

Second, the US government was being heavily lobbied by American interests in Guatemala, and notably by the United Fruit Company, to do something about anti-American trends in that country. The Administration may have judged it politically unwise to prevaricate, given the intense media barrage mounted by the company and its friends in the press and in Congress. Failure to act in such circumstances risked the accusation of being "soft on communism", an unpleasant prospect in the political conditions of the day.

Third, American policy-makers may well have believed what they were saying about Arbenz. United States statements and behaviour are consistent with the hypothesis that US policy-makers were prisoners of a doctrine that equates anti-American political and economic nationalism, and social reform at the expense of entrenched élites and foreign interests, with an international communist conspiracy.

## **2. Cuba, 1958-62**

With the passage of time, Khrushchev's consolidation of power, and the accumulation of a certain amount of experience in Third World diplomacy, Soviet policy in the Caribbean Basin came to display somewhat greater confidence. The first opportunity in the region that the Soviet Union had to display this new self-assertiveness came with the advent of the Castro regime in Cuba.

After several years of decay, the Batista regime collapsed in the face of a small but growing guerrilla insurgency led by Fidel Castro and a massive upswell of urban and rural unrest. Castro, leading the only armed force enjoying broad popular legitimacy, and benefiting from broad support from other opposition groups, quickly assumed power. Initially, he promised to abide by the 1940 Constitution, denied plans for action against foreign interests, and eschewed open criticism of the United States. The US Government fairly quickly recognized the Castro regime, the Eisenhower Administration having initially adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

The Cuban Revolution was a popular response to gross inequities in the distribution of income, to the oppressiveness and manifest corruption of the previous government, and to the domination of Cuban politics and the Cuban economy by US interests. There is no evidence of significant Soviet involvement in Castro's accession to power. Indeed, the Partido Socialista Popular (PSP), the Cuban Communist Party, had at times collaborated with Batista in return for relative freedom of operation and it had failed to support the