in MR 2011-036).
\textsuperscript{239} Carter, \textit{White House Diary}, 93 (entry for September 8, 1977).
\textsuperscript{240} Memorandum of Conversation “President’s Meeting with Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada,” September 8, 1977 (Secret/Sensitive/XGDS). Records of the National Security Advisor, Subject Files: “Memocons President 9/1-18/77,” Box 35, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library (Declassified to author in MR 2011-036).
\textsuperscript{241} Ibid. and Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. UNGR 711, February 28, 1977 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 9246, File 20-CDA-9-TRUDEAU-USA, pt. 5, LAC
\textsuperscript{242} Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. UNGR 711, February 28, 1977 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 9246, File 20-CDA-9-TRUDEAU-USA, pt. 5, LAC
\textsuperscript{243} Discussion Paper “Extraterritoriality; Substantive Approach to Discussions with Attorney General Bell,” [ca. May 9, 1977] (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 9215, File 20-USA-9, pt. 12, LAC
\textsuperscript{244} Memorandum from Deputy Director, USA Division (P Slyfield to Director (P. Sharpe), May 27, 1977 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 9215, File 20-USA-9, pt. 12, LAC
legislation. Jamieson repeated briefly Canada’s concerns about the Cuban Assets Controls, but noted that licencing concerns had not recently been a problem and that Canada was anticipating that the issue would disappear with the expected US-Cuban normalization efforts.

The US Attorney General was positive about the meetings, as initially had been Trudeau. However, the Prime Minister registered his disapproval of a Bell speech given in August, which he termed a “big stick approach.” Following the September meetings in Washington, Trudeau urged Ambassador Enders to “pursue this problem” with his government. As a result, the Americans offered additional meetings, but again leaving the Cuban Assets Controls off the table. No further agreements were realized when Vice President Walter Mondale visited Ottawa in January 1978, with relevant discussions again limited to antitrust matters and the uranium cartel. Ottawa received no more a concession on the sovereignty principle under Carter than under previous administrations. Problems concerning the effects of US law on Canadian subsidiaries exporting to Cuba had significantly diminished, and the few occurrences arising had a much lower profile, but from Ottawa’s standpoint the issue had not gone away.

In the early summer of 1979, Robert Pastor recommended to Brzezinski that the extraterritorial aspect of the Cuban Assets Controls be lifted, a few supported by the State Department but not by Brzezinski and the Treasury Department. In renewing the measures in September, the President added as a sop to Canada and other allies that with a Treasury licence, “foreign

245 Memorandum from Zbigniew Brzezinski to President Carter, “Meeting in Ottawa to Limit United States-Canadian Jurisdictional Conflicts,” July 25, 1977 (no classification marking) and attachment “Principles for Guidance to Follow Up Meetings of the Extraterritorial Applications of Anti-Trust laws’ both in Records of the National Security Advisor, Country Files Canada, File “Canada 1-12/77” Box 6, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library
246 Telegram from US Embassy, Ottawa to the Secretary of State 05303, June 18, 1977 (Limited Official Use) in RG 59, Department of State Central Files 1977, NARA. Available online via http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43
248 Telegram from the Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Washington DC, no. PDM-144, September 21, 1977 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 9246, File 20-CDA-9-TRudeau-USA, pt. 6, LAC
249 Memorandum from Vice President Mondale to President Carter, “Recommended Actions Resulting from my Visits to Canada and Mexico,” January 26, 1978 (Secret/Sensitive) in Carter Library version of the CIA CREST Database, Document NLC 6-7-1-4-3.
subsidiaries of U.S. firms may engage in certain non-strategic types of trade” with Cuba. 252

Probably Ottawa’s greatest disappointment over Cuba during the Carter years was that this long time irritant still remained in place.

The Carter administration was not above putting gentle pressure on allies in concerning Cuba, largely to curtail Havana’s foreign policy adventures abroad. Beginning in 1978, it began a campaign to reduce the amount of export credit to Cuba, an initiative driven by the belief that the economic benefits of Western credit financed its efforts in Africa. In 1975, Canada had extended Havana a $10 million line of credit with CIDA for the purchase of Canadian goods to complete projects, along with another $4 million in technical assistance grants; these were set to expire in March 1978. By that time, Canada had determined that Cuba’s per capita income was too high for CIDA assistance, although it remained eligible for funding specific to health care and agriculture via the Canadian University Overseas Organization (CUSO). 253 This scenario gave Ottawa a technical argument to terminate its aid flow to the island. In the meantime, more Canadians were voicing their displeasure over Cuba’s military presence in Africa. Trudeau, Jamieson, and other Members of Parliament received a growing volume of unfavourable letters during 1978 and 1979, mostly from conservative leaning Canadians, notably evangelical clergy. 254 Critical editorials began to appear in Canadian newspapers, with the Globe and Mail denouncing the Trudeau government’s aid policy towards Cuba as “morally shiftless, or morally shifty, or both.” 255 Members of the opposition also chimed in, especially Nova Scotia Progressive Conservative MP Lloyd Crouse, who sat on the Parliamentary Committee on External Affairs. Crouse raised the question of whether or not Canadian development assistance to Cuba was indirectly financing Cuban activities in Africa. Jamieson replied in a letter that Canada’s projects had been very specific and were targeted to helping the Cuban population in

252 For the official edict see “Embargo Regulations under the Trading With the Enemy Act,” Memorandum From the President” September 12, 1979. in Public Papers of the Presidents. Online at American Presidency Project  
253 For an overview see Briefing Note “Past CIDA Activities in Cuba,” [ca, March 1981] in RG 25, Vol. 11922, File 38-1-7-CUBA pt. 5, LAC,
254 There are several critical letters in the RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 29 and 30 from members of the public. For examples of letters from evangelical clergy see for example Letter from Pastor Milton Johnson, Community Baptist Bible Church and Christian Academy to Hon. Simma Holt, January 17, 1979 and also Letter from M.W. Rowan, Pastor of Whitby Bible Chapel to Secretary of State for External Affairs, Donald Jamieson, January 17, 1979 in RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 30, LAC
255 There are a number of newspaper editorial clippings in the RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 29 and 30. For the editorial see Globe and Mail, May 6, 1978. Accessed Online via Proquest  
http://heritage.theglobeandmail.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/PageView.asp
the fields of agriculture, health care and education. While perhaps easily dismissible as representing minority and right of centre views, the public chatter on Cuba’s involvement in Africa had sufficiently swelled that in the late spring of 1978, the Trudeau Cabinet undertook a review its Cuba programs and policies, comparing notes with other western allies. In mid-July, the Cabinet suspended further aid projects to Cuba, and opted to postpone any further ministerial level visits between the two countries, subject to a six month review. The wheels would soon be put in motion for an overall policy review, one that would face the interruptions of two federal elections, before finally being brought to the Cabinet in the fall of 1980.

The Carter administration was pleased that the Trudeau’s government had terminated aid to Cuba, correctly interpreting the action as a signal of its displeasure with Cuban foreign activities but also more importantly, as a response to growing domestic criticism. Washington suspected this was a temporary measure, anticipating that Ottawa would likely resume aid programs to Cuba if other OECD community nations did so. A CIA report identified that almost every country had terminated financial aid to Cuba, but little had changed regarding normal commercial relations. By late 1978, Canada had been relegated to third place among non-communist countries for trade with Cuba, after Japan and Spain. Pastor suggested in October that the United States officially request aid demarches from its allies, while still reassuring them Washington was not asking for a total cessation of normal trade, which would

257 For the comparative review request see Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Havana no. GSL-417, June 2, 1978 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 29, LAC and response from Havana no. YYGR 1357, June 3, 1978 (Confidential) telegrams in the same file. For the public protest re Cuban Africa policy see Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs no. YYGR 1418, June 10, 1978 (Confidential) – also in the same file.
258 Memorandum signed by Secretary of State for External Affairs (Jamieson), “Ministerial Visits to and from Cuba,” [July 1978], (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 8638 File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 29, LAC. Unfortunately the Cabinet discussion record has not been cited due to the fact that as of this writing, the Library and Archives Canada have yet to release any Cabinet Conclusions after 1976. There is an excerpt of the July 1978 meeting in Draft Memorandum for Cabinet, “Relations with Cuba,” July 31, 1980 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8639, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 31, LAC
259 Memorandum from Helene L. Boatner, Regional and Political Analysis (CIA?) to National Security Council (Robert Pastor) March 15, 1979 (Secret) in Carter Library version of the CIA CREST Database, Document NLC 24-82-2-3-0
be rejected out of hand. Carter’s briefing documents for the 1979 G7 Summit in Tokyo
repeated these points, with the President to ask the other leaders “to avoid such preferential
treatment as aid, credits and government guarantees for Cuba.”

The main thrust of these efforts took place in the fall of 1979. By that time, Pierre
Trudeau was out of office, having lost the May 1979 federal election to Joe Clark’s Progressive
Conservatives. As the latter had won only a minority government, it would be short lived; in
December, it would lose a non-confidence motion over the federal budget, triggering another
election that facilitated Trudeau’s return to power with his third majority government in
February 1980. During the summer of 1979, Brzezinski advocated a renewed effort to portray
Cuba as a hemispheric security problem, citing the presence of a Soviet brigade and Havana’s
support for Marxist revolutions in Grenada, and Nicaragua. While the US moral suasion on
credit influenced countries such as Japan, Canada’s new Prime Minister held his ground. In
early October, Carter wrote Clark concerning the Soviet brigade in Cuba, which he termed a
destabilizing influence in the Caribbean and Central America. The brigade incident turned out
to be an embarrassing farce for Carter, although it also incited Castro, then hosting the Non-
Aligned Movement meetings, to virulently denounce the west and praise the Soviet Union.
Consequently, Carter signed Presidential Directive 52, calling on the United States “to
contain Cuba as a source of violent revolutionary change.” As part of this directive, the
United States implemented Pastor’s advice of a year earlier, issuing a formal demarche to

261 See Memorandum from Robert Pastor to David Aaron and Zbigniew Brzezinski, “OECD Aid to Cuba”, October
5, 1978 (Secret/GDS) in Records of the National Security Advisor, Country Files Cuba, File “Cuba 10-11/78” Box
13, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.
262 Memorandum from Henry Owen to President Carter, “Tokyo Summit,” June 22, 1979 (Confidential) in DDRS,
Doc. CK3100114698
263 See Memorandum from President’s Advisor for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to Secretary of State
CREST Database, Document NLC 23-52-6-4-9. See also Memorandum from Robert Pastor to Zbigniew
Brzezinski, “Economic Leverage on Cuba,” [ca. August 22, 1979] (Secret/Sensitive) in Carter Library version of
the CIA CREST Database, Document NLC 15-8-6-1-0.
264 Letter from President Carter to Prime Minister Clark, October 1, 1979 (no classification marking) in RG 25,
Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 5, LAC
265 For the US-Canadian consultations see Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassies
10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA pt. 5, LAC and also no. GSP-246, October 24, 1979 (Confidential) in the same file.
A sanitized version of Presidential Directive 52, “US Policy to Cuba,” October 4, 1979 (Secret/ Sensitive) is online
at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library website
http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/pddirectives/pd52.pdf. The section on the US demarche efforts to
western allies has been sanitized in the current declassified version.
Canada and other western allies to punish Havana and Moscow for their Third World adventurism by reducing credit.

Seeking to align its response with those of leading western allies, Ottawa instructed its diplomats to discreetly inquire of their hosts to confirm if they were also approached by the United States and if so, their intended response. Gary Harman, who succeeded Hyndman in the Havana post late in 1977, opposed terminating all credit to Cuba. While acknowledging American concerns about Cuban behaviour, Harman responded that Canada could better serve “western interests” by staying the course. The Conservative government was divided on Cuba. They had ridden the crest of opposition that drove Trudeau to terminate aid. A December 1979 policy paper noted that Ottawa “sympathize[d] with the USA desire to make Cuba ‘pay’ for its behaviour.” Yet as Under Secretary Allan Gotlieb advised Flora MacDonald, the new Minister of External Affairs, “restrict[ing] official or private credits would be contrary to our policy of the last twenty years regarding the maintenance of normal commercial relations with Cuba.” MacDonald concurred, and was fully prepared to tell President Carter as such when he came to Ottawa for his first scheduled official Canadian visit during the first week of November 1979. That meeting would never occur. With the seizure of the US embassy in Iran that same week, Carter stayed in Washington; subsequent crises over Afghanistan, Clark’s electoral defeat, and the US presidential election, which Carter would lose badly to Ronald Reagan, all meant that the Georgia Democrat never came to Canada during his presidency.

In the meantime, as US-Cuban relations moved back to familiar territory, Canadian-Cuban relations declined significantly, as least in terms of politics, even as trade, export credits and tourism all continued relatively unabated. While disapproval of Cuban involvement in Africa was a central element in this decline, it was by no means the only one. Several contemporaneous developments re-ignited suspicions for the Canadian government and public

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266 Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 2362 October 30, 1979 (Secret/ Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA pt. 5, LAC
268 Memorandum from Under Secretary for External Affairs (Gotlieb) to Secretary of State for External Affairs (MacDonald) “American Demarche Proposing Restriction on Financial Credits to Cuba,” October 31, 1979 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA pt. 5, LAC
269 The Cuban issue does appear in the Briefing books for the aborted Carter visit to Ottawa. See Memorandum from Secretary of State for External Affairs (MacDonald) to Prime Minister Clark, “USA Demarche on Cuba,” November 8, 1979 (Secret) and attacked briefing note “ in RG 25, Vol. 9300, File 20-USA-9-CARTER, JIMMY, LAC
alike that Havana’s penchant for subversion remained alive and well. In early January 1977, five Cuban diplomats were expelled from Canada for espionage, and a year later, a series of Cuban intelligence operations directed both at Canadians in Cuba and at Canada itself led Ottawa to tighten visa requirements for its diplomats, an action the Cubans resented. Late in November 1978, Trudeau and Jamieson both received Fernandez De Cossio, the former Ambassador and now Vice Premier of Cuba, who had returned to Ottawa at Castro’s behest to review the state of Canadian-Cuban relations. Jamieson told him he wanted to believe in Cuban good will, but it had evidence that Cuban officials had directed these inappropriate activities against Canada.  

Offenders were to be declared persona non grata, and would not gain future access to Cuba’s embassies or consulates in Canada. On the more general level, De Cossio believed bilateral relations had declined significantly on account of “misreading one another’s actions.” Jamieson concurred that relations were “less positive” and that the public mood in Canada had soured on Cuba because of its involvement in Africa, with some Canadians now inclined to believe the worst about Cuba’s actions and intentions on that continent, as serving the goals of the Soviet Union.

Along with African and Cuban intelligence activities, Canadian-Cuban relations were not helped by signals that Havana was courting the separatist-led government in Quebec. Early in 1979, six Cuban officials intent on attending the opening of the Carrefour Cultural Quebec-Cuba, a centre promoting ties between Quebec and Cuba, failed to secure visas from Ottawa, sparking complaints by several Quebec Cabinet ministers. Correcting press reports, Under Secretary Gotlieb informed Jamieson that the visas had been not been refused outright, but the Cubans had withdrawn their applications after failing to provide proper notification and itinerary details. David Korth of the Latin American Division told Carlos Alzugaray, Cuba’s Consul General in Montreal, that proper protocols had not been followed, and to illustrate his point in a

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273 Telegram from the Department of External Affairs to the Canadian Embassy, Havana no. GSL-443, March 7, 1979 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 30 LAC
hypothetical example, he argued Canada would not send a delegation to a “Canada-Matzanas Cultural Association” without assurance that Havana approved the visit.\(^{275}\) Showing astonishingly poor tact, the Cuban diplomat compared his country’s approach to Quebec as no different than that of France, adding also that Cuba shared the province’s “Latinidad” and that it needed to consider its own interests with the impending sovereignty referendum.\(^{276}\) Havana’s moves to cement closer ties with Quebec’s separatist government, with Trudeau’s sensitivities on the national unity issue well-known, seemed highly inconsistent for a government wanting to reverse a slide in its relations with Canada.\(^{277}\)

After the nine month Clark interlude, Trudeau’s return to power was welcomed by Castro, who hoped bilateral relations could be reset and return to the high point four years earlier. Early in March 1980, the Cuban President sent the returning Prime Minister such a message through the newly appointed Cuban Ambassador to Ottawa, Dr. Carlos Amat.\(^{278}\) As Castro insisted the message be personally delivered to him, Trudeau would not receive it for an astonishing three months, as Amat had difficulty securing an appointment with the Prime Minister.\(^{279}\) Castro had disliked the Clark government, which he saw as too pro-US, and the state controlled press described it as “an evil that lasted only nine months.”\(^{280}\) Havana had been incensed by Flora MacDonald’s December NATO speech labelling Cuba as a Soviet surrogate meddling in the affairs of other countries, a statement that blindsided and greatly embarrassed Ambassador Harman.\(^{281}\) Yet despite Castro’s fond memories of the “golden years” of Canadian-

\(^{275}\) Memorandum from Latin American Division (David Korth) to Under Secretary (Gotlieb), “Conversation with Cuban Consul General,” no. GSL 253, January 31, 1979 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 30 LAC
\(^{276}\) Memorandum from Latin American Division (David Korth) to Under Secretary (Gotlieb), “Conversation with Cuban Consul General,” no. GSL 253, January 31, 1979 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 30 LAC
\(^{277}\) The remainder of the records on this are somewhat sketchy. I did not find references to this incident in the Trudeau papers, or in the External Affairs records after February 1979. An Access to Information request for RCMP records on the relations between Cuba and the Quebec cultural centre yielded no records.
\(^{278}\) Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Havana no. GSL-1079, June 13, 1980 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 8639, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 31, LAC
\(^{279}\) Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Havana no. GSL-1078, June 12, 1980 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 31, LAC
\(^{280}\) For commentary on Cuban Press criticism of the Clark government see Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 483, February 26, 1980 (Restricted) in RG 25, Vol. 8639, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 31, LAC
\(^{281}\) See Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 2873 December 21, 1979 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 30, LAC. For Harman’s instructions see Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Havana no. GSP 304. December 14, 1979
Cuban relations, the climate in 1980 could not have been more different than five years earlier. Canadian-Cuban trust had eroded even before Trudeau’s brief stint on the opposition benches. Internationally, detente was now dead, and US-Cuban relations were slipping backwards. Canada was again potentially out of step with the United States, and in April, External Affairs sought Ambassador Harman’s perspective on how a modest improvement in Cuban-Canadian relations might be received in Washington, as Ottawa had already been “somewhat diffident” to the Carter administration on the credit demarche. When Harman finally responded in early June, he advised against consulting with the United States in this regard, as US-Cuban relations had drifted even further apart, spawned primarily by an emigration crisis that spring.

Canada played a small role in assisting the Americans during the so-called Mariel Boatlift, a mass emigration effort commencing in April 1980 when several thousand Cubans wanting to leave their country swarmed the Peruvian embassy. Reversing his initial prohibition on emigration, Castro announced that whoever wished to leave for the United States could do so via the Cuban port of Mariel. Complicating matters further, he extended the offer to Cuban prisoners and psychiatric patients, declaring that the United States could have Cuba’s “chicken thieves.” Ambassador Amat denounced the refugees to External Affairs officials as “lazy elements who could not live in a society of workers.” The crisis escalated when on its own initiative, the Florida Cuban-American community organized a boatlift in May to bring over estranged relatives, and US immigration authorities were soon overwhelmed by the arrival of 115,000 Cubans over the next two months. Ambassador Harman suggested that Castro had manufactured the crisis, possibly to provoke some form of US action to draw attention away

(Restricted) and for his complaint about embarrassment see Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 0001 December 31, 1979 (Confidential) both in the same file.


283 See Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 3225, June 6, 1980 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8639, File 20-1-2-CUBA pt. 31, LAC and the reply, Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy Havana


286 Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy Havana, no. GSL-745, April 24, 1980 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8721, File 20-15-CUBA pt. 1, LAC. Castro himself had denounced them as “worms and parasites” – see Wayne Smith, The Closest of Enemies, 212

from the embarrassment of such a mass exodus.\textsuperscript{288} Monitoring the Cubans’ plight, the Canadian press, especially the \textit{Globe and Mail}, called on Ottawa to welcome some of the refugees.\textsuperscript{289} External Affairs officials recommended taking a limited number of Cubans once they had reached a third country.\textsuperscript{290} Negotiating with Peru, Canada would take on humanitarian grounds 300 Cubans via Costa Rica.

Fearing that Castro might incite mobs against the US Interests Section for taking so many émigrés, Wayne Smith, now its Head, asked Canada on May 14 to send Havana a demarche warning against attacks on western embassies, as well as to publicly express concern for the refugees’ well-being and to send Canadian diplomatic observers within the vicinity of the US facility. Ottawa agreed to the demarche, but hesitated on the latter two points, fearing risks to Canadian foreign service officers and that Havana would see American authorship in any critical statements.\textsuperscript{291} In early June, Kenneth Curtis, Enders’ successor as US Ambassador in Ottawa, thanked Mark MacGuigan, Trudeau’s new External Affairs Minister, for cooperating in this regard. Yet Mariel exposed the limits of Canadian mediation. Havana did not appreciate the demarche, and Harman added that Washington no longer needed Canada as an intermediary in such circumstances.\textsuperscript{292} Mariel once again brought to the surface the difficult dance Ottawa had to do to maintain cordial relations with Cuba in tricky circumstances, when Canada’s greater interest was naturally to please the United States.

With the Liberals now back in power, the External Affairs Department finally returned to its much delayed review of Canadian–Cuban relations. Cuba was certainly not a priority for Trudeau in 1980, whose attention was focussed on defeating the Quebec referendum, addressing

\begin{thebibliography}{99}

\bibitem{288} Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 1101, May 5, 1980 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 5, LAC
\bibitem{289} Memorandum from Latin American Division (RV Gorham) to Under Secretary (Gotlieb) “Events at Peruvian Embassy, Havana,” April 8, 1980 (Confidential/ Canadian Eyes Only) in RG 25, Vol. 8721, File 20-15-CUBA pt. 1, LAC
\bibitem{290} Memorandum from Under Secretary (Gotlieb) to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, “Cuban Asylum Seekers in Peruvian Embassy, Havana,” no. GSP-153, April 14, 1980 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8721, File 20-15-CUBA pt. 1, LAC
\bibitem{291} Memorandum from Director of Latin American Division (Roger P. Gilbert) to Under Secretary “USA Interests Section – Havana,” May 14, 1980 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 5, LAC. For Smith’s recollection of the Mariel crisis, described in considerable detail, but without mention of Canada, see Chapter 8 of his memoir, \textit{The Closest of Enemies}. The ex-diplomat meets out significant criticism to both Castro and the Carter administration.

\bibitem{292} Memorandum from Director of Latin American Division (Roger P. Gilbert) to the Canadian Embassy Havana “USA Interests Section,” June 5, 1980 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 10851, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA pt. 5, LAC. For Harman’s comments see Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 1318, May 28, 1980 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8721, File 20-15-CUBA, pt. 2, LAC
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energy and economic issues, and the emerging new Cold War. Harman advised against ignoring Cuba, reminding his Department that its importance was disproportionately large for North-South and East-West issues. In July 1980, a Cabinet submission advocated re-examining the 1978 decisions that terminated development aid and ministerial exchanges, suggesting that the latter be restored. MacGuigan was uncomfortable with this suggestion and requested revisions, sparking an inter-departmental consultation process. The Minister scribbled on a Gottlieb memo in early September “in general I think we should have an arm’s length relationship with Cuba with trade but no aid.” The Cabinet decided to resume ministerial visits, provided that Canada clearly stood to gain from such an event. In not resuming aid, MacGuigan argued that Cuba’s appeal in the Third World and the Commonwealth Caribbean made it now a greater threat to Canada’s security than before, and that providing Cuba with aid would only strengthen its capacity for foreign involvement. CUSO aid in agriculture and health was to be phased out. This decision aligned nicely with the United States, whose officials acknowledged that they counted on Canadian support when it came to security concerns in the Caribbean.

By the fall of 1980, Canada’s relationship with Cuba, and the latter’s with the United States, had returned more or less back to where they were in 1968, although not completely. Canadian trade and tourism with Cuba continued uninhibited as legacies of that golden age of 1973-1976, but the warmth and enthusiasm were long gone. The United States embargo remained firmly in place, and Washington once again saw Cuba as a subversive force in the hemisphere, although with their respective Interest Sections the two adversaries did occasionally talk. In the waning days of the Carter presidency, and especially once Ronald Reagan arrived in the White House, Cuba quickly reverted to its old status as the bête noire, with attention turning to the situation in Central America. As Lars Schoultz would describe it,

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297 Memorandum from Department of State Executive Secretary (Peter Tarnoff) to Zbigniew Brzezinski, “US Policy towards the Caribbean,” January 15, 1980 (Secret) in Carter Library version of the CIA CREST Database, Document NLC 15-28-5-2-8.
Cuba-United States relations reverted back to square one.\textsuperscript{298} Despite these disappointments, by 1980 Cuba was not longer a significant issue between Canada and the United States, and would not be for the rest of the Cold War. By cooperation and understanding the boundaries, the North American neighbours had well managed their disagreement.

\textsuperscript{298} Schoultz, 362-363.
Conclusion and Epilogue: To the End of the Cold War and Beyond

The main story of Canadian-United States cooperation regarding Cuba stops here at the end of 1980. The reality of Canadian-Cuban relations was a more or less accepted fact in Washington since midway through the Kennedy presidency, and was no longer a point of contention. Canadian policy towards Cuba, and its consideration of the American factor, remained essentially intact. Even as late as the early 1990s, Canada still refused to sell Havana goods that were either strategic or American made, although the available record suggests that by then there were few such concerns.\(^1\) Canadian trade with the island continued apace, with exports from 1982-1986 averaging around $340 million a year and imports at $65 million, the latter having more fluctuations.\(^2\) Canadian-Cuba air traffic, long seen in the United States as a potential avenue of subversion, had also become largely a non-issue. Most flights now carried so-called Canadian “snowbirds” seeking a winter holiday, in numbers these would climb into the hundreds of thousands annually by the 1990s. In the 1980s, Canadian law enforcement personnel still inspected Caribbean bound East Bloc aircraft refuelling at Gander to verify that weapons were not being transported for support to leftist insurgents in Central America.\(^3\) The Cuban Assets Controls remained in place, with its extraterritorial reach an unresolved irritant. That issue was remained relatively quiet for the remainder of the Cold War before making its unwelcome re-emergence in the 1990s under a different international order. Unlike the 1960s and 1970s, Cuba-centric protest and subversion from both left and right were no longer significant issues across the 49th parallel. Much of the Cuban exile community had moved away from violence to political lobbying, with the Cuban American National Foundation, formed in 1981, becoming a powerful interest group over the next quarter century. Activists on the left still held up Cuba as an example, but by the 1980s they had turned their attention instead to helping Nicaragua’s leftist Sandinista government, as well as refugees fleeing Central American violence. Instead of being actively pro-Castro, they were vocal critics of repressive right wing

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\(^3\) For the inspection at Gander inspection of an East German aircraft see Telegram from Department of External Affairs to Canadian Embassy, Havana no. GSC-0461, March 5, 1982 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 8639, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 32, LAC,. For US security concerns about a proposed Memorandum of Understanding allowing the annual number of Aeroflot flights refuelling at Gander to increase from 45 to 350, see State Department Briefing Memorandum, “Gander MOU,” March 28, 1984 (Secret) in Peter Sommer Files, Folder: “Canada: February-March 1984,” Box 90552, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library
military regimes and US complicity in supporting them. The Canadian and American governments alike certainly noted the presence of these voices, but they did not become a significant source of bilateral friction.

While the question of Canadian relations with Cuba was now long settled as an issue in its own right, some of the patterns discussed continued onwards after 1980 and into the post-Cold War period. Washington’s biggest obsessions regarding Cuba – its ties to the Soviet Union, and its support for the left in the hemisphere, reignited from a smoulder to a full flame after 1979, as Cuba inspired and supported Marxist governments acceded to power in Nicaragua and Grenada, and a like-minded insurgent group sought to do the same in El Salvador. Fearing that Cuba, and ultimately the Soviet Union, were again seeking to lay down stakes across the hemisphere, developments in Central America and the Caribbean provide the clearest example of the Carter administration’s 1979 switch in focus from human rights, which had greatly annoyed many of Washington’s hemispheric allies, back to traditional Cold War national security realpolitik. After losing the November 1980 election to Reagan, Carter resumed military aid to El Salvador, despite several widely publicized atrocities perpetrated by its government, as he did not want to be remembered as the President who had “lost” the country to communism.

Cuba and Central America vaulted immediately to the very top of Reagan’s foreign priorities from the day he took office in January 1981. Fighting communist influence in the region was a near obsession for Reagan throughout his eight years in the White House, sparking the Iran-Contra scandal that nearly cost him his presidency, except that this time the American public was in no mood for a second Watergate. The now declassified discussion records of Reagan’s first two National Security Council meetings lay bare his administration’s hard ideological line, subordinating human rights concerns to stopping communism and preventing “a second Cuba.” Cuba was promptly identified as “the source” of the region’s troubles, and the new administration sought to keep Havana off guard about how the United States might respond, even as it privately recognized that it was not in a position politically to undertake a

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new Vietnam-type war south of the Rio Grande. During Reagan’s first official visit to Ottawa in March 1981, Secretary of State Alexander Haig explained to External Affairs Minister MacGuigan that the United States was not intending to intervene in the region, but expressed Washington’s concern over Soviet and Cuban support for the Salvadoran insurgents through Nicaragua. Hinting at the possibility of another embargo, Haig suggested that on the matter of wheat sales to Nicaragua “[the] US might have to be more callous in this matter than it would be possible for Canada to be” It would take several years, but Reagan eventually did impose an embargo against Nicaragua in the spring of 1985, although it carried neither the same political baggage and controversy, nor ultimately did it have the longevity, of its Cuban counterpart.

As with its Cuba policy, neither the last Trudeau government nor its Progressive Conservative successor under Brian Mulroney favoured a Nicaraguan embargo (Canada would actually extend Managua credit). Neither did they support the Reagan administration’s efforts to topple the Sandinista regime by means of the so-called “Contras,” a group of US trained and funded anti-communist Nicaraguan exiles that closely replicated the anti-Castro efforts of two decades earlier. Mulroney wrote years later that even though he was admittedly very pro-American and close to both Reagan and his successor, George H.W. Bush, Cuba and Central America remained areas he agreed to disagree with the United States. Reagan himself would later have to admit he could not even get much of his own American public to support and understand his viewpoint on Central America.

As with the Cuban revolution, the Canadian government believed that the Central American insurgencies were a product of social and economic injustice. At the same time, it also recognized that the United States had legitimate security concerns in the Caribbean Basin. Canadian policymakers, in a fashion similar to Cuba twenty years ago, believed that the Soviet

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bloc was using this scenario for its own purposes.\textsuperscript{10} They also believed that as with its African interventions, Cuba had its own ideological motivations for supporting regional insurgencies, and it did not need Moscow’s prompting.\textsuperscript{11} In the spring of 1981, Trudeau and Castro exchanged letters on El Salvador, a correspondence initiated by the Canadian Prime Minister in response to mounting domestic pressure to do something to stop that civil war and its horrific human rights abuses. Reminiscent of their 1976 Havana conversation about Angola, Trudeau indicated to Castro that he had already spoken to Reagan about the conflict in Ottawa that March, and delicately reminded Castro that Canada opposed any external support for warring parties in the region. Appreciating Trudeau’s desire for balance, the Cuban President coined such thinking as idealistic, and indicated his government would support ”the decision and line of the popular forces in that country” and that its actions depended on the United States ending its support for “the repressive forces.”\textsuperscript{12}

Trudeau reaffirmed his opposition to militarizing the region in an April 28, 1983 meeting with Reagan, one day after the President had given a passionate plea to Congress for support in Central America. Revealing Trudeau’s oscillation between idealism and realpolitik, the Prime Minister gave Reagan a mixed message, in telling him “while he did not want to encourage the USA to be militaristic, he recognized the USA could act as a great power in its own backyard,” and he had “no philosophical objections” as such.\textsuperscript{13} Also rejecting Trudeau’s no arms approach, the State Department briefing for Reagan clearly distinguished between “support for legitimate governments and Cuban support for insurgencies.”\textsuperscript{14} Canadian policy documents retained the view that “where Canadian policy differs is in regards to some of the means employed to achieve stability in the region,” and that it opposed arming sides or external intervention.\textsuperscript{15}

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\textsuperscript{11} Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR466, February 17, 1982 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 22007, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 6, LAC
\textsuperscript{12} Letter from Prime Minister Trudeau to President Castro, April 4, 1981 and Letter from President Castro to Prime Minister Trudeau, June 17, 1981, both in RG 25, Vol. 8638, File 20-1-2-CUBA, pt. 32, LAC
\textsuperscript{13} Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Washington DC to Department of External Affairs, no. UNGR 4230, May 2, 1983 (Secret/Cdn Eyes only) in RG 25, Vol. 12504, File 20-AMRICA CEN, pt. 4, LAC
\textsuperscript{14} Department of State Briefing Paper, “Central America,” [ca. April 22, 1983] (Confidential) in Counsel to the President, Series IV: Michael K. Deaver Investigation, Box 92370, Folder “Canada-Deaver Investigation 4”, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library
\end{flushright}
The strident rhetoric from Washington, and Havana’s renewed zeal for revolution in Latin America stoked fears in Ottawa that Cuba and the United States were on a dangerous collision course that could trigger a direct US military intervention. Canada continued along the lines voiced in Trudeau’s letter to Castro, and of earlier periods, in acknowledging Cuba’s concerns but also those of the United States. In a starkly different context from the rumours of US-Cuban rapprochement under Ford and Carter, Canadian officials anxiously sought details concerning American policy in the late fall of 1981. Rumours abounded about a possible overt confrontation between the United States and Cuba, and Havana was on heightened military alert.\textsuperscript{16} Canadian officials also worried that as an alternative measure, Washington might tighten embargo measures against Cuba, generating new headaches for Canadian subsidiaries following several years of relative quiet. American officials, notably former Ottawa Ambassador Thomas O. Enders, who was now Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, promised to keep Canada and the allies informed, and reassured Ottawa that any US policy changes would not be aimed at allies.\textsuperscript{17} To Ottawa’s relief, there were no substantial new measures impacting on Canada until a decade later. This did not stop Trudeau from putting forward a bill, which died on the order table but was subsequently passed by Mulroney in December 1984, to address concerns over foreign extraterritoriality.

Even with Trudeau still as Prime Minister, documents suggest that Ottawa’s position with the Cubans on Central America was bereft of idealism and was surprisingly realist and conservative, albeit substantially more moderate than the ideologically charged rhetoric coming

\textsuperscript{16} For Cuban mobilization see Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 2857, November 2, 1981 (Secret) in RG 25, Vol. 22007, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 6, LAC. The US did not seemingly keep Canada informed about all its initiatives in the region, a point that frustrated Canadian officials, especially Ambassador Allan Gotlieb in Washington. See Alan Gotlieb, \textit{The Washington Diaries 1981-1989} (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2006), 45. The US was coy about a secret meeting in Mexico between Secretary of State Haig and Cuban VP Carlos Rafael Rodriguez in November 1981, although the Mexicans would so confirm it. See Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 3431, December 29, 1981 (Secret) and Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 0069, January 11, 1982 (Secret). The Canadian embassy in Havana also learned from Soviet officials that the USSR had secretly approached the US about the 1962 Kennedy-Khrushchev accord, and that the US had reassured Moscow it did not intend to invade Cuba, with the Soviets concluding the main target was Nicaragua. See Telegram from Canadian Embassy, Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 3129, November 26, 1981 (Secret) in the same file

\textsuperscript{17} Memorandum from Assistant Deputy Minister for Political Affairs (J.H. Taylor) to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (MacGuigan), “Cuba-United States Relations,” no. GSC-749, May 10, 1982 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 22004, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 7, LAC. When Ambassador Gotlieb met Enders in Washington early in 1982, he was astonished at how hard line he had become on Central America, although he deemed him much brighter than many others in the Reagan administration. See Gotlieb \textit{Washington Diaries}, 24.
out of Reagan’s Washington. Trudeau’s approach did little to please a growing and vocal center-left coalition of churches, students, unions, academics and entertainers that James Rochlin coined “counter-consensus interest groups.” These individuals and groups loudly criticized Ottawa’s timidity in confronting the United States for supporting dictatorships that abused human rights. To some degree, they were reminiscent of the original Fair Play for Cuba chapters (before they were overtaken by the Trotskyites); in other aspects they were like the Venceremos groups, having members that chose to volunteer in Nicaragua, although this time their motivation was as likely to be strictly humanitarian or religious as opposed to revolutionary (although there were a few of the latter as well). One can fairly conclude that these segments of Canadian society viewed Cuba sympathetically, and were inclined to see socialism as a valid solution to Third World inequalities. The United States government was well aware that Ottawa faced such domestic pressures, but unlike the 1960s, it was not excessively alarmed, and it faced enough similar voices at home.

In an internally praised 1982 assessment of US-Cuban tensions and Canadian interests, James Bartleman, Canada’s Ambassador in Havana from 1981 to 1983, argued that ideological differences were paramount to understanding the conflicts. In his view, Havana had a sense of mission and of paranoia about the fate of socialism in the hemisphere, a view that mirror imaged that of the United States concerning the spread of communism. Bartleman added that while Canada had successfully weathered its relationship with Cuba for 23 years, “the existence of further governments on the Cuban model would seriously affect Canadian national security.”

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18 See James Rochlin, Discovering the Americas: The Evolution of Canadian Foreign Policy Towards Latin America (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994), 128-131. Former Latin American Affairs Division head John W. Graham, lobbying on Central America exceeded the anti-nuclear and anti-apartheid movements, both of which were very active in the 1980s. Interview with John W. Graham, Ottawa, September 29, 2009.


20 Very early on, Reagan NSC staff were commenting on the influence of such groups, See Memorandum from NSC Staff to President’s advisor for National Security Affairs (Richard V. Allen), “Canada Trip,” March 2, 1981 (no classification marking) in Edwin Meese Files, Box CFOA 160, Folder “Canada (1), Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. Also Department of State Briefing Paper, “Central America,” [ca. April 22, 1983] (Confidential) in Counsel to the President, Series IV: Michael K. Deaver Investigation, Box 92370, Folder “Canada-Deaver Investigation 4”, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library

21 Telegram from Canadian Embassy Havana to Department of External Affairs, no. YYGR 466, February 17, 1982 (Confidential) in RG 25, Vol. 22007, File 20-CUBA-1-3-USA, pt. 6, LAC. The internal praise comes from
Thus Canada, like the United States, was not keen to see a second Cuba in the hemisphere. External Affairs officials instructed Bartleman to validate Havana’s call to address injustices but to warn the Cubans against pushing the United States too far, as the latter had:

> legitimate Security interests in the Caribbean and Central America interests which Cuba appears to deny or at least regard as insignificant and that maintenance of such a Cuban posture could encourage the development of a dangerous situ”

After Jose Arbesu, who handled Canadian affairs for the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs told Bartleman that Cuba was committed to supporting revolutionary movements in the hemisphere, the Ambassador reiterated Canada’s ongoing opposition to external interference, and hinted that such thinking would hinder bilateral relations, adding that the USA should “not be goaded beyond the limits of its endurance.” Cuba stubbornly continued to support revolutionaries in the western hemisphere, as well as in Africa, for the remainder of the Cold War. One consequence on the Canadian-Cuban front was that the aid programs terminated by the Trudeau Cabinet in 1978 remained off the table, and were not resumed until after Jean Chrétien’s Liberals took power late in 1993.

The Americans conceded that like most of its Western European allies, Canada was once again less than enthusiastic about the United States’ hemispheric policy. Ottawa would align itself with Great Britain’s Margaret Thatcher, Reagan’s closest ally and a leader with whom both Trudeau and Mulroney regularly butted heads, in opposing the October 1983 US invasion of Grenada, an intervention that eliminated that island’s Marxist government and brought about the first incident of open combat between American and Cuban troops - the latter being invited by Grenada to defend its revolution. Both the Trudeau and Mulroney governments also became strong advocates of regional multi-lateral efforts to resolve the conflicts, particularly the 1983-1984 Contadora initiative involving Mexico, Panama, Venezuela and Colombia. Washington

forwarding documents in this file, with Minister Mark MacGuigan wanting this cable widely circulated in the Department.

24 Department of State Briefing Paper, “Central America,” [ca. April 22, 1983] (Confidential) in Counsel to the President, Series IV: Michael K. Deaver Investigation, Box 92370, Folder “Canada-Deaver Investigation 4”, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library
understood and tolerated this Canadian position, but remained skeptical that this mediation initiative, and the 1987 Arias plan, would result in a satisfactory outcome from its viewpoint.

The United States certainly influenced Canadian policy on Cuba and Latin America during the 1980s, constraining the last Trudeau government somewhat from following more zealously its reformist inclinations for the Third World. With the conservative and pro-American Brian Mulroney, the opposite would occur. Acting on principle but also to preserve a semblance of Canadian autonomy in foreign policy, Cuba and Nicaragua offered a tried and true theatre in which Canada could follow a different, but not opposite course from the United States. Unlike in other cases, the Mulroney government would not embrace American policy in this sensitive area as it was unpopular with most Canadians. In fact, as External Affairs Latin American veteran Richard V. Gorham put it, the Prime Minister wanted Canadian-Cuban relations to be “correct and cordial.”25 However, Mulroney would adopt a cool and aloof posture in doing so, and Kirk, McKenna and Wright all describe his Progressive Conservative government’s approach to Cuba as being “studied or benign neglect,” out of deference to the United States.26 With excellent Canada-United States relations, and a continental free trade agreement in particular as his primary foreign policy objectives, Mulroney had no intention of ruffling American feathers by drawing too close to Cuba. He admitted years later that the American factor dominated his thinking and rendered out of the question a meeting with Castro:

> My reasoning was simple. Relations between Canada and Cuba functioned very well, and our trade was growing. With Reagan and Bush in office for most of my tenure, I felt it would be a needless provocation on Canada’s part if I were to take a page out of Trudeau’s book and travel to Havana just to poke the Americans in the eye.27

As this study suggests, Mulroney fundamentally misread the reason for his predecessor’s trip.

The close friendships that Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush had with Mulroney meant that at no time did either Republican President pressure him to change Canadian policy. Still both men, especially Bush, who was more vocal on this issue with Mulroney than was Reagan, were unequivocal in their hostility to Fidel Castro. In the March 1985 Quebec summit meeting, Cuba policy per se was not discussed. However, Central America was, and in that context, Mulroney shared with Reagan surprising comments Castro had made to NDP leader Ed

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25 Kirk and McKenna, 127, 132.
26 Kirk and McKenna, *Canada-Cuba Relations*, Ch. 5 and also Robert Wright, “Northern Ice: Jean Chrétien and the Failure of Constructive Engagement in Cuba,” in Robert Wright and Lana Wylie ed. *Our Place in the Sun*, 196-197
Broadbent on a recent visit – namely that Reagan “was a great public figure who could produce results” on arms control. In their Ottawa meetings of February 1989, Bush and Mulroney talked about Cuba on two occasions. After seeking to encourage Canadian support on Central America, Bush clearly disabused the Prime Minister regarding any “bold move” with Havana, and castigated the Cuban leader for being “way behind Gorbachev in reforms,” as well as being an ongoing security threat and a violator of human rights.” Bush made the elimination of Moscow’s support for Havana an important prerequisite for progress in US-Soviet relations. Evidence suggests Mulroney may have served as a warm-up act for Bush’s Malta December 1989 summit with the Soviet leader. Reporting to Bush at a working dinner on his own Moscow visit in mid-November, the Canadian Prime Minister recalled challenging senior Soviet officials as to “why should they put so much money in that dopey little island;” Bush would himself make an almost identical, although more diplomatically worded challenge to Gorbachev at Malta week later. External Affairs Minister Joe Clark told the author years later that as a general subject, Cuba came up very rarely in high level Canada-US discussions with the Americans. As the Cold War was collapsing, he recalled quietly offering to Secretary of State James Baker Canadian help on improving US-Cuban relations, with the latter responding that domestic political issues precluded such an effort. In a briefing note from the early days of the Clinton presidency, further mediation efforts were clearly ruled out.

28 See Memorandum of Conversation, “Restricted Meeting with Prime Minister of Canada,” March 18, 1985 (Secret) in NSC Executive Secretariat, Box 90903, Canada Trip 1985, Ronald Reagan Library. Released as Mandatory Review Case M-329/1

29 Memorandum of President’s Meeting with Prime Minister Mulroney February 10, 1989 (Confidential) in National Security Council Files, Presidential Memcons, Folder: “February 1989” George Bush Presidential Library. Available Online at http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/pdfs/memcons_telcons/1989-02-10--Mulroney%20%5B1%5D.pdf and also President’s Luncheon Meeting with Prime Minister Mulroney, February 10, 1989 (Confidential) in same folder. Also online at http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/pdfs/memcons_telcons/1989-02-10--Mulroney%20%5B2%5D.pdf


31 Interview with Joe Clark, Trinity College, Toronto, October 27, 2010

While Baker’s political concerns were not identified by name, the Secretary was almost certainly referring to the Cuban American National Foundation, by then a prominent expatriate lobby group with close ties to the Republican Party, including the Bush family. This group rivalled the pro-Israeli lobby as one of the most effective single issue foreign policy lobby groups in the United States, with its disproportional political clout. Canada would continue to receive regular criticism from its members, and from its champions on Capitol Hill such as the archconservative Senator Jesse Helms, well into the 1990s.

The Cold War ended, the Soviet Union pulled up its stakes from Cuba, and then disappeared itself. As a consequence, the Cuban economy collapsed, plunging the country into what became known as “the Special Period.” The Central American conflicts also ended between 1990 and 1992. Thus the traditional *raisons d’etre* for the United States standoff with Havana had disappeared. However, the United States remained resolute that its policy regarding Cuba would not change without progress by the latter on human rights and democratization. Driven significantly, but not entirely, by the sway of Cuban American voters in Florida and to a lesser extent, New Jersey, the Bush administration and its successors reframed its justification for continuing the embargo as a source of pressure on Castro to liberalize. Through the remainder of the Mulroney years and after the 1993 return to power of the Liberals under Jean Chrétien, Canada again shared the two American objectives of more democracy and improved human rights in Cuba, although once again it rejecting the means. Fidel Castro deeply resented other governments, including Canada, telling it what to do in these regards, as was illustrated plainly following Chrétien’s less than successful April 1998 Havana visit. In a mood contrasting sharply with the good feeling generated when Trudeau was in Havana more than two decades earlier, the discussions on human rights during the Chrétien trip generated so-called “northern ice” between Canada and Cuba. It also generated new criticism by cynics at home and by the American media and legislators alike, seeing it as a pointless exercise in engaging an unmovable regime.

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34 The influence of the Cuban American National Foundation during this period is covered well in Daniel P. Erikson, *The Cuba Wars: Fidel Castro, the United States and the Next Revolution*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2008), Ch. 5. See also Bardach, esp. 140-150.


Ironically, in this post-Cold War era, the US embargo not only remained in place, but for Canada and other allies, it got worse. Spearheaded by Republicans in Congress, but supported by George HW Bush and Bill Clinton, the view in Washington was that with the Cuban economy in desperate shape after the loss of its Soviet sponsor, an opportunity existed for the United States to bring sufficient pressure to bear on Havana either to topple the regime or to push it irreversibly on the road to liberalization. The process began with the *Cuban Democracy Act* of 1992 (more commonly known as the Torricelli bill, after the New Jersey Senator who sponsored it), followed by the notorious *Cuban Liberty and Solidarity (Libertad) Act*, known as the Helms-Burton Act, which President Clinton signed in March 1996 following the Cuban government’s shoot down of several aircraft flown by anti-Castro Cubans near its territory. The latter statute handed virtually all authority for US Cuba policy to Congress, as the law specified that the United States would not restore either diplomatic nor commercial trade relations with a Cuba led by either Fidel or Raul Castro. As well, the Torricelli and Helms Burton laws both added extraterritorial measures to punish American subsidiaries involved in the Cuba trade, with Helm-Burton threatening draconian penalties, including the barring from entry into the United States of Canadian mining company executives. Canada’s relations with Cuba in itself remained a non-issue with Washington, but such legislation to a significant degree revived the problems of the 1960s and 1970s.

The 1992 Torricelli Bill led the Mulroney government to issue its first ever order under the *Foreign Extraterritoriality Measures Act*, which it passed in December 1984 as an update to earlier legislation to specifically prohibit Canadian companies from complying with foreign legislation. The Chrétien government amended the Act to directly address the Helms-Burton measures. Thus Ottawa maintained its bipartisan tradition of opposing such American intrusion into the Canadian economy. When Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy visited Washington shortly after the Bill, he again sought to be balanced in his criticism of the February 1996 shoot downs, the exiles’ actions, and Havana’s human rights record, all the while urging President Clinton to postpone implementing the most intrusive aspects of the act, the so-called Title III that allowed Americans to sue current investors in once expropriated property – which included foreign mining operations in Cuba.37 Chrétien and Clinton at least developed a good

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personal rapport, but when they met in Washington in April 1997, little progress was made on Helms Burton and Cuba, with the two leaders once again agreeing to disagree.\footnote{Bartleman to PMO: Report on PM/President Discussions Held at White House, April 9, 1997 (Secret) in “Briefing Book for Rt. Hon Jean Chrétien: Official Visit to Washington, April 7-9. 1997,” [April 1997] (Secret) Department of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Development (DFAIT) Access to Information Release 2000-00432.} Despite the “northern ice”, the Canadian-Cuban relationship carried on, and did revive somewhat as Chrétien resumed development aid resumed and as Canadian tourism to the country continued to grow through the 1990s. Politically, neither Chrétien nor his successors Paul Martin Jr. and Stephen Harper appear to have engaged Presidents George W. Bush or Barack Obama on Cuba, as far as is known. The revolutionary government of Fidel Castro and his successor Raul Castro, and American obstinacy toward it, have far outlasted predictions. Canada continues on its path of routine trading and engaging Cuba as it has since 1959, still without the blessing of its powerful neighbour, but now with minimal difficulty.
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