

to analyse the factors motivating Cuban foreign policy today, one must initially go back to the origins of the Castro Revolution.

2. To no small degree foreign policy is an expression of the history of a country, and Cuba is no exception to this general rule. Many of the circumstances that helped to bring Castro to power also helped to launch the Revolution on an antipathetic course vis-à-vis the United States. There was an element of United States involvement in the chronic poverty of a large part of the population under the old economic system, with its dependence on a single crop grown in the main by absentee landlords, and with the dominant position occupied by American-controlled companies. The corruption and the brutality of the Batista dictatorship were not hard to associate with the United States in view of the relatively cordial relations prevailing between the two countries during that period. And perhaps pervading all this was the feeling in the minds of many of the revolutionaries that despite the release from Spanish rule in 1898 one form of colonialism had merely been exchanged for another. In the case of Castro and some of his followers, this feeling was further buttressed by a degree of latent anti-Americanism which was brought to the surface by what was regarded as United States failure to lend the young revolutionary régime any kind of positive support in its early days.

3. A basic principle underlying the foreign policy of most nations is the safeguarding and promotion of the national interest. Under Castro the nurture and preservation of the Revolution has been synonymous with the national interest. Radical political, social and economic changes have been brought into being at a very rapid rate which have completely transformed Cuban society, destroying the old way of life and creating a new power elite. In the process American interests have been severely damaged, primarily through such measures as the Agrarian Reform and the expropriation of American-owned companies. As a consequence of Castro's impatience to press ahead with his reforms and his sensitivity to any form of criticism, coupled with the adverse reaction of the injured party, abetted by the press penchant to denigrate and pass hasty judgment, there has been a steady deterioration in relations which has made the possibility of any understanding between the two countries extremely difficult. Furthermore, the régime has found it expedient to have at hand a foreign enemy to pillory for the hardships and dislocations that tend to accompany revolutionary changes.

4. The Cuban view of the United States as a potential threat to the survival of the Revolution has been intensified because of the American predominance in the affairs of the hemisphere. Moreover, the rather cautious and indecisive policy followed by the State Department during the first two years of Castro's rule did not seem to improve the situation. In the minds of the revolutionaries, and particularly the more extreme elements who could play on this theme, if the United States was not for the Revolution, ergo it was against it. Added to this there was at times an attitude of sour unreasonableness which one moment accused the United States of economic colonialism for the limitations of the sugar quota system and the next moment charged economic aggression when the quota was cut in 1960.

5. In the circumstances the door was opened for Soviet overtures which the Russians were not slow to follow up. Contacts established through such visits as that of Mikoyan to Cuba in early 1960 were succeeded later in the year by the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and most of the states of Eastern Europe. Nor was this a wholly one-sided operation, for the Cubans were by that time anxious to put out the welcome mat themselves, having almost reached the breaking point in their relations with the United States. They badly needed outside political support for their Revolution, as well as food and manufactured goods for the country's expanding socialist programme in view of the disruption in the normal sources of supply resulting from the U.S. embargo. In due course a whole series of agreements were concluded on trade, military supplies, economic assistance, and technical and cultural exchanges. Of especial significance was the Soviet bloc willingness to take up the cancelled