

Diplomacy and Human Rights in Cuba

From the Black Spring to
the liberation of the political prisoners

Gabriel C. Salvia (Editor)



Konrad
Adenauer
Stiftung





Diplomacy and Human Rights in Cuba

From the Black Spring to the liberation
of the political prisoners

Gabriel C. Salvia (Editor)



Konrad
Adenauer
Stiftung



CENTRO PARA LA APERTURA
Y EL DESARROLLO DE
AMÉRICA LATINA



Christian Democratic
International Center



IN MEMORY OF LAURA POLLÁN, GLORIA AMAYA,
ORLANDO ZAPATA TAMAYO AND WILMAN VILLAR MENDOZA.

KIC

Visiting address: Munkbron 1
Stockholm, Sweden
Postal address: Box 2356
S-103 18 Stockholm
Tel. + 46 8 723 25 71
www.kicsweden.org

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Río Guadiana No. 3
Col. Cuauhtémoc
06500, México, D.F.
México
Tel. +52 55 5566 45 11
Fax +52 55 5566 44 55
kasmex@kas.de
www.kas.de/mexiko/es/

CADAL

Reconquista 1056 piso 11°
1003 - Buenos Aires
República Argentina
Tel. +54 11 4313 65 99
Fax +54 11 4312 47 41
comunicacion@cadal.org
www.cadal.org
www.puentedemocratico.org

Editorial design and production

La Décima Letra S.A. de C.V.
Calle Hidalgo 61 oficina 5
Col. San Jerónimo Lídice
10200, México, D.F.
México
contacto@ladecimaletra.com
www.ladecimaletra.com

Cover image: cartoon by Betto,
El Espectador daily newspaper, Colombia,
courtesy of the author.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	9
PROLOGUE <i>Jorge Elías</i>	11
INTRODUCTION <i>Gabriel C. Salvia</i>	15
EXPERIENCES IN THE SWEDISH EMBASSY IN HAVANA <i>Ingemar Cederberg</i>	33
IMPRESSIONS OF A LATIN AMERICAN DIPLOMAT <i>Anonymous</i>	45
CUBAN EXCEPTIONALISM <i>Handbook For Diplomats Of The Democratic Community</i>	61
INTERVIEW WITH JORGE EDWARDS, AUTHOR OF “PERSONA NON GRATA” <i>Gabriel C. Salvia</i>	85
THE PRECEDENTS OF COMMITTED DIPLOMACY <i>Pablo Brum and Mariana Dambolena</i>	91
APPENDICES	113
Request For Recognition Of The Cuban Civil Movement, January 19 th , 2004.	113
Declaration “The Exercise Of Rights Is No Crime”, March 18 th , 2010.	115
Recommendation To The Organization Of American States (OAS) With Support Received From Cuba, April 13 th , 2011.	119



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In almost a decade working for the respect of fundamental democratic freedoms in Cuba, especially for the right of citizens to freely elect their authorities through multi-party elections, the Center for the Opening and Development of Latin America (CADAL) has found, in the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, a sensitive and committed partner to support the spread of awareness of the situation lived daily within the region's last remaining dictatorship and of the efforts of those brave activists who promote a political opening through nonviolent methods.

This is the seventh book about Cuba published by CADAL with the support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and in this way both institutions contribute to the further growth of the shared principles of "Liberty, Justice and Solidarity".

Regarding this present edition in English, it has been possible thanks to the generous collaboration of Camden Luxford, student at Deakin University in Australia, and Hernán Alberro, Programs Director of CADAL. Cam enthusiastically translated the most part of the book, except for two chapters that were originally in English, and Hernán was in charge of its final editing.

Finally, I would like to thank Micaela Hierro Dori and Tristán Rodríguez Loredó, who took the first pictures of the book in the hands of democratic figures in Cuba.

Gabriel C. Salvia
General Director, CADAL
Buenos Aires, February 21st, 2012



PROLOGUE

Jorge Elías

In the words of George Orwell, “one does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship”. That sentence, from his novel *1984*, published in 1949, was to prove true on a remote Caribbean island – Cuba – a decade later. At that moment, the first day of the year 1959, the world looked kindly on the feat of the bearded, idealistic boys who had defeated the loathsome regime of Fulgencio Batista. The political left at that time, especially in Latin America, glimpsed a light capable of shining brighter than Moscow’s and encouraging a greater emphasis on African decolonization movements.

In a region plagued by dictatorships, nobody thought the Cuban revolution would turn into that which it had fought and destroyed: a dictatorship. Batista fled to the Dominican Republic, where he found shelter in the hospitality of his intimate friend Leónidas Trujillo, another dictator. In Miami, the Cuban diaspora celebrated this turn of events. It was a new dawn, until, at midday, unexpected clouds swiftly covered the sky. New generations of Cubans, now victims of abuses, expropriations, nationalizations, agrarian reforms, and prison, began to leave their footprints on Florida’s beaches.

We always, according to Zygmunt Buaman, “suspect that the truth of the matter is opposite to the one we have been told”. In this case, Orwell had been prophetic: one dictatorship replaced another. For more than half a century, the power incarnate in Fidel and Raúl Castro has, in order to perpetuate itself, taken advantage of an error committed in 1962 by US president John F. Kennedy: the imposition of a trade embargo against the island, condemned since 1992 by the United Nations. Playing the victim, the only communist regime of Latin America, and one of the few on the planet, has appealed to the principle of non-intervention in order to resist those who dare question its contempt for human rights and freedoms.

On an island closed until further notice, who, if not foreign diplomats, would lend a hand to those who still feel victimized by this Big Brother called State or Revolution. They were anonymous heroes until, thanks to the efforts and perseverance of Gabriel Salvia, the Center for the Opening and Development of Latin America (CADAL) instituted the Award for Committed Diplomacy in Cuba, granted according to the votes of Cuban democrats.

The achievements of those diplomats, narrated in this, an important volume rich in experiences and courageous acts, reflect the capacity of human beings to step into another's shoes in order to help them, though they may speak another language, profess another religion, or be of another color. That capacity goes beyond the job they fill, and springs from the will and sensitivity of each of them, as well as the strength of their democratic convictions. Those who could simply have enjoyed a pleasant stay in paradise have worked according to their principles. Most did so alone and without network. What better reason to award the silent labor of a body reserved in its expression and discreet in its approach?

This book, neatly compiled as a brief of what happened and a warning of what may happen, is a tribute to those who honor life above their profession and their career. Where one or a thousand voices demand freedom from tyranny of whatever stripe, those who enjoy that prerogative in their own countries shouldn't hesitate in raising up to join them. On the sunburnt skin of the Cubans, the entelechy of the New Man, embraced by intellectuals of an alleged progressive bent, has nourished itself on executions, confinements, censure and other cruelties. The judgment of Orwell was proven true, even though it was not directed at any particular location outside of Europe.

In 2003 the Cuban regime, lauded in the region by a regressive left that justifies human rights violations and a lack of freedom while living comfortably outside the island, jailed more than 75 dissidents (among them 27 journalists) and shot three discontented citizen who tried to flee in a raft.

These tragic events coincided with another, no less unfortunate, which Fidel Castro would use as a screen: the start of the Iraqi War. Many rose up against this excess, hiding behind the presumed connection between those who had fallen in disgrace and the vile “Yankee imperialism”. Had it been true, not one of the imprisoned would have been freed in subsequent years.

In that era, sadly remembered as the Black Spring of Cuba, the German Ambassador in Havana, Hans-Ulrich Lunscken, organized a reception for the diplomatic corps and other authorities of the island and another, later, for civil society, the occasion being his country’s national day. Not a single governmental official dared set foot in the gardens of the ambassador’s residence that day. And so Ambassador Lunscken, who passed away in 2008, instituted “diplomacy of canapés”, joined by other European governments. It involved inviting all Cubans, whatever their political flag, to celebrate the national days of their countries.

In the eyes of Rabbi Nilton Bonder, author of *Our Immoral Soul*, “a law is legitimate if it does not contain an interest in its own maintenance, in its intact body; but openly expresses a preference for disobedience (if that happens to mean respect) to the detriment of obedience (if that is needed of respect)”. Rarely has diplomacy had a chance to engage in a just cause, as it has in Cuba, be it at the expense of not following the law, of being disobedient.

In the beginning, the Greek city-states sent their best orators to foreign countries. They were emissaries more than ambassadors. The Byzantine emperors began to send instructions not only to represent the Empire’s interests in the courts of barbarian despots, but also to prepare reports on the domestic situation in those countries. Diplomats, recognized as such in the Congress of Vienna of 1815, didn’t have a good reputation: they bribed courtiers, fomented rebellions, supported the political opposition and intervened in the internal matters of their host countries. They were “honorable spies”.

If the steam engine, telegraph, airplane and telephone contributed to a change in routine, the Internet has now made its own contribution. The airing, by WikiLeaks, of a quarter of a million confidential communications has sped this change. The United States pays the price of a lack of caution, painted as “theft”, whose consequences precipitate the reinvention of diplomacy as an appendix to defense and development.

There are few dictatorships left. None are good, be they of the left or the right. Facing this fact, one should exercise one’s memory a little and realize that anyone, living on a land that sees no other but the moon, lacking any opportunity of exit beyond a shark-infested sea, would ask for help.

In *The Lord of the Rings* J.R.R. Tolkien says: “Many that live deserve death. And some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them? Then do not be too eager to deal out death in judgment. For even the very wise cannot see all ends.” The Castros should have read it long before the Black Spring of Cuba and other brutalities carried out in the name of the Revolution.

Read now of the achievements of foreign diplomats who, drawing on the simple fact of shared humanity, have had the courage to put on the shoes of others with the same intention as CADAL encourages in awarding them: to not leave the Cubans alone, or barefoot.

INTRODUCTION

Gabriel C. Salvia

The democratic governments of Latin America should firmly speak out, denouncing the political repression in Cuba and ceasing to support the participation of that government in international bodies, as they have done in the discredited United Nations Human Rights Commission. Their diplomatic missions in Havana should constantly meet with Cuban dissidents and human rights defenders.

We cannot cross our arms and resign ourselves to a reality such as this one. Nobody should harbor illusions as to the character of the Cuban government. We cannot romanticize any aspect of this cruel system, or justify in any way the abuses committed by Fidel Castro.

*José Miguel Vivanco, regional director of Americas,
Human Rights Watch (HRW):*

In recent times, since the illness of Fidel Castro and the continuist succession of the revolution in the hands of his brother Raúl, superficial analyses have prevailed which, with honorable exceptions², fail to grasp fundamental questions of the Cuban reality. Among the few who have come to know the real Cuba, living there for several years in the first decade of the 21st century, are the two diplomats who contributed with writings to this book.

Ingemar Cederberg, one of the winners of the Award for Committed Diplomacy in Cuba 2009-2010³, shares the experiences of his five years of service in the Swedish Embassy in Havana, complementing the testimony of a Latin American diplomat who is published anonymously, reflecting

1 José Miguel Vivanco, prologue of the book "Las Damas de Blanco: Las mujeres de los prisioneros de la Primavera Negra de Cuba", CADAL/Fundación Konrad Adenauer, 2006: http://www.puentedemocratico.org/libros/nota.asp?id_nota=1497

2 Pablo Díaz de Brito, "Cuba, muy lejos del reformismo necesario", La Capital daily newspaper, Rosario, Argentina, April 25th, 2011.

3 "A Dutch, a Swedish and a German receive the 2009-2010 Award to Committed Diplomacy in Cuba", Democratic Bridge (CADAL), December 10th, 2010: http://www.puentedemocratico.org/english/nota.asp?id_nota=3797

what it can mean for a career official to take a humanitarian stance, however discreet, against the complicity of his or her government with the Cuban dictatorship.

Also in this book, a summarized version of the chapter “Cuba” from the Handbook for Diplomats published by the Community of Democracies; an interview with the pioneer of “committed diplomacy” in Cuba, the Chilean Jorge Edwards, author of the best-seller *Persona Non Grata*; and a discussion of the historical precedents of humanitarian work by diplomats, beyond the limits of their professional duties, in the hands of Pablo Brum and Mariana Dambolena.

The book’s appendices include the most relevant petitions championed by CADAL’s Democratic Bridge Project, between 2004 and this volume’s publication.

Award for Committed Diplomacy in Cuba

Harald Edelstam, Allen “Tex” Harris⁴, Enrico Calamai, Dwight Fulford⁵, Johannes Marré, Elisabeth Demonte, James Cheek⁶, and Karl-Anders Wolter are some of the foreign diplomats who stand out for their humanitarian labor during the military dictatorships in the Southern Cone. If the first three cases are the most well known (Swedish Edelstam in Chile, American Harris in Argentina, and Italian Calamai in Chile and Argentina), the task of preserving the memory of what happened during the “years of lead” in the Southern Cone is bringing to light other cases worth remembering.

⁴ Jorge Elías, “Maten al cartero: Posdata del asedio a la prensa durante las dictaduras militares del Cono Sur”, CADAL, 2005, pp. 42-45: http://www.cadal.org/libros/pdf/Maten_al_Cartero.pdf

⁵ Robert Cox, “Human Rights and Diplomacy”, Buenos Aires Herald, August 21st, 2011: <http://www.buenosairesherald.com/article/76576/human-rights-and-diplomacy> [paid subscribers]

⁶ Gabriel C. Salvia, “James Cheek: La historia poco conocida de un diplomático comprometido”, Democratic Bridge Project (CADAL), 5 de junio de 2011: http://www.puentedemocratico.org/articulos/nota.asp?id_nota=4118

The remembrance of committed diplomacy as practiced in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay during this tragic period morally obliges these countries' current democratic governments to implement, in their foreign relations, an active state policy with regards to the international defense and promotion of human rights: "because we were victims, we must not forget the current victims"⁷.

Obviously, in Latin America the priority is to promote political opening in Cuba, where a one-party regime, whose laws expressly convert fundamental rights and liberties into crimes, has governed for more than half a century⁸.

In the case of Argentina, we find something that has been deliberately excluded from the remembrance of systematic human rights violations during the 1970s and 1980s: Cuba was an acknowledged accomplice of the military dictatorship in Argentina⁹ yet nevertheless, instead of receiving strong condemnation, it currently enjoys Argentina's complacent support¹⁰.

For this very reason, remembering the importance of gestures of international solidarity during the Southern Cone's military dictatorships, CADAL's Democratic Bridge Project came into being as an initiative for the international promotion of human rights, starting within its own region by supporting the efforts of the non-violent civil opposition in Cuba and seeking a voice in the decisions of governments, organizations, and civil society groups in Latin America¹¹.

⁷ Héctor Timerman, "El ex preso Kirchner y la cuestión cubana", Debate magazine, Argentina, January 23rd, 2004.

⁸ Ricardo M. Rojas, Los Derechos Fundamentales y el Orden Jurídico e Institucional de Cuba, CADAL/Fundación Konrad Adenauer, 2005: http://www.puentedemocratico.org/libros/Los_Derechos_Fundamentales.asp

⁹ Kezia McKeague, "Unusual alliance: Cuban-Argentine relations in Geneva, 1976-1983", CADAL Documents, Year IV, Number 50, March 10th, 2006: http://www.cadal.org/documents/nota.asp?id_nota=1746

¹⁰ Gabriel C. Salvia, "Bonafini, ejemplo extremo de la politización y la corrupción conceptual de los derechos humanos", Puente Democrático (CADAL), 15 de junio de 2011: http://www.puentedemocratico.org/articulos/nota.asp?id_nota=4142

¹¹ About Puente Democrático (Democratic Bridge): <http://www.puentedemocratico.org/english/default.asp>

One of the most successful activities of the Democratic Bridge Project has been the implementation of the Award for Committed Diplomacy in Cuba, which has been awarded in the periods 2003-2008¹² and 2009-2010¹³. The prize highlights the work of accredited foreign diplomats in Havana who have finished their missions, recognizing those that were characterized by their gestures of solidarity to the island's democrats and their committed action in the face of human rights violations in Cuba.

The greatest possible number of democratic figures in Cuba was consulted by telephone and e-mail. The winning diplomats were selected based on the number of votes they received, as well as the diversity of groups that nominated them. The actual awarding of the prize, a plaque, is conditional on the acceptance of the award by the diplomat or their respective ministry.

In Buenos Aires, on the sixth anniversary of the crackdown of dissidents known as the Cuban Black Spring, CADAL awarded the Prize for Committed Diplomacy in Cuba corresponding to the period 2003-2008. The winners were: Daniel Gromann, former charge d'affaires of the Polish Embassy in Havana; Stanislav Kázecky, former first secretary of the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Havana; Michael Parmly, former head of the United States Interest Section in Havana; Melanie Hopkins, former second secretary of the British Embassy in Havana; Hans-Ulrich Lunscken† (1952-2008), former Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Cuba; and Andrea Brouillette-Rodríguez, former human rights official of the United States Interest Section in Havana. Two more German diplomats and one Norwegian also received the award.

For this first edition of the award 135 people were consulted, among them figures from the democratic opposition within Cuba, families of

¹² "Premio a la Diplomacia Comprometida en Cuba 2003-2008", Reportes Puente Democrático, March 18th, 2009: http://www.puentedemocratico.org/reportes/PD_Diplomacia_comprometida_2003-2008.pdf

¹³ "Premio a la Diplomacia Comprometida en Cuba 2009-2010", Reportes Puente Democrático, February 23rd, 2011: http://www.puentedemocratico.org/reportes/PD_Premio_5.pdf

political prisoners, and foreign diplomats that were still on the island. They offered the names of 48 foreign diplomats they considered worthy of this distinction. Following is a list of those areas from which votes were cast and, in parentheses, the number of votes from each location: Havana (56), Villa Clara (21), Pinar del Río (4), outside of the country (3), Camagüey (3), Matanzas (3), Holguín (2), Guantánamo (2), Granma (1), Sancti Spiritus (1), and Cienfuegos (1). Below, the list of countries whose diplomats were nominated, with the total number of votes received: Germany (146), Poland (123), United States (102), United Kingdom (85), Czech Republic (60), Italy (36), Norway (36), Spain (32), France (6), European Union (6), Canada (6), Netherlands (6), Sweden (5), Japan (5), Switzerland (2), Slovakia (2), Peru (2), Belgium (1), and Portugal (1).

In the second edition of the Award for Committed Diplomacy in Cuba, corresponding to the period 2009-2010, the results were released to coincide with Human Rights Day, marked internationally on December 10th, 2010. On this occasion, Caecilia Wijgers (Netherlands), Ingemar Cederberg (Sweden), and Volker Pellet (Germany) were the foreign diplomats who stood out for their humanitarian labor in Cuba. During these two years, 16 foreign diplomats in Cuba were nominated for the prize, representing the following countries: Holland, Sweden, Germany, Spain, United States, Italy, Poland, Czech Republic, and Canada. Once again, 135 people participated in the voting, among them the Ladies in White, Oswaldo Payá, Yoani Sánchez, Vladimiro Roca, Elizardo Sánchez, René Gómez Manzano, Guillermo Fariñas, Dagoberto Valdés, and Félix Bonne Carcasses. Likewise, it had geographic representation that included Havana, Camagüey, Guantánamo, Villa Clara, Sancti Spiritus, Holguín, Pinar del Río, Matanzas, Las Tunas, Cienfuegos, and Santiago de Cuba.

Regarding the importance of this initiative, Elizardo Sánchez, a prominent figure in the peaceful struggle for human rights in Cuba, said: “[As well as against its own citizens, the] Castro regime exercises its enormous capacity for intimidation against foreign diplomats and correspond-

ents: most diplomats opt to avoid trouble, and have the best time possible. This reality reinforces the necessity and legitimacy of the Award for Committed Diplomacy.”

For his part, the Cuban freelance journalist Frank Cosme Valdés Quintana published an article in the portal Primavera Digital, stating:

It was a pleasant surprise to discover that the Argentines, having passed through consecutive military dictatorships, had founded CADAL. Only those who have suffered through similar situations can comprehend what is happening in other countries and display solidarity, a word which seems to have lost its meaning in the circles of accredited diplomats in Cuba, but for rare exceptions.

These rare exceptions were recognized by this organization through their Award for Committed Diplomacy in Cuba 2009-2010, awarded to three diplomats distinguished by the support they offered to Cuban democrats: the Dutch diplomat Cecilia Wijgers, Swedish Ingemar Cederberg, and German diplomat Volker Pellet. All modestly declared that the prize was not only for them, but also for the Embassies that represent their respective countries.

It was even more pleasant to discover that the Argentines had sought the opinion of different Cuban dissident groups. Among those consulted were the directors of our *Primavera Digital*, and journalists of the same organization, along with representatives of wide sectors of opinion, many of them already well known internationally. After the many bitter moments in this unequal struggle for the rights of citizenship, in which government representatives, religious personalities, correspondents, etc. often ignore those men and women who are writing a beautiful page in our history, we are comforted and more than compensated by the recognition offered by this Argentine organization to these diplomats and, at the same time, to the Cubans who seek nothing more than peaceful change¹⁴.

As the objective of this prize is to encourage commitment from democratic governments in the face of the human rights situation in Cuba, beginning with the recognition and protection of political dissidents, op-

¹⁴ Frank Cosme Valdés Quintana, “Desde la Argentina”, Primavera Digital, January 13th, 2011: http://www.primaveradigital.org/primavera/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=582:desde-la-argentina&catid=54:politica&Itemid=71

position figures were asked to explain the reasoning behind their nominations as much as possible.

For example, Yoani Sánchez of the blog *Generacion Y*, winner of several international awards and one of the most influential voices of the Cuban civil movement, highlighted the qualities of the Dutch diplomat, Caecilia Wijgers: “Her dynamism, diligence, and affinity with the Cuban temperament were valuable, allowing her to develop close working ties, and friendships, with our citizens. She encouraged and supported, through word and deed, numerous projects such as the magazine *Convivencia*, the alternative blogosphere, independent journalism, and civil society in general. She organized numerous conferences and exchanges between dissident groups that otherwise would not have had a tolerant space in which to meet.”

The blogger also described the Swedish diplomat, Ingemar Cederberg:

He stood out for his engagement with and support of Cuban civil society groups. During his time in Cuba he drove dialogue with the opposition and other notable groups of a political, artistic, or informative nature. The opening of an Internet center in the diplomatic headquarters, enjoyed weekly by almost a hundred people, is thanks to him. He grew to be an expert in the country’s culture, a man with great feeling for the arts and literature. Events, meetings, commemorations and numerous other exchanges were celebrated in his home, at a time during which many other diplomats were closing their doors to civil society and the political opposition.

And finally, regarding the German Volker Pellet, the activist (who has been awarded many prizes for her defense of freedom of expression in Cuba) stated that “[his] time in Cuba coincided with moments of much tension and high levels of repression against dissident groups. Volker, too, fell victim to a campaign of official defamation: his face and name were broadcasted on Cuban television, accompanied by strong accusations. He joined the Ladies in White on more than one of their marches and was a tireless promoter of new initiatives of information and expression.”

In Pinar del Río members of Project Convivencia, among them Dagoberto Valdés, nominated the Dutch diplomat:

For her service in the establishment of ties between the peoples of the Netherlands and Cuba. For her generous, passionate, and coherent devotion to the defense of human rights and civil education for all Cuban people. For her contact and respectful, systematic relationships with leaders of Cuban civil society, human rights activists, and other people committed to Cuba's present and future. For her selfless work in the interior of the country and honest, rigorous understanding of the situation in Cuba and the daily life of Cubans. And for the immense love she and her family demonstrated to thousands of people, both ordinary and important, in our country. Every project of civil society in Cuba bears the mark of her presence and effective, discreet solidarity. She was an advisor guided by the principles of a diplomacy of our times, in which human rights come before commercial or ideological interests. She visited our project many times and made significant contributions to its development. Her open spontaneous nature and courtesy opened many Cuban doors to her, while closing those of the people who could never understand the authenticity of her life and her work. Her farewell from Cuba was a fiesta of friendship and gratitude. We will never forget her.

Likewise, the group headed by Dagoberto Valdés highlighted the work of the Swedish diplomat:

He served as an interlocutor for the different activists of Cuban civil society. His courtesy and prompt attention made him a well-informed diplomat with his finger on the pulse of the real Cuba and its complex problems. Each year he visited our project and listened attentively to the diverse points of view and analyses of the Cuban reality, which would serve him in his diplomatic work. He listened, and asked respectful, intelligent questions. His support for the opening of an Internet facility in the Swedish Embassy was a prodigious work of patience and perseverance. In the end he achieved the inauguration of the "Back Room" (*Trastienda*), so-named by Yoani Sánchez and Reinaldo Escobar (well-known Cuban bloggers) for its location and familiarity. His warm openness, and that of his inseparable and diligent wife Mona Cederberg, allowed him to build many friendships in Cuba. He was a diplomat committed to the Swedish and Cuban peoples, not simply their respective authorities. Over the course of years he established the discrete, effective style of the Swedish mission in Cuba.

Elizardo Sánchez of the influential Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation noted that:

During her stay in Cuba, Mrs. Wijgers maintained a position of genuine human solidarity towards the Cuban people and of moral support for our peaceful efforts to improve the human rights situation on the island. We will always remember her for her constant willingness to listen to us, with all the patience in the world, and for her tenacity in finding concrete ways of demonstrating the solidarity of her country and other European countries with us. I have been practicing non-violent resistance against the regime for 43 years, and I never met a diplomat who was so committed to the cause of human rights and democracy while accredited in our country and running the risk of expulsion.

Cuban attorney and human rights activist, René Gómez Manzano, said “Doctor Pellet was characterized by his practical solidarity with pro-democracy dissidents. It cannot be forgotten that even Cuban official television broadcasted him on different occasions as he marched with the honorable Ladies in White.”

Eugenio Leal, of the Veritas Group, speaking of the Dutch diplomat, highlighted that:

Her support of Internet access for members of the digital portal *desdecuba.com* and the magazines *Consenso* and *Contodos* (I was a founding member of both) was a determining factor in the possibility of publishing works from inside the country. The Cuban government uses electronic means to prevent access to these sites and it is only possible in an embassy. She enabled all of us to use the Internet for two hours one set day each week, in the premises outfitted for this purpose in the Dutch embassy. Likewise, she was always available to receive us and offer respectful assistance. She encouraged us, and facilitated the approval of different projects to develop activities and organizations in the emerging civil society. She habitually loaded her car with supplies and newspapers, to be given to independent journalists, libraries and other promoters of civil society in the interior of the country.

For their part, the diplomats who received the Award for Committed Diplomacy in Cuba 2009-2010 expressed their gratitude to the Cuban demo-

crats. Caecilia Wijgers was born in 1967 and is currently working as Deputy Head of the Division of Political and Legal Affairs of the UN Department of the Dutch ministry in The Hague. She sent this message:

I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to the dedicated people of CADAL and the Democratic Bridge Project for the Award for Committed Diplomacy in Cuba 2009-2010. I express with deepest sincerity that this is a great honor for me.

I would especially like to thank, for their kind words, members of the Cuban opposition, human rights activists, family members of political prisoners, and other civil society actors. While working in Cuba, I always believed that freedoms of expression and of access to information are basic and fundamental rights. Because of this it was, for me, obvious and natural to support efforts devoted to the well being of the Cuban people.

I think a genuine civil society is a motor for the creation of space in which citizens can flourish, opening doors and windows. I'm very happy to have been able to contribute something, however small. I wish you all much success in your current and future efforts.

Volker Pellet, born in 1961 and currently working in Berlin as Director for Political Foundations in the German Foreign Ministry, expressed his thanks in the following message:

I feel very honored to have been awarded – together with good colleagues and friends – the Award for Committed Diplomacy in Cuba 2009-2010 by the prestigious organization, CADAL. I feel a small, humble pride that many of the dissidents in Cuba have clearly valued our work during our respective periods in Havana.

Nevertheless, foreigners and diplomats are only marginally capable of influencing the reality of the dissidents and civil society in Cuba. They can achieve a few things, make small gestures of solidarity and humanitarian support, ensure some degree of international attention, but they can't considerably improve the human rights situation. This can only be achieved by Cuban civil society, which continues to live in extremely difficult conditions.

It is a truly memorable experience to have shared – for a relatively brief period of time, and to a certain degree – some of these conditions: to have personally looked into the eyes of State Security agents, to have been exposed to “acts of repudiation”, to have been witness on various occasions to unjust,

intolerant, and inhumane treatment towards peaceful groups like the Ladies in White.

At the same time, this personal experience was indispensable. It opened my eyes to the Cuban reality and I don't regret it. Honestly, I hope future diplomats in Havana take a step forward and live this experience until one day in the future, not very far away I hope, tolerance and respect for human rights prevail in "the most beautiful land ever seen by human eyes".

International relations and human rights

To contextualize the theme of this book, it is necessary to remember that dictatorships try to shield themselves with the obsolete arguments of "respect for sovereignty" and "non-interference in internal matters", both of which have been limited since December 10th, 1948 by the universal language of the Declaration of Human Rights. Dictatorships demand "respect and equal treatment", despite having governments that have not been freely elected, and they try to justify their internal repression by appeals to "external threats and enemies", in true Orwellian style.

Among the remaining dictatorships, the Cuban regime is an emblematic case, having held onto power for nothing less than *half a century*. This regime grew out of an armed revolution that surged forth with the intention of reclaiming democracy, but that transformed into a dictatorship from its first days in 1959, maintaining until today a political system of one party and one thought. This regime, which represents a clear limit to the consolidation of democracy in Latin America, makes the most of the comparative advantage held by a government with these characteristics in international relations. This is because Cuba's population lives isolated from the world and afraid, under a system of iron repression and monopolist, propagandist media, whereby the principal opposition and condemnation received by the regime come from outside, via civil society organizations, journalists, intellectuals, some governments, and occasionally international organizations.

In consequence, the Cuban dictatorship dedicates huge resources and activity to its foreign policy¹⁵ in order to obtain the legitimacy it lacks in-

ternally from the point of view of democratic liberties. An obvious piece of evidence can be found on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, stating the country “has diplomatic or consular relations with 187 States. It has 148 diplomatic representations in 121 countries. At embassy level there are 120 representations, 1 Interests Section, 20 Consulates, 4 Diplomatic Offices, and also 4 permanent representations to International Entities”¹⁶.

To make a simple comparison one can take the case of Argentina, with 30 million more inhabitants than the 11 million that live in Cuba and with a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita greater than that of the Castro brothers’ paradise. According to the information found in the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, the Republic of Argentina maintains diplomatic relationships with 191 countries, but only has 79 embassies.

So, how can it be that a country less developed and with one quarter of the population possesses a third more overseas embassies than Argentina? To this is added the activity of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples, among other forms of “parallel diplomacy” where apparent “unselfishness” and demagogic “solidarity” are a kind of global “political clientelism”, buying favors with scholarships for foreign students and sending doctors and teachers on “internationalist missions”. All this, to obtain in international organizations the votes they would not receive internally, thus legitimizing themselves in power.

Whereby it is of no surprise that a regime like the Cuban, which implements systematic and obscene violations of human rights as state policy, has been member of UN’s Human Rights Council¹⁷ since that body’s cre-

¹⁵ Belén Oliveros y Gabriel C. Salvia, “Relaciones internacionales de Cuba 2006”, CADAL Documents, Year V, Number 67, March 19th, 2007: http://www.cadal.org/documentos/documento_67.pdf

¹⁶ <http://www.cubaminrex.cu/English/Ministry/ministry.htm>

¹⁷ Mariana Dambolena, “Una dictadura da cátedra en el Consejo de Derechos Humanos”, Democratic Bridge Project (CADAL), March 7th, 2008: http://www.puentedemocratico.org/articulos/nota.asp?id_nota=2282

ation¹⁸. It later managed to be re-elected for three more years. On this point, the Cuban dissident doctor, Hilda Molina, asks herself: “How do you explain the election to the Human Rights Council of a government that has spent 50 years in power publically violating those same rights? Who are those who elect and reelect a 50-year-old dictatorial regime that has institutionalized the systematic violation of basic rights to carry out the investigation, evaluation, and judgment of the planet’s human rights situation?”¹⁹

The case of Cuba shows that one of the great foreign policy challenges for democratic countries is their relationship with dictatorial regimes. Alternation of power and the logical priority of domestic issues – those that matter most to their voters – are further complicated by the prevalence of “national interest” in foreign policy. This last can principally be associated with international trade, and it is for this reason that the Chinese dictatorship, now an economic power, is the main current menace to the globalization of human rights.²⁰ But exchanges of a political nature also bear keeping in mind, such as the defense of the Cuban dictatorship by Argentina in return for the support offered by the Castro regime to the Argentine claim to sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) at all times – including during the military invasion initiated April 2nd, 1982 – and in all international forums.

But beyond realism in foreign policy, it undermines the remembrance of our own dictatorships that among the strategic objectives of the Argentine Foreign Ministry is found: “To prioritize the integration of Argentina in the world, through consensus oriented at the strengthening of international

¹⁸ Gabriel C. Salvia, “¿La globalización de las dictaduras? La integración del flamante Consejo de Derechos Humanos de la ONU”, CADAL Documents, Year IV, Number 53, May 23rd, 2006: http://www.cadal.org/documentos/documento_53.pdf

¹⁹ Hilda Molina, “La reelección de Cuba como miembro del Consejo de Derechos Humanos de la ONU”, CADAL Documents, Year VII, Number 100, June 1st, 2009: http://www.cadal.org/documentos/documento_100.pdf

²⁰ Gabriel C. Salvia, “Billetera mata derechos humanos: El viaje de CFK y las contradicciones con los objetivos de política exterior”, Democratic Bridge Project (CADAL), July 16th, 2010: http://www.puentedemocratico.org/articulos/nota.asp?id_nota=3505

law, the promotion of values associated with international peace, democratic government, respect for human rights...”²¹, while the same ministry maintains friendly relations with dictators and ignores the human rights activists suffering under them.

To quote just one of many examples²², taking one that is highly relevant at the time of publication: between November 16th and 22nd, 2008 the Argentine president, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, made an official tour to those countries of North Africa²³ that later, at the beginning of 2011, would occupy international news headlines due to the popular revolts against their dictators. She was accompanied by a delegation of entrepreneurs, with an agenda dedicated solely to business and without making a single demand regarding human rights.

Cristina Fernández gladly met with Tunisian Zine Abidine Ben Ali, Egyptian Mohamed Hosni Mubarak and the Algerian leader Abdelaziz Bouteflika, although the most surprising was her meeting with one of the most sinister dictators in the world, Libya’s Muammar Gadhafi. In her meeting with Gadhafi, the president expressed that: “The leader of the Libyan nation and I have both been political activists from a very young age, have embraced very strong ideas and convictions, and share a point

²¹ Argentine Ministry for Foreign Relations, International Trade and Worship, Secretary for Foreign Relations: <http://www.mrecic.gov.ar> [Spanish only].

²² Gabriel C. Salvia, “Cristina dejó en Cuba la poca credibilidad que tenía sobre su honesta defensa de los derechos humanos”, Democratic Bridge (CADAL), January 21st, 2009; Gabriel C. Salvia, “Siria, Qatar y Vietnam: tres visitas incómodas al país que enarbola la bandera de los derechos humanos”, Democratic Bridge (CADAL), July 7th, 2010; Gabriel C. Salvia y Pablo Brum, “Los derechos humanos en Siria y la visita a Buenos Aires de su ministro de Propaganda”, Democratic Bridge (CADAL), January 7th, 2010; y Gabriel C. Salvia, “Las contradicciones de la política exterior K”, Democratic Bridge (CADAL), August 19th, 2009: http://www.puentedemocratico.org/articulos/nota.asp?id_nota=2681
http://www.puentedemocratico.org/articulos/nota.asp?id_nota=3487
http://www.puentedemocratico.org/articulos/nota.asp?id_nota=3481
http://www.puentedemocratico.org/articulos/nota.asp?id_nota=2998

²³ Gabriel C. Salvia, “África mía: Otra prueba para Cristina en la promoción internacional de los derechos humanos”, Democratic Bridge (CADAL), November 17th, 2008: http://www.puentedemocratico.org/articulos/nota.asp?id_nota=2583

of view that strongly questions that status quo which is imposed in order to prevent change or the possibility of transformation.”²⁴

Meanwhile, CADAL’s Democratic Bridge Project promotes and recommends as public policy in foreign relations precisely that which is not applied by the Argentina’s Foreign Ministry and does not inspire action on the part of local organizations of the human rights establishment. Its objective is contribute to the international defense of civil and political liberties, through the following activities: a) offer international solidarity to support the efforts towards political opening of those democrats that live in countries governed by dictators; b) to have a bearing on the implementation by democratic countries of foreign policies based on human rights; c) to monitor the Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review, concentrating on those countries governed by dictatorships; d) to analyze the relationship between politics and the press; e) to flag threats to press freedom in Latin America, and f) to drive action, together with kindred civil society organizations. CADAL’s Democratic Bridge project proposes that the governments of democratic countries could begin to contemplate a series of measures in the areas of foreign policy and human rights. First, to publicize the votes cast in the election of member countries to the UN’s Human Rights Council, including its authorities, and to make available the recommendations made during the preparation of said organization’s Universal Periodic Review regarding countries seriously questioned for repressive acts.

In terms of trade, the Democratic Bridge project proposes to require that national corporations with interests in countries governed by dictatorships adhere to the Global Compact in Corporate Social Responsibility initiated by Kofi Annan in 1999. This should be a requirement in order to receive support from export-oriented public bodies. Human rights take first place

²⁴ Gabriel C. Salvia, “Cristina Kirchner y el recuerdo de una gira vergonzosa”, Democratic Bridge (CADAL), February 16th, 2011: http://www.puentedemocratico.org/articulos/nota.asp?id_notas=3898

among the principles of the Global Compact: “Within their sphere of influence... businesses should: 1) support and respect the protection of internationally recognized human rights; and 2) make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.”

For their part, embassies located in countries governed by dictatorships should limit their diplomatic representation to the rank of charge d'affaires, a symbolic measure that implies criticism of the internal human rights situation in that country. In said headquarters, practices of committed diplomacy should be applied, offering recognition, protection and Internet access to human rights activists including independent journalists and the relatives of political prisoners. Diplomatic relationships of a democratic state entail a representation of their societies and not just their governments. Further, the practice of committed diplomacy, instead of being limited to exceptional and heroic humanitarian acts, should be expressly taught to those officials assigned to countries where the violation of human rights is the norm.

The jurist Martín D. Farrell offers solid juridical arguments that support the objectives of CADAL's Democratic Bridge project²⁵:

[...] a perceptible change has been produced in international law, and where previously the supreme principle of the sovereignty of states was imperative, today its position in the hierarchy is disputed by interest in the international protection of human rights [...]

[...] It seems plausible to sustain that the rights of states in accordance with international principles are derived from individual rights: states have no autonomous moral base, nor are they the bearers of international rights independent of the rights of those individuals that inhabit the state. The state is not a moral being, and is not capable of affecting moral choices or of possessing state rights. Governments are mere agents of the people and their international rights derive from the individual rights of the individuals that populate – and consti-

²⁵ Martín D. Farrell, “Las teorías de la justicia en las relaciones internacionales”, Faculty of Law, Universidad de Palermo, Buenos Aires, Argentina:
http://www.palermo.edu/derecho/publicaciones/pdfs/alumnos_docentes/sfarrell.pdf

tute – the state. The discourse on the rights of states is reduced to the discourse on individual rights [...]

[...] individuals are the subjects, as much in moral reasoning as in international law, and the component of impartiality extends this morality to universality. It also has a component of generality, in the sense that individuals are the subjects of concern for all, and not just their compatriots or coreligionists.

Farrell also offers an affirmation that should be the norm in democratic countries' foreign policy with regard to human rights: "we should concern ourselves for the citizens of foreign countries as much as we concern ourselves for our own citizens", which brings to mind a phrase of the Czech dissident, Vaclav Havel: "I know how important it is for a person to know that out there, there are people who care about your destiny."²⁶

²⁶ Vaclav Havel, "Letters to Cuba", People in Need, 2005.



EXPERIENCES IN THE SWEDISH EMBASSY IN HAVANA

Ingemar Cederberg

Introduction

I had the opportunity to serve as Minister and Deputy Head of Mission in the Swedish Embassy in Havana for five years, from 2005 until 2010. Among my tasks stood out those related to politics and human rights, highly sensitive matters in the Cuban context.

I arrived to the island with a long history of professional experience in several Latin American countries: Costa Rica, as program officer for Central American refugees in the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), between 1980 and 1983; in the Swedish Embassy in Santiago, Chile, in charge of support to programs for human rights in South America, from 1987 to 1991; in the Swedish Embassy in Guatemala, between 1995 and 1998, as First Secretary and Head of Cooperation for the Peace Process; and as Minister and Deputy Head of the Mission in Bogota, Colombia, between 2001 and 2005, a position with considerable responsibilities in the areas of politics, human rights and the peace process.

In this sense, I was well prepared to assume responsibility for my tasks in Cuba. Furthermore, I had served in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Stockholm as Deputy Director in the Department of the Americas between 1998 and 2001. The human rights aspects were of high priority in contacts with Latin America and the Caribbean, not least in the bilateral contacts with Cuba.

In this work I had the honor of representing Anna Lindh, the social-democrat Foreign Minister, a person who gave great importance to human rights. She was tragically assassinated in 2001. I represented her in a meeting with a vast Cuban cultural delegation visiting Sweden, where it was my responsibility to explain our human rights policy with respect to the Cuban situation and our solidarity with political prisoners on the island.

This was my first experience with Cuba while acting in representation of my Government.

Sweden and the European Union

Since the 80's, the Swedish Embassy always gave considerable weight to human rights in its relations with Cuba. For example, on behalf of the embassy, representatives of the opposition were invited to receptions for the National Day of Sweden and the doors were always open to receive any civil society concerns. In order to reduce tension with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba (MINREX), such work contacts were formally managed at the level of the Chief of political affairs, not the Ambassador. After Sweden joined the European Union in 1993, a considerable proportion of these contacts began to be coordinated from a joint forum for the Chiefs of political affairs of member states' embassies, which meant a substantial step forward in the quantity and quality of work carried out in the Cuban context. The so-called European Union Havana Human Rights Working Group served as a common forum for member states with embassies in Cuba, to exchange experiences and opinions regarding the human rights situation. Reports were prepared and delivered to the Ambassadors and strategies to achieve communal policies were elaborated.

The country occupying the rotating *pro tempore* presidency of the European Union had a large role in the coordination of contacts with the opposition and civil society. The plan was to organize at least one meeting each month of this forum for human rights, where the political advisors shared their experiences and exchanged opinions. Groups and individuals of the civil society were normally invited, in order to gather information and to integrate them into our internal meetings.

Since the time of the Black Spring in March 2003, marked by massive arrests and the arbitrary sentencing of 75 democratic activists, many of them journalists, the European Union began to prioritize the monitoring of human rights violations, which were increasingly evident. This was a

natural reaction, given that the Castro government used our protests as an excuse to limit contact between Cuba and the European Union. Along with the human rights groups and other civil society representatives, we also met with the families of prisoners, at an individual embassy level or as a group of embassies representing the European Union. The embassy whose country held the presidency was always in charge of organizing said meetings, although often, in a parallel process, the groups made their own way to individual embassies.

The human rights work carried out by the European embassies was also well coordinated with our respective Foreign Ministries. We normally received instructions for action in Cuba from both our respective capitals and from the Committee for Latin America, COLAT, in Brussels. The current president in their turn submitted reports to COLAT discussing the political situation, including human rights.

It was fundamental to gather the most relevant information and to effectively analyze the country's political situation. In this context, the compilations of testimonies and material contact with civil society were very helpful. These contacts were varied: political parties be they established or in formation, human rights groups, women, Afro-Cubans, homosexuals (LGBT), bloggers, representatives from culture, etc.

In general, the contacted groups were from the metropolitan area, but there were also many visits to the interior of the country. In the maintenance of these latter contacts, we tried to coordinate our respective journeys and thus maximize their impact. The families of political prisoners formed a very visible group and lived in a situation that was very difficult in every aspect: marginalized by local authorities, they were unable to work and their children faced obstacles in the continuation of their studies. Prisoners were intentionally transferred to jails distant from their home regions, making it more complicated for their families to maintain contact with them.

Visits to the Interior

The Swedish Embassy was one of the diplomatic delegations that travelled most often to the country's interior to maintain relations with the families of political prisoners. In my case, I also visited other persons from the opposition, independent libraries and cultural groups. Each year I travelled at least once to the eastern region, and twice or three times to the western and central regions. The contacts made were very important in understanding the reality of the country.

Outside of Havana the groups were very isolated and enormously restricted in their liberties to meet with each other or travel around the island. As I already mentioned, in the case of the families of prisoners who were kept in another part of the country, they were consequently unable to make full use of the few opportunities for contact. Likewise, even finding these families presented another difficulty. They lived in remote areas and sometimes there were no indications of street names or house numbers.

Before travelling, we would coordinate with the EU working group to assure a better coverage of families and other opposition representatives. Finally, we would present a report in a joint meeting.

The journeys were generally made in an embassy vehicle, sometimes with driver. As such they were not very discreet visits, but highly visible to the neighbors. This did not bother the families, as it was in their interest for neighbors and authorities to know that European embassy representatives visited them.

A terrible aspect of the contacts with families and other opposition figures was the situation of their children: I was informed of their harassment in the school system and their difficulties in entering university courses. They lived as citizens of the second or third class, making their lives almost impossible.

Another aspect was the lack of information about what was happening in the country and in the world. If there was little information in Havana, in the provinces it was worse. For example, no media reached them, they

had no Internet access, and tourist hotels did not allow them in. I had the impression that they lived under constant harassment by the local authorities. If in the capital one could protect oneself better, due to the city's size and the greater number of supporters, in the interior they lived under constant and very visible control.

I also took advantage of the opportunity to maintain contact with the Catholic Church and with Caritas, as they could share information about the social situation and needs of the corresponding region. The social work and information projects carried out in Pinar del Rio were of special interest: until 2008 the archbishop facilitated the realization of very important activities under the coordination of secular activist Dagoberto Valdés. Father Conrado carried out a similar but smaller project in a parish of Santiago de Cuba.

Human Rights Reports

The Dutch Embassy was a leader in human rights work until the year 2009. In 2004 the embassy had begun to present monthly reports on the human rights situation and conditions in the prisons, based on the reports of the Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation (CCDHR) and other national groups.

They reported all of the individual cases of arrest and other abuses against opposition figures and human rights defenders, and the development of the Cuban government's policy of persecution of civil society can be detected in these reports. On receipt of the information, the embassy established a list according to the criteria agreed upon with the European Union Havana Working Group. The statistics later appeared in the reports of each embassy to their Foreign Ministry and were an important instrument in the understanding and argumentation of human rights matters in Cuba.

At the end of the Dutch Counselor's mission in the Embassy, we were informed that the Netherlands could not continue with this task. Sweden volunteered as patron of the reports from July 2009, just as its presidency

of the European Union was beginning. This was a preliminary solution pending a long-term decision, and the task was assumed – supposedly – in representation of the European Union.

Coordination with other embassies

Havana is a city where diplomats have more frequent contact amongst themselves than in other world capitals. The explanation of this phenomenon seems to be the lack of contact with the population, which affects foreigners in general and diplomats in particular. Very few Cubans, for example government officials and those artists recognized by the regime, are authorized to maintain social contact with diplomats. This surely affects diplomats' social life and consequently there are more social meetings between embassies and their diplomats.

This is an advantage as far as exchanges between embassies in political matters are concerned. In the subject of human rights there is a shared vision between the European and North American diplomats. Both the Canadians and the Americans share our critical position, as do countries that are not part of the European Union, such as Switzerland and Norway. Bilateral contact, nevertheless, is variable.

In the 90s there was a greater overlap between the position of Latin American countries and Europe towards Cuba. Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Costa Rica and Mexico maintained a very strong position against human rights violations in Cuba. The resolutions of the then Human Rights Commission of the UN manifested this position each year. Nevertheless, in the year 2000 there was a notable policy shift towards a greater pragmatism on the part of the Latin Americans, perhaps as a consequence of the pressure of left-wing governments or of a new regionalism with a different form and content.

During my years in Cuba, both my embassy and I put great effort into contacts with diplomatic representatives of Latin America and the Caribbean regarding political matters and human rights. This has been very

fruitful and interesting, but unfortunately has not generated any tangible results in the area of human rights. In spite of sharing the same general vision, we have been unable to reach a similar conclusion in the Cuban case. I could discretely obtain sensitive information from some Latin American colleagues who on a personal level were sympathetic to our policies, but who in practice were tied to the political positions of their governments in the field of human rights.

The United States Interests Section was the most influential and well-connected diplomatic entity on the island. Due to the extremely particular history shared by Cuba and the United States, it is evident that Cuban groups in exile managed many contacts with their country, and the European Union tried to remain independent of this matter. Although we maintained contact with a few colleagues in the Interests Section, we preferred to keep this discreet and low-key.

Sweden's Presidency of the European Union

After the Czech Republic and before Spain, Sweden exercised the *pro tempore* presidency of the European Union between July and September 2009. During these six months, relations between the European Union and the government of Cuba were very tense.

The process of dialogue between the two parties was at a critical point, in spite of Spain's efforts to soften the European position. The situation of opposition figure Darsi Ferrer had been discussed between the Human Rights Work Group. He had been jailed with no legal process, accused of possessing building materials without permission. Various European colleagues had met him during the marches of 10 December, International Human Rights Day.

Darsi Ferrer is a young doctor with great leadership potential who has been castigated by the authorities. His wife was invited to a Working Group meeting to present details on his arrest and the legal situation; based on this discussion, the Work Group decided to monitor the case. Various col-

leagues offered to visit Daris Ferrer's home to display our concern. The Counselors of Sweden, Germany, Great Britain, Poland and Hungary attended the visit.

The international press documented the action and the news was transmitted worldwide by various informative agencies such as the BBC. This generated a profound unease on the part of MINREX, who called together the Ambassadors and Chargés d'Affaires of the participating embassies, demanding an explanation of the behavior seen by Cuba as interference in its internal matters.

There was, later, a very strong discussion among the Heads of Mission and Sweden was criticized for coordinating this action while it was discharging the *pro tempore* presidency of the European Union. In particular, for having informed representatives of the foreign press in Havana. Consequently, the European Union was at least temporarily polarized, making Sweden's role as president more difficult.

Darsi Ferrer was liberated from prison at the beginning of 2010.

Personal impressions of Cuban civil society

My relationships with representatives of Cuban civil society affected me greatly. It was a way of staying informed about the unofficial Cuba, above all in the interior of the country, where I met people who were persecuted and greatly lacking in protection.

In Havana I had contact each week with between three and ten civil society representatives, individually or in groups, as well as with others in the context of European Union Human Rights Work Group meetings. These were representatives of political parties, human rights groups, women's groups, former political prisoners, independent journalists, cultural figures, religious groups, LGBTQ groups and Afro-Cubans, all considered illegal under the Cuban legal system.

We tried to convince them to visit, as first option, the embassy whose country was holding the presidency of the European Union, in order to

guarantee the diffusion of the messages we received in interviews. I had a fundamentally pedagogic role in the interviews, that is, I insisted that they made observations from their context of the Cuban world and managed to downplay the role of the diplomatic missions in the country so as not to create exaggerated expectations.

We were very conscious of the great risk of infiltration by State Security in the meetings, but at the same time we wanted to keep this window open, as it was a link and a bridge with civil society. As such, I was unsurprised by the case of “Emilio”, who presented himself as an independent journalist with the name Carlos Serpa Maceira: he had introduced himself in a very awkward fashion, giving me a present of those videos that circulated among certain right-wing Cuban groups in exile in the United States. Later he became the photographer with the most images released overseas and online of the Ladies in White, a very protagonist role for an agent of the State.

Accordingly, various rumors of this type were circulated about several independent journalists, very appropriate to a world so isolated and so exposed to competition for survival. It was not my role to involve myself in internal matters. It was, rather, to offer a space for dialogue in favor of the rights of Cubans to freely express themselves.

I ought to mention that there are many very brave people among the civil society representatives. Functioning most effectively as an inspiration to youth was Dagoberto Valdés, who always fought on with his work in Pinar del Río, without official support from the church or significant financing. It was an interesting model to follow, as the objective was evident: maintain participative activities without resources and in spite of constant harassment by the authorities.

The project of solidarity with the families of political prisoners led us to support the work of the Ladies in White. I was present on many Sundays for mass in the Church of Santa Rita to demonstrate our preoccupation for the political prisoners. I was also with the Ladies in White during their

campaigns for International Human Rights Day in different Havana parishes. I participated in some meetings in the house of its principal leader, Laura Pollán²⁷.

The so-called “acts of repudiation” against the protesting ladies are a very degrading and tasteless phenomenon. State Security mobilized hundreds of people in campaigns against the Ladies in White in an attempt to terrify them and communicate to the Cuban public that they should not display solidarity with the families of political prisoners.

Meetings with the representatives of opposition parties have been, for me, very enriching. Among these leaders stand out Oswaldo Payá, Manuel Cuesta Morúa and Darsi Ferrer, while Óscar Espinosa Chepe has contributed through his economic analyses. In the cultural sector I maintained diverse contacts, from dissidents to those authorized in their functions. The world of bloggers in Havana has grown in recent years. Yoani Sánchez and Reinaldo Escobar have been very important in this process.

In this respect, among my last contributions to civil society in Cuba was the opening of an Internet café in the Swedish Embassy. It gives me a great deal of satisfaction that this space has gained more and more life, and that it has been able to serve not only dissidents but also other groups in need of international contact and access to information.

Cuba-European Union Relations: Now and in the future

I have the impression that solidarity with the Ladies in White ended up being our most important contribution, speaking in terms of the European Union Working Group. The diffusion of this story in the international press

²⁷ Laura Pollán was one of the founders of the Ladies in White, female relatives of Cuban political prisoners detained in the repressive wave of March 2003. Her husband, Héctor Maseda Gutiérrez, was among them and was sentenced to 20 years of prison, to be liberated in February 2011 on parole. Pollán died of cardiorespiratory arrest October 14th, 2011, at the age of 63, after being hospitalized for a week. For more information see “The Ladies in White: the wives of the prisoners of the Black Spring of Cuba”, Erika Lüters Gamboa, CADAL/Foundation Konrad Adenauer, 2006 pp 89-94: http://www.cadal.org/libros/pdf/Las_Damas_de_Blanco.pdf [Spanish].

reinforced our denunciation of the negative human rights policy of the Cuban government.

The other element that managed to modify this policy was the lamentable death of political prisoner Orlando Zapata Tamayo after a hunger strike that went on too long.

At the same time, being able to make a modest contribution to the release of the 75 prisoners of 2003's Black Spring group and other political prisoners has been a great achievement for us. These prisoners, with their families, were deported to Spain and other countries, with no guarantee of their right to return to their home. Nevertheless, arbitrary arrests are still on the rise and the repression continues. This means that there will be new political prisoners in the future and that the population's rights will continue to be limited.

In the relations between the European Union and Cuba, the Common Position remains strong, although there is an internal debate regarding the possibility of opening real dialogue with Cuba. Sweden and other countries prefer not to introduce such changes until there is a clear demonstration on the part of the Cuban regime regarding human rights.

Another important element for the European Union's work in Cuba in the future is the role of the Office of the European Delegation, which does not only have to fulfill its principal task of cooperation, but must also represent the European Union in political and human rights aspects. In turn, the European Union maintains a clear policy regarding how such an office should function in this regard. Before adopting the decision to eliminate the Common Position this office should be well established and functioning as required.



IMPRESSIONS OF A LATIN AMERICAN DIPLOMAT²⁸

When the editors of this book invited me to write some pages dealing with the years of this century in which I carried out diplomatic functions in Cuba, my first instinct was to say no. I think diplomatic work should be realized with a low profile unless serious motives suggest otherwise. I think it should be carried out, in general, discretely, and that the construction of bridges and channels for dialogue, to be kept in reserve and never broken, is more efficient when it is carried out far from the political stage, from academia, and from cameras and newspapers.

But in any case there were two things in the invitation of the editors that were decisively in favor of giving them a positive response. The first was that it would be published anonymously so as not to compromise my career or my government, and the second was that I had crossed professional paths with the three European colleagues that received in 2010 the Award for Committed Diplomacy in Cuba. Caecilia Wijgers, Volker Pellet and Ingemar Cederberg served with class, competence and bravery in the embassies of the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden, respectively. I recently found out that our Dutch colleague was also awarded the Community of Democracies' Palmer Prize for Diplomats in Lithuania, another significant recognition of her work.

But although the "trigger" to write these pages was the possibility of sharing a publication with my Swedish colleague, I was also guided by the desire to relate what I saw and personally experienced in Cuba, tinged, of course, with my own convictions, yet seeking to clearly differentiate between facts and theories, reality and ideology.

²⁸ The author worked in Havana as a diplomat from a Latin American country. He writes anonymously for the consequences this text could generate for his professional career.

Much is said and imagined about Cuba, and normally a certain ideological subjectivity is maintained, be it for or against the system. But in both cases, there are few who have spent more than a couple of days or weeks on the island. In general, the island is visited on vacation, to attend a conference, or by invitation of the Cuba Solidarity Brigades. These tourists and special invitees visit the historic part of the capital, spend a week in Varadero or a similar beach and visit Che Guevara's mausoleum in Santa Clara. But hardly anyone explores the island in depth and the effort to speak with the common people is not usually made. In this way, when debating Cuba the discourse comes more from one's heart or ideology than from a prolonged, dispassionate and objective observation.

The Cuban system is also normally considered from the position each person has with regard to the United States, instead of concentrating objectively on Cuba's individual situation, due to the claim that all the blame for structural problems lies with the US blockade²⁹. A comprehensive observation divest of ideology allows one to infer that many of the Cuban deficiencies are not a result of the blockade, but of an economic choice made by the country's highest authorities five decades ago, as we will see later.

I think only those foreigners that live in a country for a prolonged length of time, generally for work reasons and without the sentimental or ideological ties that lead to subjectivity, have much credibility. Diplomats, journalists and businesspeople that make the effort to get know the country more deeply generally have more authority than those who visit it superficially or simply enjoy its tourist attractions.

²⁹ I use the term "blockade" in response to international consensus and especially the current fashion in Latin America, although technically the group of economic sanctions imposed by the United States on Cuba has more in common with a commercial embargo or boycott. It is worth keeping in mind that the meaning of the word "blockade" is not appropriate in this case for the mere fact that the US is the largest supplier of foodstuffs to the island. While I was in Havana, the US sold agricultural products to the island to the value of more than 700 million dollars.

I belong to the first of those groups and one of a diplomat's daily tasks, in any part of the world, is to objectively inform his or her ministry about what is seen, read and heard in the country in which they work, in order to later suggest courses of action, if appropriate. I will try to do something similar here.

First, however, it is necessary to define the role more clearly, because I suppose these pages will not only be read by diplomats. In the more institutionally advanced countries, among them several Latin American ones, there is a professional diplomatic career, protected by specific legislation and with norms sufficiently strict to assure the continued survival of a permanent foreign service that transcends ideologies and political parties. In these countries, even if the possibility exists that the president may designate ambassadors who are not career diplomats, the remaining officials of an embassy must belong to the professional corps. These professional diplomats are not obligated to leave their post and return home with each change of government. Ambassadors who are career diplomats may, on occasion, remain at their post even if the president who appointed them leaves office. In contrast, political ambassadors finish official duties the same day the president who appointed them terminates his or her mandate, unless the next head of state confirms them.

In the embassies of countries with more professional foreign service regimes there may, on occasion, exist differences in political sympathies between the politically appointed ambassador and the other agents of the diplomatic mission. But in spite of this, embassy work usually continues as normal, given that each knows how the others think and all work with patriotism and professionalism, two conditions that transcend ideology and political allegiance. Nevertheless, sometimes there are, to a greater or lesser degree, misgivings and distrust between a political ambassador and the professional diplomats of the embassy, and the ambassador may not understand that career diplomats who truly love their country would never betray it or compromise its permanent interests. Despite that, instructions

must always be followed, be they from the immediate superior or from the diplomats' government via their Foreign Ministry.

The preceding clarifications, obvious to some and unknown by others, are pertinent to the discussion of Cuba for various reasons, due to the strong ideological component implicated at times by involvement in that country.

Before traveling to Havana to carry out my work, I did some reading about the history of the island and the Cuban Revolution. I also met with Cuban diplomats working in my country and with some colleagues from my ministry who had been on the island before. But it is one's own impressions that count. And on arrival at the José Martí International Airport of Havana I encountered tangible evidence that I had entered a different system. First, on approaching the immigration officer who would check my passport, something caught my attention: between one side and the other of the officer's station there is a wall and a closed door, only opened to allow the new arrival to "enter" Cuba after the dour employee of the Ministry of the Interior has intensely reviewed the passport and verified that the photo matches the traveler's face. This includes the request, not always friendly, that the traveler looks at a camera. This was to be repeated on each of my arrivals to Havana, although in the future I always showed the diplomatic photo ID provided by the Foreign Ministry of Cuba. But the employees of Migrations work for the Interior Ministry and the serious, even unfriendly gesture was always present, be they men or women.

The customs inspection, coming after the migrations procedure, is usually carried out without problems for diplomat agents who reside in Cuba, although it can involve uncomfortable moments, not exempt of tension, if the foreign diplomat is attended by a customs employee in the mood to open suitcases. Although the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations clearly establishes that the diplomatic bag clearly identified as such is inviolable, the rest of the diplomat's luggage may be opened. Nevertheless, universal diplomatic law is also governed by the principle of reciprocity, which, in short, means equal treatment. According to this principle, and

to refer specifically to Cuba, if the customs authorities of my country do not revise the personal luggage of Cuban diplomats, I may ask the same of Cuban customs. I had no such problems the first time I arrived but I did on a later arrival, although I was able to firmly deal with the situation, not allowing the opening of my luggage.

Another detail that indicated I had entered in contact with a very different reality to that to which I was used to in previous destinations was the arrival of my belongings to my residence in Havana, transported by a moving company. It was another unique experience in which the principle of reciprocity seemed to be unknown. Again, although the Vienna Convention allows the possibility of customs control, it is not usual, and certainly not in my country, that two employees of the local customs office set themselves up in the residence of newly arrived diplomats to control the unpacking of their personal belongings in their home, and to search for “prohibited” items like a cordless telephone or satellite dish. It is worth making clear that this procedure is repeated when the diplomat leaves the island. The strange part is that when one has managed to install a satellite dish in his or her home, visible on the roof or balcony, this is not removed or commented on by the authorities.

But before the arrival of my personal effects, while renting my home, I submitted myself to the martyrdom to which most diplomats – those that are not ambassadors – are subject when it comes to choosing their residence. Firstly, no foreigner, be they diplomat, businessperson or media correspondent, can choose the neighborhood of Havana in which he or she would like to live. It is the Cuban state, via its real estate brokerage corporations, that chooses the neighborhood and the different residence options for the foreigner. Between the two real estate agents in vogue I ended up with the most deficient, that which brings together the worst defects of apathy and lack of respect for the client, even a diplomatic officer of a friendly country. I will not enter into inappropriate detail, but it is enough to say that in no other Latin American capital, independent of its relative level of development,

would a Cuban diplomat suffer such anxious moments as many diplomats in Havana, simply in order to rent a residence and then live in it.

The absurdly high rental prices paid to the state, compared with both Latin America and Europe, have absolutely no relation to the size of the residence or the lamentable state in which most are found. But favoritism also exists on the island: I confirmed that a residence identical to mine was rented to a colleague at a much lower price than I was paying. Similarly, a colleague from another Latin American country told me with no small annoyance that when he had almost closed a rental deal, the real estate agent who was attending him used a weak excuse to justify the handing over of that residence to a diplomat from a different Latin American country that was very generous with Cuba.

A detail that reminds me of Cold War stories and movies is the tapping, not only of telephones, that I had been told about. In the embassies and residences of diplomats, and also those of foreign journalists and business people, there are microphones. All telephones, landlines and cellular phones, are listened to by State Security. A Cuban acquaintance I saw quite frequently, with access to reserved information, revealed to me more than once the tenor of some of my private conversations; information, he said, obtained by acquaintances in State Security. This gentleman seemed to know more than me about private and internal matters of my own embassy. In more than one conversation with friends and relatives overseas on my home telephone the “click” was clearly heard. Sometimes, hearing the unmistakable sound, we good-humoredly welcomed those who were listening before continuing with our conversation.

This reminds me that in Cuba I saw the German film *The life of others*, which deals with the tapping and obsessive control to which the citizens of the former German Democratic Republic were subjected by the *Stasi*, the Ministry for State Security, until 1990. Cubans display considerable humor despite their misfortunes, I discovered later: they baptized that movie *The life of us*.

Once, a European colleague invited me to his office to discuss a delicate matter. When I arrived at the Embassy he told me we would speak while walking in the street, but first he asked me to leave my cellular phone with his in the office. Cell phones are known in Cuba to be open microphones. Following this procedure, whenever I had to discuss delicate matters in my home or embassy, we would speak in the garden or walking along the beach, trying not to carry cellular phones.

One of its basic aspects of the diplomatic profession is the necessity of informing one's ministry of the reality of the country, including details of those people and matters that are, for most Cubans, prohibited or problematic. Any informed person of any country knows that if they need objective and complete information the official sources are not enough. For obvious reasons this applied in Cuba, and I had to somehow obtain a different vision to that offered by the monopoly on information and opinion held by the rigidly controlled official Cuban press.

Sometimes, to more profoundly investigate a matter, it is not enough to meet with diplomatic colleagues or with foreign correspondents, both groups also highly controlled by State Security. It should not be forgotten that, as with the embassies, the Cuban state insists on providing the human resources for press agencies and, in general, all foreign institutions, public or private. Sometimes it is helpful to seek the opinion of the political opposition, and in these cases one must operate with the greatest possible discretion, above all if one comes from a Latin American embassy: these have no official relationship with Cuban dissident groups.

On one occasion, I agreed to meet in the Malecón with a former political prisoner who had been recently liberated for health reasons and whom I had met in another embassy. In front of the sea and its crashing waves, the man asked my opinion on the best country to immigrate to, between the United States and a Scandinavian country. Both, he said, had conceded him political asylum. Without vacillating I told him that I would, in his position, choose the Scandinavian country. I explained that, if he had no

great preference, I thought it better to diversify the asylum destinations instead of exiles always going to Miami or any another city.

Of course, in these cases other risks must be assumed, not always associated with the tight vigilance of State Security. Sometimes they are generated by “dissidents” who are not really dissidents. There are dissidents who enter the United States Interests Section and those European embassies most committed to the observation of the human rights situation on the island but who are, in reality, State Security informants. I have been told that high-level Cuban security agents can be found even among embassy cleaning staff. Both North American and European diplomats are aware of this and consider it collateral risk.

Another very Cuban peculiarity is that a member of the Cuban military or a uniformed official of the Interior Ministry is absolutely prohibited to enter a car with diplomatic plates. I verified this personally. Once, a high-level military officer, even though he was not uniformed, flatly refused to enter my car. In another opportunity I had the pleasure: Cubans frequently “hitchhike” in private cars due to the great lack of public transport. On one occasion I let a young woman in an Interior Ministry uniform into my car. As soon as she realized she was in a diplomat’s vehicle, her face grew very worried and she was silent throughout the short trip. It was only on leaving the car, when she thanked me, that she told me she had not noticed the diplomatic plates and that she could have serious problems if she had been seen by a workmate.

During my time on the island, it raised some suspicions and put some Latin American ambassadors in quite uncomfortable positions if their diplomats maintained social ties with their American colleagues. These ambassadors were usually political appointees, not career diplomats, and seemed unaware of the fact that our countries maintain diplomatic relations with Washington despite a few specific differences. Of course, there are those Latin American embassies whose countries have an “automatic alignment” with Cuba and none of their officials ever appear in the United

States Interests Section, not even for the celebration of the Fourth of July. But they are few, and have their script to follow. Some Latin American ambassadors, aligned with the Cuban system, were alerted by third parties that their officials assiduously visited the Interests Section and manifested their displeasure to their second in charge. But these officials are generally career diplomats and answer to Foreign Ministries, which normally do not discipline their professional corps for such a "fault".

Apart from social receptions (in which the opportunity exists to converse with political dissidents) the chief of the United States Interests Section would also gather together the other accredited embassies in Cuba in order to make known Washington's point of view on certain matters. In these cases the more independent Latin America ambassadors with greater freedom of choice would send a subordinate official to the meeting, and it was my role to attend them. But I was also in social gatherings in the houses of North American colleagues and I invited them to my home, together with diplomats from European countries considered "conflictive" by Havana. I know perfectly well that those in charge of the security of my home duly reported on the vehicles parked in the door, but this is something we have to live with in Cuba.

As far as "committed diplomacy" (this book's reason for being) is concerned it is generally used to refer to an approach to the work that may compromise the diplomat in the country in which he or she is accredited, but also, on occasion, in his or her own country. During the Second World War and the Holocaust, there were European and Latin American diplomats who saved many Jews from death in the Nazi extermination camps. Decades later, in the 1970s, there were diplomatic agents who saved many lives during the Latin American dictatorships, making the "disappeared" reappear and getting them safely into exile. In both periods there were those who acted with full knowledge of their governments but also those who did so disobeying instructions. Even if in moments those brave public servants may have received serious reprimands in their countries of origin,

it is clear that later they won the moral battle before their governments, before the world and before history.

In the case of Cuba, the three European diplomats who were awarded the Prize for Committed Diplomacy 2009-2010, acted with the knowledge of their superiors, their governments and the Cuban government, despite some uncomfortable encounters with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba (MINREX) and the abrasive criticism of the official press. During the time I worked in Cuba no European or North American diplomat was declared *persona non grata* and invited to leave the country, in agreement with arrangements made in the Vienna Convention for Diplomatic Relations. But it is worth keeping in mind that to do so automatically triggers the application of the principle of reciprocity: if Cuba expels a foreign diplomat, that diplomat's country of origin would immediately do the same with a Cuban diplomat. In this case it is clear that of the two, the government that is more isolated and criticized by the international community is that which loses more; for this reason, the rubber band is only stretched to a certain point.

When these three European diplomats received Cuban dissidents in their embassies or private residences, they did so with the prior knowledge of the Ministry of Interior, although the authorities would later demonstrate their annoyance. I remember well the case of two of my prize-winning colleagues. On one occasion, the daily newspaper *Granma*, organ of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party, photographed one of their residences and published it along with the inevitable criticisms of the relationships of foreign diplomats with dissidents, who are invariably classified by the island as "mercenaries, traitors or worms". Our other colleague was called in by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when he concerned himself with the fate of a known Cuban dissident and doctor who protested one December 10th, International Human Rights Day.

It is not only the United States Interests Section that receives dissidents and allows them to use the computers to communicate via Internet with

the rest of the world, an activity banned for the great majority of Cubans. In several European embassies there is a diplomat, usually the second in charge, who interests him or herself with the concerns of the dissidents, receiving them and even permitting them the use of computers. As I wrote earlier, this carries the risk of penetration of the embassy by false dissidents who later inform State Security, but these are risks accepted by those countries most committed to human rights.

Because of the human rights situation, the countries of the European Union developed in 2002 a Common Position critical of Cuba, which remains to this day. Nevertheless, the relationship of each country with Cuba shows a fairly broad variation from tolerance and close cooperation to firm rejection and strong criticism. In spite of the enormous efforts of the European country with the most open position towards dialogue with Cuba to change the position of the European Union as a whole, until now European skepticism has been stronger.

At this point it is necessary to make an easily verified clarification for those readers who are not very familiar with the political history of the countries in question. The European Union is not a mere lackey or servile partner of the United States and has demonstrated this on various occasions. Some countries have kept themselves distant, if not directly opposed, to certain us foreign policy outrages, especially during the administration of President George W. Bush. If the European Union were always servile and complacent with the regards to the United States, it would have applied the same blockade that Washington has maintained against the island for the last five decades, and it has not done so. On the contrary, it has criticized this arbitrary measure that is also detrimental to other countries, and it has voted with Cuba in the yearly resolution in the General Assembly of the United Nations, requesting the removal of the us blockade. By the same means, if there were such an alignment with the United States there would not be differences among the European countries in the relationships they maintain with Havana.

The simplified, ideologically motivated analyses developed by those sympathetic to the system usually fail to recognize that, for example, if the Czech Republic maintains a very firm position with Cuba regarding human rights, this is because that country itself suffered the weight of the Soviet boot during various decades and, above all, because the Cuban government applauded the crushing of the Prague Spring in 1968 by Russian tanks. Thus, while I was there, the Czech Embassy in Havana was the most conflictive of the European embassies in its relations with Cuba and endured diverse accusations. The Czech charge d'affaires and other embassy officials, with whom I maintained a very cordial relationship, told me – as though it were completely normal – that every once in a while the embassy's broadband would stop working, or that all diplomatic relocations had to take place under the form of "diplomatic bags", this being the only way of preserving certain personal belongings. Nevertheless, the Czechs remained stoic in their firm stance towards Cuba.

I firmly believe that in case of a possible political transition towards pluralist democracy and capitalism, which appears distant but which I imagine to be inexorable, Latin American countries and Europe should play a pivotal role in economic cooperation and assistance with development of governance systems. Even if the influence of the big northern neighbor will once again be inevitable, nowhere is it written that Washington ought to keep the whole pie, nor that Cuba should become an exact copy of what it was December 31st, 1958.

I will not make extensive reference to the real economic and social situation of the island, although I received a profound insight into it. Rather, I will make a brief synthesis. I can assure readers that it is nothing like that imagined by many, thanks to official propaganda constantly repeated inside and out of Cuba. I traveled thousands of kilometers from one end of the country to the other and gained first-hand awareness of the serious sufferings of the average Cuban, especially those to do with the aspects always highlighted by the Cuban Revolution, such as health and education,

that in reality present serious deficiencies. In those conversations I almost never heard reference to the human rights situation, and nor did they seem aware of the specific cases of persecution and jailing of dissidents most taken up by the foreign press. 90% of the complaints were related to basic aspirations, like being able to buy a modest home or vehicle, to travel or possess the resources necessary to better feed one's children without relying on the famous "ration book" which, installed "provisionally" almost five decades ago, assures fewer and fewer basic foodstuffs and has still not been eradicated, despite recurrent promises. From the mouths of the Cubans themselves I found out about basic deficiencies in medical and dental attention, such as the continual lack of anesthesia, and the reality of an education system that lived much better times at the start of the Cuban Revolution, but that was still using education resources created before 1959.

There is something that is not usually believed outside of Cuba's borders (a lack of belief I experienced when I recounted it in my country): the shortages and limitations produced by a centrally planned economic system are not suffered only by Cuban nationals. Foreigners, although they possess hard currency and a level of income infinitely higher than the average Cuban, do not always have access to basic foodstuffs or products. It is supposed that diplomats enjoy the use of special shops where everything can be obtained simply by showing the necessary amount of money, as happened in European countries behind the Iron Curtain before 1990. But it is not so: on many occasions I could not obtain eggs, milk, concentrated stock, flour, oil, potatoes, toilet paper, nappies and other products of the most basic personal hygiene, although I had the money to buy them. These products were lacking in all or almost all supermarkets and hard-currency shops, and finding them became a genuine odyssey. The first reply offered by my colleagues, friends and relatives when I told them these things was that surely it were due to "the us blockade" and they struggled to understand that it was not so, for two reasons. First, because Cuba is a global trader.

Its real problem, accentuated since the end of 2008, is a serious financial insolvency. Cuba owes hundreds of millions to its foreign suppliers, as it pays its accounts little by little. Second, something that many do not know or that ideological blindness does not let them accept, the US is a huge supplier of foodstuffs to Cuba, and has become one of the island's biggest trade partners, as medicine and agricultural products have been expressly excluded from the blockade since the start of this century.

For some reason that Cuba insists on ignoring, the most developed nations on the planet are representative, plural democracies with a capitalist economic system. Even the quintessential Asian power, although it continues under a Communist ideology, structurally transformed its economy at the end of the 1970s, adopting a market economy. Today it registers a growth rate that was unthinkable four decades ago.

I can say with the authority of considerable familiarity with the island that the US blockade is not the only cause of its current economic situation, although this does seriously limit its development. It is enough to travel through the abandoned fields where before 1959 millions of head of cattle grazed or where every type of agricultural product, not just sugar cane, was cultivated, or try to find basic services for oneself, normal in any city of medium development, to verify that the most tangible structural problems of the current reality have nothing to do with external economic sanctions. They are self-imposed limitations bred of stubborn attachment to a collectivist system obsessively preoccupied with the avoidance of even the slightest social difference linked to individual effort. In the last two years, especially in recent months, the government has begun to loosen these rigid ties and has allowed a timid opening. For example, Cubans may now stay in tourist hotels, and private citizens may work freely in jobs such as turnery or hairdressing, and carry out repairs on their homes. It was announced that they will be able to freely buy and sell their residences. When I was in Havana, before these light reforms, a Cuban told me he was once stopped by the police for riding a bicycle to which he had added a small


motor, and that at another time a uniformed officer asked him what he was doing carrying a bag with tools of a certain sophistication.

By all means, I am against the us blockade, considering it arbitrary, a violation of international law, injurious to third states and manifestly useless for the purposes of the United States which, far from having achieved its objectives by this means, has spent the last five decades providing Cuba with an excellent weapon of propaganda.

Latin American countries are called to take on a role of greater cooperation with a changed Cuba and, together with Europe, balance the weight that, in the case of an inevitable transition, the dominant power some few kilometers from the island would enjoy. In the present moment I consider a change of attitude very difficult, as much from the Latin Americans and Europeans as from the Cuban government, above all for two reasons: first, for the pertinacity with which the current system in Havana resists the political opening demanded of it by most of the countries on the planet. The mere announcement of timid economic reforms that, even if carried out in an effective manner, will take quite a long time to show tangible and beneficial results, is not enough. Second, because several nations, above all in the American continent, insist on continuing to believe the able adaptation of the myth of David and Goliath to the relations between Cuba and the United States.

Cuba's future concerns all Cubans, including those who think differently and political exiles, not all of who reside in the United States. Cubans who have emigrated for political or economic reasons are estimated to be two million people, no small number on top of a resident population of about 11 million.

Diplomats who have had the opportunity and personal interest to explore the island, its people and its potential more profoundly, and who are invested with the sensitivity and independent judgment necessary to assess the real situation of Cuba, can become discreet operators in a change that, in any case, ought only to be decided by the Cubans themselves. Gov-



ernments may change, but institutions and people remain, and although the political propaganda insists on the contrary, this holds valid in Cuba's relations with other countries. Between the island and other governments are bridges and channels for dialogue that should never be breached, and should maintain the reserve that characterizes the action of the authentic diplomat.

I, personally, would not be averse to returning to a Cuba in which one of the wishes of José Martí, national hero and most beloved poet of the island, comes true. He aspired to a Cuba that was “with all and for the good of all”.

CUBAN EXCEPTIONALISM³⁰

The *Handbook* presents individual country case studies in order to record the practical activity that diplomats from democratic countries have performed there in support of civil society, democracy development, and human rights. Situations can and often do resemble each other in some recognizable respects, and our aim is to enable diplomats and civil society partners in the field to obtain insights and guidance from actions taken elsewhere, without, however, suggesting that the experiences in one country can simply be transposed directly to another, since the trajectory of each country's development is singular.

The case of Cuba is extreme, and in many ways unique. Cuban history since the late 19th Century is intertwined in a relationship with one country, the United States. The mutual enmity between the two governments for much of the last 50 years has had a direct impact on conditions inside Cuba. Anything that diplomats of democratic countries can do in support of Cuban democracy development pales in significance to the potential effect of placing us-Cuba relations on a normal basis, possibly for the first time.

The only country in the western hemisphere that does not practice some form of electoral democracy, Cuba's government remains in principle a Marxist-Leninist throwback and a resolute holdout more than two decades after the abandonment of communism in Europe and adoption of the market economy in China. Expectations that Cuban communism would be merely the last domino to fall failed to recognize a signal difference with Eastern Europe where the regimes were judged to be collaborating with an outside oppressor, the USSR. The Cuban government presents itself as the patriotic defender against an outside threat.

³⁰ This chapter is a brief version of the one originally published at *A Diplomat's Handbook for Democracy Development Support*, Second Edition, Council for a Community of Democracies (CCD), 2010.

The regime has from the outset been symbiotically identified with its *Comandante en jefe* who led the revolution that propelled it into power on January 1st, 1959. Descriptive labels scholars employ to capture its essence range from “extreme paternalism” (Prof. Carollee Berghdorf, Hampshire College, UK) to “charismatic post-totalitarianism” (Prof. Eusebio Mujal-León, Georgetown University, Washington, DC). Exile adversary US Congressman Lincoln Díaz-Balart, has called it “the Fidel Castro regime,” pure and simple. Although an orderly succession has obviously occurred as Fidel Castro retired from public office in July, 2006 and ostensibly turned power over to Raúl Castro, the question arises whether anything significant has changed. Fidel Castro’s moral influence over the country remains, though he is without direct control of all details as before. Having described himself in 1961 as a “Marxist-Leninist until I die,” he recast himself in post-retirement writings as a “utopian socialist,” adding that “one must be consistent to the end.”

The regime he built over the decades, “is not the German Democratic Republic,” as one diplomat in Havana phrased it, but it is an authoritarian one-party state that has used an Orwellian security apparatus to rein in and quash democratic impulses over five decades, often citing the threat from the US as the rationale. Much of the world acknowledges the ability of Castro’s Cuba to have stared down and survived determined efforts by successive US governments to end the regime, by invasion, attempted assassination, a CIA program of subversion, and a punitive economic embargo.

But increasingly, democrats rebuke the regime for its invocation of these real threats to Cuba’s sovereignty to justify the continued and even tighter suffocation of human and civil rights of Cuban citizens.

The case study that follows attempts to identify activities by diplomats and democracies in support of Cubans’ efforts to secure rights at home, including discussion of a more open and democratic system. But the study reports the view that these efforts tend to bounce off a tightly controlled

and controlling regime that veers between self-confidence and paranoia, and discounts the pertinence of mutual leverage.

Diplomatic efforts meant to support democracy development are in consequence especially challenged in today's Cuba. Diplomats have to manage seemingly competing professional obligations of non-interference, official engagement, a long-term developmental perspective, and immediate democratic solidarity.

This challenge, familiar to diplomats and international NGOs working in other authoritarian and repressive states, is made especially vexing in Cuba by an authoritarian government that is fearful of change. But some signs of change are present in Cuba. Coming years will engage democrats in support of efforts by the Cuban people to pursue aspirations for more significant change that is theirs alone to accomplish.

Cuba's Relationships with Community of Democracies Member States

Cuba's foreign relationships have varying degrees of intensity. As described above, the relationship with the us is overwhelmingly the most important from every point of view. There is scarcely a family without relatives in the us, and us policies on permissible remittances from family members, as well as on visits, are of primary importance on the island. The Obama administration has relaxed the regulations that had been considerably hardened by the preceding administration. In 2010, us visas were again being provided Cuban artists and performers to tour in the us, such as the emblematic poet-singer Silvio Rodríguez.

The Helms-Burton Act, however, is rooted in law and many of the provisions of the us embargo cannot be changed by executive order. Yet, as time goes by, the ability of the harder-line exile community in South Florida to dictate terms of the relationship between the two countries diminishes. A growing number of us voters would share the consensus among non-us democratic representatives in Cuba that the us embargo and us policies

have been counter-productive, enabling the regime to justify strengthening its control over the population. A recent article by Human Rights Watch monitors Nik Steinberg and Daniel Wilkinson judged that “It is hard to think of a us policy with a longer track record of failure.”

Professor Lopez-Levy has observed that the fault with us policy is that it “wants to start at the end.” The Helms-Burton Act indeed rooted its embargo provisions not only in Cuba adopting a multiparty democracy, but on the Castros being no longer in office.

Fidel Castro has always turned us policy to his advantage and has mobilized Cuban fears the Cuban American community aimed at restoring economic as well as political control over the island. Cuban citizens are generally reported to be bitter about the hard line from either side: the Cuban authorities who care more about ideology than the plight of Cubans; and us authorities and lawmakers who chose to tighten sanctions and the embargo at the moment of greatest economic hardship for Cubans. By all accounts, ordinary Cubans hope the Obama administration will succeed in inducing flexibility, a relaxation of enmity and also of Cuban controls.

The Obama Administration has initiated talks with Cuban authorities over immigration and overflights as well as preliminary talks on the prospects for improving the relationship. Though Fidel Castro has never accepted the premise of “normalization” in exchange for democratization, it is implicit that both sanctions and Cuba’s continuing to imprison prisoners of conscience must ultimately be bargaining tools in a larger picture.

The Cuban government has recognized the need to diversify relationships, having learned a harsh lesson from over-dependence on the USSR. There has been something of a revival of relations with Russia, and China has become Cuba’s second largest trading partner.

Cuba’s other relationships have in some ways been strengthened in recent years. Virtually all Latin American countries now have diplomatic representation in Cuba, especially since Cuba stopped supporting leftist uprisings in Central America in the early 1990s. Indeed, Cuba is seen by

Latin Americans to have played a constructive role in mediation of conflicts in the region.

A wave of electoral victories of the left and center-left in Latin America in recent years translated into cooperative relationships with Cuba. While most reject Cuba's political model, the Castros' anti-democratic policies and practices have seemingly been applauded by the likes of Venezuela's Hugo Chavez. Generally, in line with historic Latin American neuralgia toward outside interference in domestic affairs, Latin Americans take a hands-off attitude toward Cuban governance.

Worker-based and left of center Latin American political movements and parties long enjoyed close relations with Cuban political elites, and once in office, several leaders such as President Luiz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva of Brazil, President Evo Morales of Bolivia, or ex-President Michelle Bachelet of Chile, reciprocated for past Cuban support.

Cuba has been admitted to the Rio Group devoted to economic cooperation among Latin American and Caribbean countries. Though the us has continued to resist the idea (advanced by Canada) of inviting Cuba to Summits of the Americas, Fidel Castro was enthusiastically welcomed at the first Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean on Development hosted by Brazil (that excluded the us).

Venezuela is a high-profile ally of the Castro regime and is a major financial benefactor. Mexico has recently restored a productive political level dialogue after the tensions with ex-President Fox, strengthening economic relations and consulting on other issues of mutual importance such as illegal migration. President Lula da Silva who visited Cuba several times during his tenure as president, paid a state visit to Raúl Castro in 2008 featuring a major economic assistance and development package that situates Brazil as a central partner, particularly in the energy development field.

Dr. Julia Sweig points out that Cuba's emphases on social justice resonate in Latin American public opinion. This may explain the paradox that while many have only recently overcome the abuse of human rights at the

hands of military regimes, they nonetheless fail to criticize Cuban human rights abuses. Dr. Sweig assesses that “Latin American governments today generally see gradual reform under Raúl Castro as the path most likely to bring about a more plural, open society on the island,” a judgment corresponding more to the dispiriting material conditions in Cuba than to the reawakened aspirations of the people.

Canada and the European Union countries have always maintained relations with Cuba and have opposed Helms-Burton both for its negative impact on developments regarding Cuba and for its extra-territorial projections of us law that foreign partners judge to be unacceptable. But “western” democracies have also been firm about the unacceptability of Cuba’s disregard for human rights and for the holding of prisoners of conscience.

After the arrests of 75 democracy activists in March, 2003, the EU and its diplomatic missions in Cuba placed a severe downgrade on relations, which was only removed in 2009. There are varying degrees of warmth or lack of it among EU countries individually. Spain is the most active, including fast-track access to Spanish citizenship for Cubans with at least one Spanish grandparent, and productive partnerships in such areas as the environment, disaster preparedness and relief, and science and technology. The Czech Republic probably represents the other end of the EU scale, reflecting the priority that the former communist country places on democratic transition, and also the convictions on human rights of former president Vaclav Havel, who founded the International Committee for Democracy in Cuba. (The Fidel Castro government had supported the 1968 USSR invasion to crush Czech political reform). Individually, other EU countries have tried to engage the Cuban government in the last year, while also keeping a focus on prisoners’ lists. The European Commission has become a development partner of Cuba, but has done so in tandem with a high-level EU-Cuba dialogue on human rights.

Canada has maintained political engagement with Cuban authorities while arguing with them “nose-to-nose” for the space to continue contacts

with civil society. Although Cuba normally discounts economic leverage, the Cubans do care about their image in a country such as Canada that sends so many tourists to Cuba and continues to be an economic partner.

There are indications that Cuba knows it needs to reach out to major democracies to balance what will likely be a wave of activity from the us if and when relations do become more normal. Cuban leaders have told European partners they would like to think that Europe's greater emphasis on social democracy will enable Cuba to cement some of the social principles of the revolution amid inevitable change.

Resources and assets of democratic diplomats in Cuba

The Cuban government is not isolated from the representatives of foreign democratic governments as is Burma/Myanmar, nor is it indifferent to foreign views – the foreign press section of the Foreign Ministry is its biggest. But authorities can and do turn access for foreign diplomats on and off, depending on behavior.

The regime rarely goes so far as to request withdrawal of diplomatic representatives. Democratic diplomats do exercise their immunity in order to meet with civil society, speak freely, and even demonstrate solidarity with the victims of human rights abuse.

On the other side of the coin, there have been ample reports in the past of diplomatic immunity being violated by random if systemic acts of harassment and intimidation against mainly us diplomats, their dependents, and even their pets.

Diplomats have been able to count on the support of home authorities for diplomatic activity corresponding to the policies of the sending government at a given time. The most protagonistic approach was assigned to James Cason, the Bush administration's Head of the us Interests Section (a fully-staffed diplomatic mission located within the Swiss Embassy) from 2002 to 2005. Mr. Cason recalled he was told, "You are not at a mission. You are on a mission... The mission is to support the democracy movement."

In doing so, Mr. Cason antagonized Cuban authorities. It was an outcome that would not have been considered productive by other countries whose relationships were less officially hostile, but it was one that Washington (and Miami) at the time seemed to want. Writer Daniel Erikson explained that “Castro and his top ministers despised Cason (who ‘could not have cared less what Cuban officials thought’ of him, his focus (being) wholly on supporting Cuba’s nascent opposition movement). But they also found his overt support for Cuban dissidents to be politically useful, because it helped them to make the argument that opposition to the regime depended on overseas sponsors. Many Cubans in the system with reformist instincts found that the us Interests Section had become such a hot potato that they were forced to give it a wide berth.” On the other hand, Mr. Cason’s support for Cuban would-be democrats may well be remembered long after tit-for-tat antagonisms between the governments are forsaken.

The remarks of current UK Ambassador Dianna Melrose to a UK website on Cuban issues typify the dualistic approach most home authorities expect of their democratic diplomats. She spoke of her commitment to constructive engagement with the Cuban government. But she underlined that they cannot demand “mutual respect” to fend off criticism of the suppression of human rights in Cuba where “people are locked up for criticising the government” without “mutual respect also by the Cuban government for the European Union and the values important to us, including commitment to full civil and political rights, democratic freedoms, freedom of expression: all the rights that are fundamental to our society.” On this basis, EU diplomats have continued their contacts with a range of opposition and other figures in civil society as detailed in the next chapter on applications, confident they will have support at home for activities that demonstrate solidarity with those persecuted for their principles.

Former Canadian Ambassador Michael Small records he was always clear with Cuban authorities that his mandate was “to talk with the whole

range of the country,” and he was not curbed in making contacts with civil society.

Most diplomats interested in civil society contacts on a trip also met conscientiously with Cuban official contacts. The Cuban authorities respected a certain balance. If the emphasis became swollen toward dissidents, the official contacts were cut off and diplomats were left with only dissidents to meet.

Diplomats committed to maintaining contact with civil society and offering solidarity with human rights defenders come from the missions of several democratic countries in Cuba. The recent “Awards to Committed Diplomacy in Cuba” offered by CADAL (*Centro Para la Apertura y el Desarrollo de América Latina*) for “showing solidarity towards democrats in the island and for taking committed actions” on “human rights violations” honor three diplomats from Germany, two from the US, and one each from Poland, the Czech Republic, and Norway.

Diplomats recognize the reality that they have limited direct influence on any top-down regime whose political priorities are wholly internal. That being said, Cuba has specific development needs and not a lot of strategic leverage over countries able to address them. For decades, outside the US, Cuba enjoyed a generally sentimentally sympathetic international image and press, but the clampdown on free speech and political opposition, especially the arrests in 2003, have given the regime a black eye in democracies. A resolution adopted by the European Parliament in March, 2010 condemning Cuba directly addresses the responsibilities of Cuban authorities.

Raúl Castro has acknowledged that Cuba has to modernize, and to do this Cuba needs partners. This situation creates some political capital that embassies can deploy.

Financial assistance is a resource of diplomatic missions that ought to correspond to a dire shortage of resources on the part of Cuban NGOs. US agencies have very large amounts of money to disperse from funds authorized by Congress. The vast majority is spent on programs and NGOs outside

Cuba, though the Cuban Democracy Act (1992) authorized direct US funding of NGOs seeking non-violent change. The direct funding by embassies of civil society groups, especially advocacy NGOs, has been vigorously objected to by authorities. In practice, because it was controversial, such funding often became divisive, and as mentioned, placed some Cuban recipients in a position of vulnerability. Apart from the US, diplomatic missions in Havana generally do not provide funds to support political dissidents. But they pursue the opportunity to fund developmental activities in Cuba, often preferring projects undertaken at the municipal level by local authorities or coops.

That some US funds are channeled via NGOs in newer democracies such as the Czech Republic and Poland is an example of solidarity among democracies, though most embassies of democratic countries in Cuba confide it would have been counter-productive in recent years to be closely associated on political issues with the US Interests Section that in the words of a US diplomat, seemed “radioactive” because of the US regime change agenda. EU countries struggled to work out a common EU position, but there were until recently few formal demarches together with non-EU partners. Over the last two decades, “like-minded” embassies, including Sweden, the Netherlands, Canada, Chile, Mexico, Spain and Britain have regularly compared notes on the ground in Havana, though they do not coordinate activity in any organized way.

The election of a new US administration in 2008 has made the working relationships among embassies in Havana more productive, and mutually reinforcing acts of human rights support are more frequent, as detailed in the next chapter. Of course, EU embassies and those of other democracies have been consulting on development assistance issues.

Diplomats from Community of Democracies countries have consistently maintained the legitimacy of their solidarity with those seeking freedom of assembly and speech, and human rights defense. Cuba signed the Santiago Declaration in 1991 containing the “commitment to democracy, the strength-

ening of the rule of law, and access to effective justice and human rights.” In 2008, Cuba signed the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (see Annex) that guarantees such rights as well as the freedom to leave the country. There has been little apparent follow-up in concrete rights made available, but the fact that Cuba claims to be a democracy further legitimizes the right to support Cubans who seek debate about democratic norms.

Applications: The Golden Rules

Understanding Cuba and its nuances is a challenge for any foreign observer. There are angles and complexities at every turn. Diplomats are reminded constantly of the need to respect the Cubans’ sense of their history, both to understand the present, and to grasp the fundamentals of national psychology. Many of the structures of Cuban social organization in Cuba are unique to that society.

Diplomats from democracies balance ambivalence and nuance against the need to contest the categorical denial of fundamental human rights inherent in such official acts as the harsh sentences meted out to dissidents and reformers arrested in March, 2003, and the public cynicism over the crude propaganda with which the regime characterizes activists of conscience.

They register their deep respect for the courage of dissidents described by Mario Vargas Llosa as “those who resist the dictatorship in difficult, even heroic, conditions,” who continue to protest violations of human rights, and who pay a high price for taking a stand, often extended to their families. But the imperative for democratic diplomats to support those raising a democratic voice in opposition has in practice taken account of the greater vulnerability direct contact and especially direct financial support can trigger. In April, 2007, Oswaldo Payá and Marta Beatriz Roque (founder of the Assembly for the Promotion of Civil Society, who had been jailed in 2003 on trumped-up charges of “acts against the independence or territorial integrity of the state”) joined other democrats in stating that

“achieving changes in our society is a task corresponding to Cubans and only Cubans, to define and decide freely and democratically the future of Cuba without foreign intervention.” In short, supportive diplomats report a need to know when to keep their distance from those engaged in a struggle with authorities who monitor events closely, and especially contacts with foreign embassies in Cuba.

This applies to officials as well as to civil society activists. Diplomats observe that members of the political elite, even very senior figures such as deposed former Secretary of the Council of Ministers and Vice-President Dr. Carlos Lage, back off from what had been effective mutually beneficial contacts because of a need to avoid any accusation from security personnel of dangerous associations. In periods of thaw, such as the mid-to-late 1990s, younger officials were able to enjoy foreign contacts that in periods of retrenchment were then held against them with a cost to their careers.

Sharing among embassies is routine practice, though some are more like-minded than others. The EU, of course, shares systematically among member-state embassies and keeps balance and absence of duplication in development assistance efforts. On political/human rights issues, as mentioned above, some embassies, possibly those with fewer concrete interests at stake in Cuba, take stronger declaratory positions. There is acknowledgment of the potential for an informal division of labor and differentiation of role among democratic embassies, especially in the EU. As detailed later, EU diplomats have teamed up to support victims of political persecution and their families, and to demonstrate public solidarity with peaceful demonstrators.

Analysis of the situation in Cuba has been an ongoing duty of diplomats for many years; a local form of “Kremlinology” has grown out of the need to decipher opaque relationships in the FAR and in upper reaches of the Communist Party.

There have been major episodes of wishful thinking and cases of telling authorities at home what they wished to hear. Morris Morley (in *The Cuba*

Reader) cites CIA field officers on how, prior to January 1st, 1959, “Ambassadors Smith and Gardner were both absolutely convinced that Castro wasn’t going to come out of the hills. They believed what Batista told them and didn’t see that changes were going to come.”

Contemporary diplomats do not accept, obviously, the assessments of the Cuban regime at face value. They anticipate that the current repressive system will founder once Fidel Castro disappears from the scene. But they acknowledge that there is a risk of reporting isolated reforms, gestures, or contacts as heralding already the beginnings of more important structural change that has never yet emerged in any fundamental rights-altering way.

Cuba remains a closed society as far as information is concerned. There is no access to foreign news outlets (though bureaus of foreign media are in place). There had been a short-lived growth in the late 1990s of autonomous media but following a crackdown, none of the periodicals then published still exists (with the exception of the official *Gazeta* of the Union of Writers and Artists).

The Internet is basically not available to citizens, though recently it has become possible to acquire computers (at costs prohibitive for the vast majority). The regime seems to recognize that Cuban youth will access foreign websites and social networks through bootleg connections, and observers report a debate in Cuban political circles as to the inevitability of greater openness and its implications. A blogging community operates out of Cuba (the most prominent example being Yoani Sánchez of “Generation Y”), working through cut-out servers off the island where most of their readers are. There is an Internet freedom campaign channeled through RSF (Reporters Without Borders).

Journalists have been jailed for accepting financial aid from the us. The harsh fact is that there is no independent alternative in Cuba to state-owned tv and to the propagandistic Cuban news service *Granma*. The online newspaper *Candonga* in Holguín has been blocked and its director

Yosvani Anzardo Hernández was detained by police for two weeks and threatened with prosecution because he was acting as a correspondent for a Miami news site. Contact with foreign press is punishable in Cuba with sentences of up to 20 years. The Writers in Prison Committee of PEN International urges democratic governments to pursue the release of journalists among the prisoners of conscience in Cuban jails.

The us, whose resident Cuban exile community argues that Cubans are brainwashed by absence of alternative and objective views, inaugurated in 1982 Radio Martí which broadcasts to the island much as Radio Free Europe did to communist countries during the Cold War. The Cuban Government eventually jammed the broadcasts that are estimated to have had little credibility among the population in any case because of distrust of the us agenda, and the tone of hostility to the Revolution about which Cubans are conflicted.

The us Interests Section and embassies of other democratic countries have always made available news and information bulletins about world events and bilateral relations. Some welcome Cuban Internet users to embassy facilities.

The us Interests section has organized meetings and workshops, and distributed publications and information material at every opportunity, making the information program the Section's central activity. In 2006, the Interests Section ratcheted the campaign for freer information upward by installing an electronic news ticker along the top of its Havana building that attempted to rebut Cuban government claims and views. The authorities countered with a massive protest and the construction of a plaza for popular demonstrations against the us adjacent to the building whose electronic ticker they attempted to block from view by masses of black flags.

The tit-for-tat campaign spurred on by Fidel Castro and the Bush Administration has since been deescalated and the us administration pulled the plug of the electronic ticker in July, 2009.

Despite the crackdown a decade ago that reversed short-lived tolerance of independent commentators and outlets, Cuban scholars and intellectuals continue to value access to outside contacts and materials. A semi-autonomous magazine of social commentary, *Temas*, is printed in and distributed from Colombia and has sustained a fair measure of free-wheeling debate, mirrored by *Temas*' regular monthly public discussions of current social and economic issues. Some embassies help start-up magazines by providing access to newsprint.

Working with the Government

The prevailing approach of democracies represented diplomatically in Cuba toward working with the government is to do so without forfeiting the need to dialogue on the human rights situation and demarche the Cuban authorities when the situation calls for it.

A dominant theme of foreign analysis expects that significant political reform in Cuba is more likely to emerge from circles and developments within government than from fragmented political opponents of government who are not well known to a public immersed in state propaganda and in any case preoccupied by bread-and-butter issues. But if so, few Cuban officials allow themselves to be perceived by foreigners as potential agents of democratic change. Still, the functional value of developing a wide range of confidence-building contacts among government officials, including in the FAR, is undoubted. US and Cuban military authorities have cooperated on issues arising from the US presence at Guantánamo, and on maritime patrolling against drug trafficking. Canadian federal police work with the Cubans on trafficking issues. Several intelligence agencies from democracies have working relationships with Cuban counterparts at the Ministry of the Interior on concrete issues where notes can usefully be compared.

The Cuban regime projects an air of supreme self-confidence that narrows opportunities for diplomats to advise the government. But confidence-

building activities addressing Cuban concerns are possible. The challenges of delivering large amounts of humanitarian aid in the aftermath of devastating hurricanes costing 20% of GDP, engaged the Cuban authorities for the first time in working partnerships with foreign agencies and NGOs, prominent among them, Catholic Relief Services.

Several embassies work on a variety of infrastructure and social issues with municipal levels of government and local co-ops, such as projects for restoration of historic monuments, buildings, and whole neighborhoods, partnered by agencies of EU member states.

US authorities have worked effectively with Cuban authorities over hostage and other emergencies even at the height of tension in relations. Under the Obama administration there is an increase in contacts, though diplomats report disappointment among Cubans that controls persist over scholarly and cultural exchanges. Cuban authorities allowed US military overflights for emergency relief operation after the Haiti earthquake. Cuban medical teams participated in the international effort there which represented a change from earlier international humanitarian operations in Haiti when the Canadian Prime Minister's suggestion Cuban cooperation be engaged ran into political complications.

Dialoguing with Cuban authorities takes place at the political level with possibly increasing degrees of frankness, with ministers and senior officials from Europe, Latin America, and North America. Diplomats report that senior Cuban officials take non-polemical dialogue seriously. Several ambassadors report that it is productive not to work human rights into every discussion. This may have the effect of adding force to specific demarches on human rights. But declarations made by western ministers for the benefit of their domestic audience tend to undermine the credibility of such demarches in Cuban eyes. Publicly-announced exercises in passing prisoners' lists generally remain without outcome, deflected with the answers, "We'll check", or "It's on Fidel's desk." But private communications in 2008 by Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, and

Pope John Paul II during his own visit in 1998, did have a more productive effect, as have the discussions undertaken by Cardinal Ortega leading to release of the 52 remaining prisoners arrested in March, 2003. Carefully pre-negotiated outcomes for specific head of government visits have obtained exit permits for designated Cuban activists accepted for asylum in the country concerned. This was done without publicity.

Reaching Out

Connecting to civil society is essential to most democratic missions, though how it is done is carefully considered. It is obvious that civil society in Cuba is underdeveloped, and not well networked, and could benefit from international contacts and non-political support. But the benefits to members of civil society have to be weighed against the risks of their being accused of being subject to foreign influence.

British Ambassador Melrose echoed the position of several ambassadors of Community of Democracies countries when she stated that “We don’t accept any government can tell us who we can or can’t speak to. There are British and other EU Ministers who would very much like to come to Cuba. But they insist on being able to have meetings with both their Cuban government counterparts and with whoever they choose from the peaceful opposition.”

us diplomats from Washington recently met privately with opposition figures after concluding a round of re-launched immigration talks. (These talks had been broken off by the us in 2003). Cuban spokesmen initially reacted wildly to the meetings, accusing the American officials of “plotting subversion” with “dozens of their mercenaries.” Assistant Secretary Crowley responded that “meeting with representatives of civil society who simply want a voice in the future of their country is not ‘subversive.’” On February 23rd, Ricardo Alarcón, the President of the Parliament, lowered the tone of Cuban reaction, observing that such meetings with civil society are not apt to “rupture the dialogue.”

Democratic embassies follow different practices for purposes of connecting to specific figures of the peaceful opposition. Many designate officers within the embassy as the prime focus of contact, without diminishing the ambassador's political commitment. Some missions, and notably us personnel, stress the symbolic importance of the head of mission being seen personally in acts of personal solidarity and outreach.

Some ambassadors make a point of not hosting political opposition figures at their official residences, but receive them privately in the embassy chancery. To meet opposition figures outside, heads of mission tend to join events that include political activists hosted by other embassy officers. As pointed out above by Ambassador Melrose, visiting ministers and senior officials of Community of Democracies countries often insist on including in their programs meetings with opposition figures, and they generally also often do so privately at their embassy's chancery.

Embassies play an essential role in brokering and encouraging people-to-people exchanges with groups in their own countries. Cubans are deeply committed to high performance in culture and sports, and avidly welcome connections with partners and to events abroad. The Cuban authorities are wary, and of course the hardening of us rules on exchanges limited interchange with America in recent years, though it is now showing signs of revival.

Convening opposition or civil society members invites friction with the government but several democratic embassies have offered embassy venues for workshops or discussions on a good offices basis without specific political goals on issues that Cubans need to resolve among themselves.

Over recent years, different democratic embassies have taken a variety of approaches to inviting civil society representatives and political activists to official receptions. In that Cuban authorities object to their presence, some embassies give two distinct receptions on National Days, while others continue to mix them together, accepting that there will in consequence be fewer if any higher level representatives from government.

Cuban authorities can be volatile when embassies alter practice in favor of greater presence of democracy activists: one year, the authorities withheld an embassy's permit to clear liquor and wine through customs until after the reception (to which dissidents had been prominently invited) had taken place.

The fragmentation of Cuban democratic opposition poses the question of whether democratic embassies could facilitate greater cooperation by offering their neutral good offices to groups seeking to work together more effectively, as has been done in authoritarian settings elsewhere, such as Chile or South Africa. In Cuba, that would be difficult to do except very indirectly.

Embassies do facilitate contacts between Cuban citizens and family members outside Cuba, with several making Internet available for the purpose.

Cuba has succeeded in exporting into exile much of its opposition. Several democracies facilitate refugee status for those seeking or having to leave Cuba, especially the US, Spain, Canada, Mexico, France, and Chile, occasionally, as mentioned above, as negotiated outcomes of high-level official visits.

There has been a long tradition of the Cuban exile diaspora seeking harmony of purpose with activists inside Cuba (Jose Martí's sojourn in the US prior to the 1895 rebellion comes to mind). Democratic governments and institutions abroad frequently sponsor workshops and colloquia on Cuban human rights issues. However, because of the state control of media, these events have minimal direct resonance within Cuba, insulated by barriers to information from outside. Writer Raúl Rivero who had been sentenced to 20 years in prison in 2003 but released in 2004 on health grounds expressed appreciation for his refuge in Spain, where he acknowledged to Daniel Erikson, "the community has been very welcoming... The journalistic community has embraced me." But the harshness of conditions in Cuba provided him with little opportunity for re-connecting. Yet while the direct connections between dissidents outside and civil society inside may not be

robust, the knowledge inside that such mobilization of democrats outside occurs provides moral reinforcement for Cuban democrats.

Financing civil society and NGOs is controversial and subject to close official scrutiny. Direct financial support for opposition groups has resulted in accusations that they are “mercenaries,” and embassies avoid those situations. But fast-disbursing small amounts of support from mission funds of democratic embassies can be of great value to groups working on development and social issues. Embassies value the opportunities that emerge at local levels for small projects where there is less likelihood the partnerships can be misconstrued as having a political rather than developmental, or even humanitarian, agenda. Sometimes, they make contributions anonymously.

Showcasing experience and creative cultural performance is central to public diplomacy in Cuba. Cuban artistic and cultural life has always been vibrant. Though constrained on issues of self-expression with any political implication, graphic art, music, and dance are among art forms where Cuban performance has created an audience avid for connections to performance from outside.

Cuban youth are keen to have the opportunities to consume international popular culture. The rock music scene has emerged in strength and after an extended critical attitude, the regime has bowed to the inevitable strength of popular culture.

Embassies are able to invite from capitals experts in a range of activities where the Cuban system needs development, or where the delivery of services falls short, as well as scholars to engage with Cuban researchers and academia. Canadian cooperation for some years was typical in lending the benefits of Canadian experience to institution building that is not overtly political but that contributes to the habits of transparency and accountability: the development of effective committees in Parliament, systemically greater accountability of Ministers, and an Ombudsman’s office in government. Another notable emphasis has been on decentral-

ized partnership activity working with Cuban unions and housing, food production, or micro-financing coops in the provinces.

Showcasing political examples can also be effective. The Cuban ambivalence about US involvement in Cuban affairs has always had at one pole the “America of Abraham Lincoln” whose Emancipation Proclamation had enormous impact on an island where at the time about half the population was composed of slaves and freed slaves originally from Africa. There are differing views as to the extent to which race relations are vexed in Cuba today. Ostensibly Cuban society is non-racial, but interest is high in others’ experiences in managing pluralistic societies, though this is a difficult topic for Cuba’s monolithic socialist model.

Defending Democrats

Demonstrating solidarity with persecuted peaceful democracy activists is part and parcel of embassy support for the rights of freedom of assembly and speech that democratic countries represent. Embassy personnel can often provide a local focus to recognition extended by their governments and parliaments to local democrats, such as the resolution of the European Parliament March 10th, criticizing Cuban human rights violations.

In bestowing an international profile along with its annual Andrei Sakharov Award, the Parliament may also have enabled in the case of recipient Oswaldo Payá a degree of insulation from direct persecution. But this was not the case for the *Damas de Blanco*, who also received the Sakharov Award. The several Ladies in White are wives of prisoners of conscience arrested in March 2003 and still jailed. To express their silent protest, the women attend mass on Sunday in Santa Rita Church in Havana’s *quinta avenida* before proceeding on a short walk in public. Clearly, the dignity and moral force of their protest irked authorities to the point of retaliation. In April, 2010, pro-government groups harassed the *Damas de Blanco* (a frequent act of organized intimidation called an *acto de repudio*), at one point confining them under harsh abuse for several hours.

Diplomats responded in support. us diplomat Lowell Dale Lawton attended a recent mass with the women. German and Czech Embassy officers Volker Pellet and Frantisek Fleisman accompanied them on their walk.

Verifying and witnessing is an important embassy function in regard to such acts of intimidation. Chris Stimpson of the UK Embassy described his presence as a witness at the confrontation with the organized counter-protestors as constituting observation “to monitor human rights and freedom of expression.”

There are also efforts to verify the health of prisoners of conscience. Cuban authorities do not grant human rights monitors access to their prisons. Recently, some prisoners of conscience have undertaken hunger strikes. One of the 75 arrested in March 2003, Orlando Zapata Tamayo, died as a result on February 23rd, 2010. Foreign leaders such as US Secretary of State Clinton and Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero condemned the act that Amnesty International called “a terrible illustration of the despair facing prisoners of conscience who see no hope of being freed from their unfair and prolonged incarceration.” The Mexican and Chilean parliaments adopted similar declarations. President Raúl Castro unusually expressed public regret for Zapata’s death, though the authorities then arrested dozens of his supporters to prevent them from attending the funeral that was, however, attended by diplomats from several countries. There have been concessions since, worked out in a meeting in May, 2010 between Raúl Castro and Cardinal Ortega, to ensure adequate hospital treatment for sick prisoners and to move prisoners to their home provinces to facilitate family contacts and then, the announcement in July 2010 that all 52 remaining prisoners from March, 2003, would be released.

In August 2009, five EU diplomats from Sweden, the UK, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic brought food and clothing to the wife of Darsi Ferrer, imprisoned without charge in July the day before he was to lead a demonstration for human rights. The Cuban Foreign Ministry protested that “the EU is putting in danger the political dialogue begun with Cuba.”

But as an EU Mission spokesman in Havana (Sven Kühn von Burgsdorff) restated the EU's policy on the occasion of re-launching the dialogue, "there is no reason to lack trust in our desire to do both things at the same time – improve dialogue with the government, and with civil society, including the peaceful opposition."


Such acts by diplomats of demonstrating solidarity, and witnessing events, do have the effect of offering some protection to activists and human rights defenders who have already courageously crossed the line of protest so that gestures of moral support for their rights do not expose them particularly to greater danger.

Direct acts of protection have also been performed by embassies in Havana over the years. Dr. Julia Sweig records the most prominent of these: "By March of 1980 a handful of Cuban citizens had already smuggled themselves into foreign embassies in search of asylum. The Peruvian embassy was one target, and the Peruvian government was not at the time disposed to return the intruders to Cuban authorities. Later that month, when several Cubans crashed a bus into the gate of the Peruvian complex and provoked a violent incident with Cuban soldiers, Fidel responded by removing all police protection from embassy grounds. Within 48 hours, over 10,000 citizens had taken refuge inside the gates."

The episode led to the Mariel boatlift, once US President Carter said he would open America's doors to Cubans wishing to leave. Fidel Castro took up the offer and within months 125,000 Cubans so emigrated.



Looking forward

Cuba represents a complex challenge for democratic diplomats today. Pressing the regime to drop its absolutist doctrines in favor of a full-blown democracy is unrewarding in practical terms. And yet, a relativist approach that concedes that the denial of essential and universal human rights can be overlooked is not one most members of the Community of Democracies can accept.



Clearly, in Cuba, a transition is anticipated if not actually already underway. The outcome is unpredictable though it is clear that the Cuban population, especially younger Cubans, want to be part of their open hemispheric world and the wider world. Diplomats in Cuba from democracies represent links to that aspiration and are its witnesses on behalf of democrats everywhere, all the while trying to engage the Cuban authorities in activity and contact that will help improve the situation of Cubans today.

The us administration is also working for more normal relations. There is an irreducible *quid quo pro* the EU and other democratic partners and their embassies keep in mind. Perhaps President Obama's words of advice for Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero best sum up the prognosis, "Have the Foreign Minister tell the Cuban authorities we understand that change can't happen overnight, but down the road, when we both look at this time, it should be clear that now is when those changes began."



INTERVIEW WITH JORGE EDWARDS, AUTHOR OF PERSONA NON GRATA³¹

Gabriel C. Salvia

Jorge Edwards was born June 29th, 1931 in Santiago, Chile. He studied Law at the University of Chile but never practiced, opting to pursue his literary vocation. In 1952 he published his first volume of stories, *El Patio* (The patio) and two years later began his diplomatic career. He acted as Secretary of the Chilean Embassy in Paris, at the same time devoting considerable energy to his book *El peso de la noche* (The weight of the night), published in 1965. In 1970 the Chilean government sent him to Havana on a special mission to reestablish the suspended diplomatic relations between the two countries. Three months were long enough for Fidel Castro to declare him *persona non grata* for his support of dissident intellectuals, and from this controversial experience emerged the book *Persona non grata* (1971).

Edwards moved to Barcelona in 1973, where he worked as literary advisor for Seix Barral and as director of a small publishing house, while contributing articles to the country's most prominent newspapers. During his years of exile he wrote the lauded compilation of essays *Desde la cola del dragón* (From the tail of the dragon) in 1977 and *Los convidados de piedra* (The bystanders) in 1978. Returning to his country that same year, he was designated a member of the Chilean Academy of Language.

In 1990 Edwards won the publisher Tusquets' Comillas Prize for his manuscript on the life of Pablo Neruda, *Adiós, poeta* (Goodbye, poet). In 1994, he received the National Prize for Literature in recognition of his long career and support for Chilean arts, and in 2000 he received the Cervantes Prize. That same year, President Ricardo Lagos of Chile awarded him the Gabriela Mistral Order of Merit. He is currently Chile's Ambassador to France. In

³¹ http://www.puentedemocratico.org/entrevistas/nota.asp?id_nota=1580

December 2006 he was kind enough to give an extensive interview for the radio show *Apertura Latinoamericana*, later reproduced for the Democratic Bridge website and presented in summary below.

*Could you summarize the epilogue you have written for the new edition of *Persona non grata*?*

Persona non grata has had many editions, I don't even know how many anymore. Every so often it's reprinted, so I've written a new prologue many times. At the start of this year – 2006 – I wrote an epilogue to replace the original, which had a lot to do with Chilean situations, with the Embassy of Chile in France and Pablo Neruda. This new epilogue, a commentary on the Latin American situation today from the perspective of Cuba and its influence, replaces the other. This is a situation that naturally, over time, has decayed, changed, taken other characteristics; regardless, some “little Fidels” have emerged in Latin America in the form of Hugo Chávez and company.

The new epilogue is an analysis of that phenomenon, which appears to me rather anachronistic, with weak theoretical foundations (it doesn't have an ideological base as the Cuban Revolution did in its beginnings), a pseudo-Marxist and quite populist phenomenon that has characteristics similar to “peronism” in Argentina and Latin American nationalism. For example, there are curious allusions to Juan Velasco Alvarado's military experience in Peru. Hugo Chávez once said that. It is an analysis of this situation. I don't think this phenomenon is as frightening as some see it, because I think it's going to pass and that this is already beginning to happen with the triumph of Rafael Correa in Ecuador. He is, deep down, quite different from Chávez, in spite of all his declarations of friendship with [the Venezuelan president]. He says Ecuador is not going to be influenced by George W. Bush *or* by Hugo Chávez. My analysis covers up to election of Michelle Bachelet and the first days of her government in Chile, but doesn't discuss Ecuador or Lula da Silva's reelection.

It's been thirty-three years since Persona non grata was published. How much does the role of Latin American countries, especially the democracies that emerged from dictatorships, have to do with Cuba's failure to initiate a democratic transition or respect human rights?

I think we're weak in terms of democracy. We have a kind of complex. To us, democracy seems like the better of two evils, and I think this is a very profound mistake. Our ideology should be based on grand principles, on those that date to the 18th century French Enlightenment. Deep down, this reflects our weakness in modern intellectual development, because Spain and Latin America had a weak Enlightenment and a maudlin Romanticism without the depth of the great European Romantic period. Today they have a rather precarious modernity. That's the truth of it. So we're too tolerant in the face of foolishness flung at us from Cuba or from Venezuela. We're too lenient; we have no solid base with which to face these problems. And I think in this we're practically all responsible – at least those governments characterized by that leniency – and that it is an error, because it affects us too. Eventually, aberrant expressions emerge in our domestic politics, derived from that lack of clarity.

For example, in Chile there is some sympathy for those hooded students that throw stones at the police and a certain principled antipathy for the police force that keeps order. This is always expressed in the political declarations of the left, the center-left, etc. The other day, a group of those hooded students entered a University library, took more than a thousand volumes and burned them in the street! So, how can we have sympathy for that? It's clearly fascist. The Nazis in Germany did it and now the hooded students in Chile have done it. They must be Castro supporters. If you ask them, they'll say they're *castristas*, and that they're admirers of Hugo Chávez. Among the burnt volumes were the works of three great Chilean intellectuals: Ricardo Latcham, who was a great literary critic; Mariano Latorre, a novelist of the Criolle era; and Mario Góngora, a notable historian, one of the people who has thought about the Chilean 20th century with most clarity. So we have a

long way to go still. We have to be very clear and much more firm in these questions. A friend of mine said to me recently: “you get more right-wing every day”, and I answered him: “so you’re going to tell me that those students who throw stones and burn books are of the left?” He was silent.

What do you think of the democratic left’s evolution in Latin America?

Deep down, the intelligent intellectuals – because remember: to be an intellectual is not the same as, nor proof of, being intelligent – have reacted and have changed. Think about Mario Vargas Llosa, who was of the extreme left when I met him in Paris in the 1970s and today is a completely changed man. And there are many other cases. Fernando Savater is another one. The best intellectuals have reacted. Many have been left behind, but the important thing is the intellectual vanguard: it is what sets the tone and what, at bottom, has a kind of intellectual hegemony, winning only in the terrain of ideas. This is what’s interesting. We will always be a few, but the situation should be accepted and we must remain alert.

There is also the sensation, at least one notices it here in Argentina, that the issue of human rights is becoming quite politicized. Some of those who criticize the Cuban regime didn’t criticize the military dictatorships and those who suffered human rights violations (in this country we have Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel) appear in a tribunal next to Fidel Castro. Why is there no honest defense of human rights?

This often happens in Argentina and I don’t understand why. The unilateral defense of human rights is an absolute classic. Rights are valid for one side or the other depending on one’s political leanings. So, for the Argentine Peace Prize winner human rights must be defended in Chile but not in Cuba. I have defended human rights both in Chile and Cuba. This is the difficult, important and interesting thing. One is accused of many things for doing so, but must continue.

You're aware of the position taken [in 1996] by the European Union to invite the dissidents to the embassies. This is a form of recognizing them and is something that has a rich tradition in Argentina. Here, ambassadors from countries such as France, Venezuela and the United States invited the politically persecuted in order to reverse the ostracism the Argentine military dictatorship had imposed on them. How do you see the discussion underway in the European Union [regarding its common position towards Cuba] and why do you think the countries of Latin America are so far from even discussing this matter?

The European Union took the correct position when it began to open up to the Cuban dissident community; later, it took a certain step back in this sense. But in the end, the European vision is always, deep down, the humanist vision, the Enlightenment vision: it's the vision of human rights in their classic sense. And among us that vision, as I said, is weak. It's confused and blurred because of a geographic distance that is also an intellectual, even ethical distance. But the line taken by the European Union in that moment was a good one. For example, not long ago in Madrid there was an event in homage of Raúl Rivero, the Cuban poet who was imprisoned until recently and now lives in Madrid. In this homage there were representatives of both the People's Party (it was still the time of José María Aznar) and of the Socialist Party, smaller but still there, present in the homage, which seemed rather important to me. And that is an attitude that, happily, exists in Europe: in that sense they have a clarity we lack, basically.

How do you think Latin American democracies can contribute at this precise moment in Cuba?

A transition is evidently drawing near, because the Revolution without Fidel is another thing entirely, something difficult to conceive. It's an old revolution with an old leader. The leader is going to disappear. Maybe not tomorrow, but certainly the next day. And Latin American democracies have to be thinking about this and they need to deal with it well. That transition has to be done well. If it happens, for example, in a violent man-

ner, with armed interventions, with civil war, it'll be a disaster. And it's going to affect us all, because it would be unthinkable that a great conflict there has no consequences in Mexico, in Central America, in Venezuela, everywhere. We must all be prepared and things must be done well. This presupposes clear thought and an awareness of the great themes of human rights, political democracy, etc.

Whenever one speaks with diplomats and politicians who are seen to be reluctant to face this matter, one of the things to point out to them is that one of these days they will have to speak with Cuban democrats. They're going to have to speak with Oswaldo Payá, Vladimiro Roca, Marta Beatriz Roque, etc.

There is an important phenomenon that must be taken account of, that in the Cuban exile community, which some years ago was quite tough and a little *pinochetista*, for example, have also emerged democratic movements and voices. So, the internal Cuban democratic groups together with those in exile can do a lot. I trust in that. I know those people quite well. I've spoken with Raúl Rivero, as I said, and I think a coherent group can be formed, a union of forces that ought to be strongly supported by Latin American democracies in general, and by the United States as well, the democratic United States.

Finally, would you like to send a message to the people in Cuba who fight for human rights?

Well, I've always felt a great solidarity with, and a great human sympathy and admiration for the people that fight for democracy from inside Cuba. Because the struggle there is difficult yet valid, and there, on the island, it truly does have enormous meaning. So all my affection, all my support and all my solidarity with them.

THE PRECEDENTS OF COMMITTED DIPLOMACY³²

Pablo Brum and Mariana Dambolena

In September of 1940, Chiune Sugihara boarded a train that would take him from Kaunas (in Lithuania, then part of the Soviet Union), to his next destination, Prague. He quickly took a seat by the window, which he opened, and started swapping papers with several people outside the train. Even as the train began its slow march, these people handed him the papers, which Sugihara scribbled on and then returned. They repeated the process literally until the last minute, when the speed of the train was too high to maintain the exchange. Sugihara, working feverishly, kept on signing and throwing the slips out the window as the train sped away from the station.

Chiune Sugihara was a diplomat working for the government of Japan, more specifically as the Vice Consul in Kaunas. His job consisted of representing his government in the cities to which he was assigned, as well as taking care of bureaucratic issues. The documents he was signing were transit visas, which allowed those who carried them to freely enter and exit Japan. The people running along the train were European Jews, and the paper they held in their hands was the difference between life and a mass grave.

Sugihara managed to deliver approximately six thousand transit permits in total. By doing so he violated orders and risked the wrath of forces vastly larger than his diminutive figure: the National Socialist government of Germany, which had a policy of hunting down and exterminating any and all Jews, as well as his own government of Japan. It is important to remember that the latter had its own slate of mass killings of civilian populations, frequently accompanied by extreme cruelty. Sugihara risked

³² Pablo Brum and Mariana Dambolena "On Diplomatic Commitment to Human Rights" CADAL's Documents, Year VII, Number 98, May 14th, 2009 (Abridged version).

his life and, failing that, his expulsion, firing and purge on the part of a government that was a key ally of Germany – the country that militarily dominated the entire region.

Chiune Sugihara entered history as a humane and, more specifically, a diplomatic example. When the time came to take actions that most were unable to do, he chose to use the extraordinary power these government agents possess to save lives. In one of the most violent political climates in history, and surrounded by two of the most odious governments ever seen, Sugihara chose to do the right thing from a humanitarian point of view, beyond legal considerations. His example refers to an extreme case like the Second World War, but it serves as an illustration of the key point in understanding committed diplomacy: there are no excuses. Diplomats and their bosses frequently face the choice of what to do with the power they are granted by their governments in contexts where it could protect civilians from harm. In many cases, they convince themselves of their own lack of capacity or need to act – but Sugihara's name will always be engraved in Yad Vashem, the museum that memorializes the *Shoah* in Jerusalem, to remind them of what it is possible to achieve.

Many other people have entered history, aside from Sugihara, for making similar efforts. Perhaps the most famous of all is the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, who also used his diplomatic authority during the Second World War to rescue European Jews from the *Schutzstaffel*. Wallenberg extended the physical protection of the Swedish government to buildings packed with Jewish refugees, and also made frenzied deliveries of Swedish passports that automatically protected those who carried them. It is estimated he saved the lives of several thousand people.

Sugihara and Wallenberg are two dramatic examples that belong to a shameful period of humanity, but they are not the only ones. Therefore, it is worth reviewing some examples from the Latin American context, which has had its own cases of diplomats committed to the protection of human rights and liberties.

Why It Matters

The description of a diplomat's job does not include among its tasks a preoccupation with the fate of citizens of third countries, or of events in general that do not involve their own country.³³ Strictly speaking, a diplomat is the agent of a state, whose mission is to represent it and advance its interests.³⁴

As a matter of fact, there are theories based on the idea that, for diverse reasons, governments should not pass judgment on the political systems of other countries. Latin America has the dubious honor of having its own version of this principle, more specifically in the case of the so-called Estrada Doctrine. This concept takes its name from Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs Genaro Estrada, who directed his country's diplomacy at the beginning of the 1930s. Part of its inspiration came from the fact that the United States had refused to recognize the coup-established regimes of Porfirio Díaz and Victoriano Huerta in previous decades, much to the chagrin of Mexican diplomatic pride.

In 1930, Estrada instructed his diplomats³⁵ to work in the same way all dictatorships worldwide propose today: that treating a government based on its political system constitutes interference in its internal affairs. Aside from the numerous practical defects this practice has originated³⁶, it sets out with two basic theoretical mistakes.

³³ In fact, Article 41 of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations—which regulates the establishment of diplomatic missions says that “it is the duty” of those who enjoy diplomatic privileges “not to interfere in the internal affairs of that State.(...) The premises of the mission must not be used in any manner incompatible with the functions of the mission as laid down in the present Convention”.

³⁴ The Convention limits diplomatic activities to “(a) Representing the sending State in the receiving State; (b) Protecting in the receiving State the interests of the sending State and of its nationals, within the limits permitted by international law; (c) Negotiating with the Government of the receiving State; (d) Ascertaining by all lawful means conditions and developments in the receiving State, and reporting thereon to the Government of the sending State; (e) Promoting friendly relations between the sending State and the receiving State, and developing their economic, cultural and scientific relations;”

³⁵ “Mexico does not express itself in the sense of granting recognitions, because it considers that to be a denigratory practice that, in hurting the sovereignty of other nations, puts them in the position of having their internal affairs commented on by other governments who, in fact, adopt a critical attitude in deciding on the legal qualifications of foreign regimes”.

³⁶ Which generally consist of post facto discoveries of horrors such as famine in North Korea, the holodomor in Ukraine or Tiananmen, as well as violence originating in unmonitored authoritarian states, which ranges from the Great War to September 11th.

The first one is that by affirming that other government systems have the same value and diplomatic legitimacy as the one from the country that originates this policy, what is being suggested is that democracy is not the only legitimate system of government. In other words, a freely elected president has the same merit as one resulting from a coup d'état. This constitutes direct sabotage on the legitimacy of democracy in the very country that proposes this policy.

The second consists of eliminating the other country's citizens from the equation. According to the Estrada Doctrine, relations should strictly be conducted by agents of governments, independently of how these gained access to power. Thus, any consideration on the democratic origins of political power in a country is ignored, as are the universally recognized³⁷ rights of its citizens.³⁸ This hardly constitutes a reasonable premise for good relations between two societies. Even then, to this day there are people –including the Mexican government– who defend this practice: “Founded on perennial principles of universal validity, the Doctrine remains valid”.³⁹

The Estrada Doctrine is not the only proposal of its kind. It is important to clarify that it was hatched in the context of an ideological struggle in the diplomatic field, between those who favored recognizing *de facto* governments and those who did not. In that sense, it is not directly linked with

³⁷ Thus described in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the mother treaty on the subject: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood (...) Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person (...) Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (...) Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression (...) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association”.

³⁸ As an example, in an article published in 2001 in the Houston Journal of International Law, Christopher Gadoury describes the Estrada Doctrine in the context of a possible recognition of the Taliban government of Afghanistan as legitimate: “Under the Estrada Doctrine, the recognition of governments that come to power through extraconstitutional means is for all practical purposes eliminated from diplomatic practice. Only new states are recognized; when a new government comes to power either through constitutional means or otherwise, its relations with outside states remain unchanged.” A few months later, Islamic terrorists trained and financed in Afghanistan launched the greatest terrorist attack in history.

³⁹ La Doctrina Estrada y el principio de la no-intervención, Jorge Palacios, Nuestra Comunidad Magazine, N° 117.

the acts of diplomats inside a country. Nonetheless, it is one of the clearest practical applications in Latin America of a certain current of foreign policy thinking.

In international relations theory, the oldest school –the one known as realism that traditionally designates the Athenian historian Thucydides as its first exponent- is generally associated with these ideas.

The meeting point between realism and policies that refrain from committing diplomats to human rights is the way in which the world is conceived from that optic. The only relevant actors are states, and the determining factor in foreign policy is the “national interest”. Since the primary objective of a realist foreign policy is preserving the stability of the international system, it is advisable to minimize frictions between governments, particularly by abstaining from interfering in others’ “internal affairs”.

These ideas were originally expressed to guarantee international peace, and are not linked to the fight against genocide or for human rights; this is only a modern development. However, in practice it is a fact that both from the caution of democracies and from the defensive posture of dictatorships, it is common to hear that “interests” and the respect for a state-based system that has its origins in the 1648 Peace of Westfalia, must be prioritized.

One example of the continuous line drawn by this international practice appears in a paper by Mexican author Antonio Gómez Robledo, in which he analyzes the Estrada Doctrine. In that work, he uses the following quote from Samuel von Pufendorf, a German theoretician who in 1672 wrote: “It is not up to foreigners to examine the title by which a man has assumed sovereignty; they should merely consider the possession, and most of all if said person holds great resources”.⁴⁰

Two hundred years later, in 1982, Mexico’s Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs defended the Estrada Doctrine with dangerous ideas such as these:

⁴⁰ The quote comes from *De Iure Naturae et Gentium*, which Gómez Robledo resurrects in his “Notas sobre la doctrina Estrada”, published in 1986.

“The thesis of the legitimacy of governments, of which [Thomas Woodrow] Wilson was a paladin, has with time been discarded, and foreign authors seem to agree on legitimacy being part of the internal affairs of a state, and not a matter that should be resolved by strangers.”⁴¹

These references to the “sovereignty” and “legitimacy” of governments based only on the fact that they hold power, and to the “internal affairs” of a country, are crucial in understanding the essence of the problem. The abuse of these concepts is one of the main factors in current international politics that blocks humanitarian aid to victims of violence, be it from non-governmental organizations, international aid agencies and, no less importantly, from diplomats coming from third countries.

What is frequently called committed diplomacy lies on the frontier between two fields that are compatible but naturally different. On one side stands diplomacy as a function of government. It is a salaried, subordinate and carefully delimited activity. In fact, it is one of the most protocol and legalism-smothered practices. It is surrounded by sensibilities and precautions designed to minimize the possibility of disagreements and conflicts, while at the same time maximizing agreements, acts of courtesy and compliments.

On the other side is the philosophical field, from which the concept of human rights was born. Even though said idea has also supported itself on legal instruments –such as the various liberal constitutions or the Universal Declaration that codified them-, in general it has not adapted well to the world of laws: “The Universal Declaration may plausibly be argued to have attained the status of customary international law. Any legal force it has, however, rests on state practice (...) and is entirely independent of the fact that it is a UN resolution. Furthermore, (...) this normative force has not been translated into strong procedures.”⁴²

⁴¹ Cómo entiende el gobierno de México la doctrina Estrada, José Maximiliano Alfonso de Rosenzweig Díaz.

⁴² International Human Rights: A Regime Analysis, Jack Donnelly, International Organization, Vol. 40, No. 3, 1986.

The reason is that the labyrinthine world of treaties, sovereignties and borders has too often been used to impede actions in defense of said rights. It is precisely this barrier against action that committed diplomacy must overcome. It is often the case that a commitment to the defense of human rights goes beyond the responsibilities and powers that diplomatic law grants an individual.

American philosopher John Rawls developed some of these ideas, although not in reference specifically to diplomacy but to international politics. In “The Law of Peoples”, Rawls establishes the general principles that must be accepted in liberal and non-liberal, “decent” and “indecent” societies, to conduct relationships. In this sense, he draws a distinction between basic human rights and citizens’ rights in a constitutional liberal democracy.

In Rawls’ opinion, the defense of human rights is a duty in the foreign policy of each state. His work debates the moral principles that should guide the delivery of help to certain non-liberal societies subjected to unfavorable conditions, and points out the moral duty of diplomacy to provide aid in those cases.

This document focuses on the issue of committed diplomacy in Latin America. To do so, there are noteworthy accounts of Latin American diplomats –as well as out-of-the-region diplomats working in Latin America– who, in doing their jobs, took action to defend human rights. The objective is to keep these stories alive, because they deserve to be remembered, as well as reminding those who have the power to help victims of violence that others have already treaded the path.

Some Noteworthy Cases

The Second World War, mainly due to its never-matched dimensions, is the conflict where the most acts of diplomatic bravery can be observed. Many, such as those of Wallenberg and Sugihara, have become models of committed diplomacy. Others, comparatively forgotten, have equal merit.

More specifically, some of these consist of Latin American diplomats taking action in Europe to save the lives of refugees, almost always Jewish victims of German persecution.

A very prominent case is that of José Arturo Castellanos, known as the “Salvadorian Oskar Schindler”. As his country’s Consul in Geneva, he saved approximately thirty thousand (some sources estimate even forty thousand) European Jews.

Castellanos, who had military training, designated a Hungarian Jewish refugee living in Switzerland named George Mandel-Mantello as his First Secretary in the Consulate, with the purpose of protecting him. He ordered Mandel-Mantello to produce thousands of citizenship certificates for Jews living in countries occupied by National Socialist Germany. These documents, which proved those who carried them were Salvadorian citizens, protected them from being deported and eventually executed. In 1944, Castellanos asked the Swiss government to represent El Salvador’s interests in Hungary, which by then was occupied by Germany. In that way, Mandel-Mantello managed to authorize legal papers for Hungarian Jews through the Swiss Consulate. Just like Sugihara, Castellanos ordered these actions without the support of his government.

Castellanos’ efforts to save Jews recently came to light, and for that he received posthumous recognitions from Jewish communities, including the American Jewish Committee, as well as human rights organizations. The Consul also appears in a list maintained by the Raoul Wallenberg Foundation as one of the diplomats who acted to rescue Jews.

Gilberto Bosques was the Mexican Consul in Marseilles, France, between 1939 and 1944. During the Second World War he helped a great number of Jews, Austrian and French resistance leaders, Spanish Republicans and other victims of persecution to find refuge in Mexico. Aside from managing visas through his consulate, he “did detective work, finding people in prisons and, sometimes, in a very Mexican fashion, used bribery so that the Germans would free those they considered ‘highly dangerous’, meaning

union leaders, intellectuals, opposition militants, Italian or Yugoslavian partisans, and a long etcetera.”⁴³ Because of his activities, Bosques and his family remained imprisoned in Germany for a year, along with other employees of the consulate. They were finally freed through a prisoner exchange agreement signed between Mexico and the Nazi regime. A street in Vienna bears his name, in recognition of his extraordinary efforts and humanitarian work.

Luis Martins de Souza Dantas was a Brazilian diplomat who, it is estimated, helped over 800 people – Jews, Communists and homosexuals-, escape from the German government. His case deserves a special mention because his humanitarian activities breached specific orders from the Gétulio Vargas government, which had taken some inspiration from Adolf Hitler.⁴⁴ The book *Quixote Nas Trevas*, by Fabio Koifman, tells his story.

Other cases worth highlighting of Latin American diplomats during the Second World War are those of the Brazilian Aracy de Carvalho-Guimaraes and the Chilean María Edwards.

It is important to understand that acts of commitment to the most basic human rights in diplomatic contexts are not limited to the Second World War. In fact, for Latin America there is a particular interest in those cases in which envoys from various countries saved the lives of potential victims of dictatorial violence.

The region has seen dictatorships of diverse ideological banners: from Cuba’s Communist totalitarianism to the nationalist authoritarianism of the Southern Cone. Within that wide range there are many opportunities to observe the actions of representatives of third countries who, sometimes without the full support of their ministry, managed to save civilian lives.

One of the most dramatic stories is that of Harald Edelstam, a Swedish diplomat who already had a positive reputation in matters of human rights

⁴³ La Dignidad de la Añeja Diplomacia, Marta Durán de Huerta, *La Jornada*, 23/3/2000.

⁴⁴ Luis Martins de Souza Dantas, The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation.

protection, after his stationing in Germany during the Second World War, as well as Guatemala during the 1950s.

In 1973, when the Chilean armed forces led by Augusto Pinochet launched a violent coup d'état, Edelstam was heading his country's embassy in Santiago. During those critical moments, Edelstam was decisive in rescuing the lives of unarmed civilians. In fact, "The Western European embassy that received the most refugees was Sweden's. This was due to [Edelstam's] personal position, who decided on his own to rescue hundreds of people without previous orders from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs".⁴⁵

The two best-remembered instances of his actions occurred in that dramatic September of 1973. In the first one, Edelstam risked his life by showing up at the Cuban Embassy, adjacent to Sweden's, to rescue Cuban agents and civilians of other nationalities who had sought refuge in that building.

In the second case, Edelstam "pulled 54 Uruguayans who were to be executed on the following day all at once" at the National Stadium, the Chilean dictatorship's venue of choice for murdering its first groups of victims.⁴⁶

On December 5th, 1973, the military regime decreed Edelstam a *persona non grata* –in spite of his diplomatic credentials- and expelled him from the country.

Today, there is a Harald Edelstam Foundation in Chile, which seeks to "highlight and reward with the 'Edelstam Prize' those individuals who in their work as government representatives (...) have displayed courage in carrying out unconventional humanitarian acts to save persons suffering from repression (...) against international law and human rights". As a case

⁴⁵ Los asilados de las Embajadas de Europa Occidental en Chile tras el golpe militar y sus consecuencias diplomáticas: El caso de Suecia, Fernando Camacho, *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, N° 81, October 2006.

⁴⁶ *Idem*.

study on Edelstam indicates in terms that are often applicable to all cases of committed diplomacy, “His character, sometimes excessively brash, made his colleagues at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs uncomfortable when he skipped diplomatic rules in occasionally acting on his own, without previously making consultations”.⁴⁷

Paradoxically, a few years earlier, a Chilean diplomat had been expelled from Cuba because he offered a similar assistance to the one the Cuban diplomats received by Edelstam to citizens of Cuba. Jorge Edwards, a prestigious novelist who decades later would win the Cervantes Award was designated Ambassador of Chile in Cuba by Salvador Allende. Edwards’ experience in Havana would be very brief: of just three months. The reason was that, as soon as he discovered the reality of totalitarianism in the Island, Edwards kept in touch with dissidents and expressed his dissatisfaction with the Castro brother’s regime. The result was, besides from a tense three hours dialogue with Fidel Castro, his expulsion from the country – a measure rarely taken-. Though brief, Edwards’ experience has an additional value because of the political affiliation of the government he represented, that was absolutely identified with the Cuban “revolution”. Edwards would later be a staunch enemy of the Chilean dictatorship, something that highlights his democrat’s credentials. The novel he wrote about his experience, *Persona non grata*, turned into a Latin American classic and the trigger for the rupture between communists intellectuals and those who considered themselves to be socialists but democrats at the same time.

Another military dictatorship that committed extensive violations of human rights was the one that took over Argentina between 1976 and 1983. During that period, a small group of American diplomats acted with intents contrary to those of the Secretary of State at the time, the notorious Henry Kissinger.

⁴⁷ Idem.

The Chargé d’Affaires, Franklyn “Tex” Harris, made approximately 13,500 claims of disappearances and human rights violations during the Argentinean dictatorship. He based his reports on the accounts of family members of the victims he welcomed in his office. As the National Security Archives (a Washington-based project dedicated to divulging declassified information) revealed, Harris carefully informed his bosses of what was happening in Argentina, with details on the hierarchy and the names of the military officers involved.⁴⁸

In recognition of his work in Buenos Aires, which according to the Argentina Observatory at New York’s New School “saved hundreds of lives”, Harris was granted the Distinguished Honor Award by the Department of State, the highest prize handed by that institution. Tex Harris was also decorated by the Argentinean government in 2004.⁴⁹

Afterwards, under the James Carter Administration, Patricia Derian, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Coordinator at the Department of States, undertook a personal incrimination of high-ranking members of the regime. Derian, who began her career fighting for equal rights in the Southern United States, remembers telling Emilio Massera, during a meeting at his office in Buenos Aires, that “You and I both know that as we speak, people are being tortured in the next floors.”⁵⁰

According to statements made to the newspaper Clarín in 1998, Massera’s reaction was “(...) the gesture of washing his hands, as if he had soap, and then flashing an enormous, horrible grin. Next he said: You remember the story of Pontius Pilatus, don’t you?”⁵¹

⁴⁸ Note by Harris on August 11th, 1973, part of the study “The Pentagon and the CIA Sent Mixed Message to the Argentine Military”. National Security Archive, 28/3/2003.

⁴⁹ Tex Harris Decorated, 25 Years On, Michael Soltys, Buenos Aires Herald, 24/11/2004.

⁵⁰ Meeting between Derian and Massera on August 15th, 1973, comprised in the same project by the National Security Archive.

⁵¹ Patricia Derian y las mentiras de Massera, Marina Aizen, Clarín, 29/11/1998.

Derian's role was paramount in summoning a condemnation of the Argentinean dictatorship on the part of the United States.⁵² In 1978 Derian testified to her country's Congress on Argentinean failures in freeing prisoners, stopping disappearances and inviting the InterAmerican Commission on Human Rights, as had been agreed in private negotiations, for a fact-finding mission. "[The Argentinean government makes] systematic use of torture, summary execution of political dissidents, the disappearance and the imprisonment of thousands of individuals without charge, including mothers, churchmen, nuns, labor leaders, journalists, professors and members of human rights organizations".⁵³

Additionally, her work was fundamental in promoting the deployment of a mission by the Organization of American States' Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in 1979. During its stay in Argentina, the ICHR received 4,153 new claims against the government.⁵⁴

Patricia Derian's commitment to human rights led to her being given the Libertador General San Martín award, which she received in New York on March 24th, 2006.

The American ambassador in Buenos Aires between 1974 and 1977, Robert Hill, also became notorious for his regular messages to Washington informing on criminal actions by the Argentinean regime. This was even after Kissinger had held conversations with members of that government green-lighting a national campaign to hunt down opposition figures. In spite of being received poorly by the local press due to his nationality and his links to the Department of Defense, "Hill sent Washington reports warning of the murderous actions of the Triple A, which he defined as 'right-wing terrorism', or a 'vague collection of death squads'

⁵² Una ex funcionaria de Jimmy Carter reivindicó la política de Derechos Humanos del presidente Kirchner, *Télam* (official news agency of the Argentinean government), 25/3/2006.

⁵³ "The Pentagon and the CIA Sent Mixed Message to the Argentine Military". National Security Archive, 28/3/2003.

⁵⁴ Annual Report 1979-1980, OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

with elements of the state's intelligence services and Federal Police 'involved'. While critics linked him to the ideologues of the paramilitary groups, in 1974 Hill condemned the possibility of responding to the guerrillas with illegal methods".⁵⁵

Lastly, the Italian Consul in Buenos Aires at the time, Enrico Calamai, also took action towards rescuing people from the Argentinean regime. Calamai had already spent a few months in Santiago, where he witnessed the key role of diplomatic delegations in rescuing refugees during a coup d'état. In Argentina, during 1976-7, Calamai arranged passports and air-plane tickets to Montevideo and Rio de Janeiro, to enable the escape of potential victims of violence. In order to achieve this he even produced fake documents. Later on his career would collapse with punitive deployments to Afghanistan and Nepal. One of the reasons explaining his loss of support within his own government, which he cited in a 2006 interview with *Página/12*⁵⁶, were Soviet orders to Communist parties around the world, including the Italian affiliate, to begin cultivating good relations with the Argentinean regime, a brand new supplier of grain to the Soviet economy.

Committed Diplomacy and Foreign Policy

Committed diplomacy is a problematic concept. Even though its exact definition is elusive, it is a practice that is backed by sufficient historical evidence to be recognized internationally. However, that does not subtract from the fact that the acts of diplomats committed to human rights beyond their call of duty are a scarce minority. As Theo van Boven, a United Nations human rights official in the 1970s said: "The diplomatic world is very unique. Each person is preoccupied with their own business; some

⁵⁵ Los informes del embajador de EE.UU. que cuestionó en secreto a la dictadura, David Cox y Damian Nabot, *Perfil*, 23/3/2008.

⁵⁶ "Los militares habían dicho que no reconocerían el asilo político", Alejandra Dandan, *Página/12*, 18/6/2006.

are committed with what they are doing, but many could not care less if they were working with human rights or potatoes.”⁵⁷

The concept of going beyond formal duty and applying a humanist perspective –not a legalist or a realist one - to international relations is nestled in the oldest traditions of that discipline. While committed diplomacy as a practice emerged in the twentieth century, a product of extreme and massive acts of violence experienced within it, the idea that there is a place for democratic solidarity in international politics precedes those events.

In terms of specific countries, the United States serves as an example of that rich internal debate. The ideas just described are not new to the American political tradition, even when the opposite ones –associated to realism – also had numerous adherents at the governmental level. In the same *Notas sobre la doctrina Estrada* mentioned previously, Antonio Gómez Robledo quoted Thomas Jefferson, who ordered his envoys to France to recognize the Republican government that had toppled the constitutional monarchy in 1792: “It accords with our principles to acknowledge any government to be rightful, which is formed by the will of the nation substantially declared”.

The notion that diplomats may –and perhaps should - provide assistance to the victims of illegitimate government persecution is a direct consequence of this school of thought, once transported to contemporary times.

During the same tragic period of the Southern Cone, one can see situations like Henry Kissinger’s order as Secretary of State to suppress any criticism of the Pinochet regime in government interactions with the OAS. According to Kissinger, “This is not an institution that is going to humiliate the Chileans (...) It is a bloody outrage”.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ “No se puede ser neutral en los derechos humanos”, Werner Pertot, *Página/12*, 8 de mayo de 2006.

⁵⁸ Phone conversation on June 16th, 1976, also published by the National Security Archive.

On the other hand, James Carter, an American president known for making some efforts in the area of human rights, said the following in 1977:

“First, we have reaffirmed America’s commitment to human rights as a fundamental tenet of our foreign policy (...) This does not mean that we can conduct our foreign policy by rigid moral maxims. We live in a world that is imperfect and which will always be imperfect—a world that is complex and confused and which will always be complex and confused. I understand fully the limits of moral suasion. We have no illusion that changes will come easily or soon. But I also believe that it is a mistake to undervalue the power of words and of the ideas that words embody”.⁵⁹

These two cases, which refer to the same country and are separated by less than a year, illustrate how difficult it is to retain commitment to these issues. It is a significant fact that in spite of saying something so reasonable at the time, Carter’s presidency was a great failure, including many aspects of the defense of human rights. Kissinger’s government service is usually considered to have at least been skillful.

Concern with which criteria to adopt in the foreign policies of democratic countries is not exclusive to the United States. In fact, just as the Estrada Doctrine existed, Latin America also gave birth to a diametrically opposed proposal, known as the Larreta Doctrine. It refers to Uruguayan Chancellor –or Minister of Foreign Affairs- Eduardo Rodríguez Larreta, who directed that institution between 1945 and 1947. The main proposition of the doctrine has been summarized as a “parallel between democracy and peace”, a Kantian idea which sustains that an international system composed of democracies is the best guarantee against war. The Uruguayan Chancellery under Rodríguez Larreta was involved in an important post-war controversy: the possibility that members of the old German National Socialist regime would find refuge in Latin America, particularly in Argen-

⁵⁹ Speech on May 22nd, 1977 at Notre Dame University.

tina. It is concerning that specific situation when the Minister formulates broader foreign policy ideas, almost always anchored in the interAmerican context: “[The Minister] wishes to establish that, while recognizing the significance and importance of the non-intervention principle –a victory achieved during the last decade of inter-American relations-, he does not think it may be extended towards unlimitedly sheltering notorious and reiterated violations on the part of a Republic of the most elemental rights of men and citizens (...)”⁶⁰

Strengthening his belief in the necessity of liberal democracy as a fundamental pillar in guaranteeing individual rights and international peace, Rodríguez Larreta stated the following to the press: “If before the war the reality of a parallel between democracy and peace was a value understood within inter-American relations, after the tremendous experience of the war this concept has acquired the strength of absolute truth.

With regard to the principle of non-intervention, the diplomat thought that it was necessary to “harmonize it with others whose permanence gather fundamental importance in preserving international peace and security.” He simultaneously directed the following to the critics he foresaw in the horizon at the time of announcing his policy: “(...) they may advise us to adopt a passive attitude, but it would then turn out that this [pan-] American mission will have become a different one: one in which we would become a haven for execrable doctrines, practices and interests, and the propitious field for their future rebirth”.

It did not take long for the storm of criticism to arrive, and it came both from domestic political opposition (including the very Partido Nacional of which the Minister was a member) as well as other Latin American ministries. Some accused him of naiveté, others of being a “diplomatic spearhead” for American interventionism. There were few adherents to

⁶⁰ This and the other quotes referring to the Rodríguez Larreta doctrine are taken from *La doctrina Larreta*, Álvaro Casal, Ediciones De La Plaza, 1997.

the Uruguayan proposal. Among the remarkable ones were newspapers like the Buenos Aires-based *La Nación*, as well as a few governments which included the United States, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Panama and Venezuela. However, those who were against the new doctrine included the Soviet Union, Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Ecuador and, naturally, the Argentinean military regime.

In the end, the Rodríguez Larreta Doctrine did not have a major impact. As *The Washington Post* correctly predicted on the 27th of November of that 1945:

“A long time will pass before this principle becomes an accepted rule in inter-American affairs, and there will be those who will hold that under no circumstances should that point be arrived to, no matter the magnitude of the provocation. It has already been proven that the first important step in the road to external aggression can be the suppression, within the borders of the country that is to become the aggressor, of the rights and liberties of its citizens.”

The latter quote draws greater importance when considering what would really happen in Latin America in the decades that followed.

On a more current note, there are increasingly numerous voices demanding rectitude on the part of democracies in regards to the international promotion of human rights, of which committed diplomacy is but one aspect. For example, the Executive Director of Human Rights Watch, Kenneth Roth, thus began the latest edition of his organization’s annual report:⁶¹ “A government’s respect for human rights must be measured not only by how it treats its own people but also by how it protects rights in its relations with other countries.”

Roth expands on this idea further down the text:

“In their foreign policy, these governments should promote human rights as even-handedly as possible. That means criticizing not only pariah states but also friends when they commit serious rights violations. They should also elevate the impor-

⁶¹ Taking Back the Initiative from the Human Rights Spoilers, Kenneth Roth, Human Rights Watch.

tance of human rights in their relations with other governments, assigning the issue to senior officials, insisting on human rights occupying a prominent place on the agenda during bilateral discussions, and establishing clear benchmarks for change with specific consequences for indifference or retrenchment.”

Even though the subjects of Roth’s statement are the governments of the most powerful democracies, the principle is universal. In fact, in theory, international promotion of human rights is already part of the foreign policy of many countries. Take into account, for instance, the following summary, taken from the official websites of the different departments of foreign affairs of some countries:

- Argentina: “Prioritize the integration of Argentina to the world, through consensus oriented to the strengthening of international law, the promotion of the values associated with international peace, the democratic form of government, and the respect to human rights...”
- Australia: “Protection and promotion of the human rights encapsulated in the Declaration is vital to global efforts to achieve lasting peace and security, and freedom and dignity for all”.
- Belgium: “To promote and protect human rights is a critical aspect of Belgium’s relations with other nations”.
- Chile: “This task includes the promotion and protection of civilian, political, economic, social and cultural human rights, those of the women, children, indigenous people, minorities and other vulnerable groups... highlighting the importance of universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights, civilian, political, economic, social and cultural, including the right to development”.
- Spain: “The promotion and the defense of human rights constitute one of the priorities of foreign policy of the government as well as of its policy of international cooperation”.
- United States: “A central goal of us foreign policy has been the promotion of respect for human rights, as embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”.

- France: “The promotion and protection of all human rights are a legitimate concern of international community and gives the same consideration to civic and political rights than to economic, social and cultural rights, as well as to all the victims of violations”.
- Italy: “Italy’s foreign policy is thought to foresee conflicts as well as to reestablish the respect for human rights in those countries where the most serious and systematic violations take place”.
- Mexico: “The foreign policy of the current administration has the priority of implementing the international obligations of Mexico in terms of human rights.”
- New Zealand: “Is strongly committed to the protection and promotion of international human rights, as embodied in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and in the key human rights treaties”.
- Netherlands: “The Netherlands seek to protect and promote human rights worldwide, and by doing it, strengthen freedom, justice and dignity of every individual”.
- Sweden: “To promote and increase the respect for human rights is a priority task that must integrate with every aspect of foreign policy”.
- Switzerland: “The promotion of human rights is an objective of Swiss foreign policy. In cooperation with other states, civil society and experts, it tries to improve the human-rights situation for as many people as possible throughout the world”.

It is important to note that the diplomats who acted in defense of human rights almost entirely came from countries that respected Rawls’ law of peoples. This is why they are part of the “society of peoples”: because they follow that law in their mutual relations. They are actors who belong to liberal democratic “decent” peoples; countries where constitutional democracy is reasonably established, such as the United States, Sweden, Italy or Colombia. All of these presently possess democratic systems, periodic elections and participation in the international system. The aforementioned

diplomats, as members of those peoples, complied with the familiar and traditional principles of justice between free, democratic peoples. This leads not only to the respect of human rights but also to the duty of assisting peoples living under unfavorable conditions that hinder them in having a decent socio-political regime.⁶²

It is in this context that interventions by other peoples – in this case of their diplomatic emissaries- are justified. If the conceptions of political liberalism are just, then decent and liberal peoples have a right not to tolerate criminal states, seeing as they are aggressive and dangerous to the entire international system. Therefore, this diplomatic intervention is made as a fulfillment of their civic duty, oriented towards an idea of justice as a common good. As the aforementioned Theo van Boven says: “one cannot be neutral when it comes to human rights”.

These ideas could be criticized -as they often are with no small amount of reason- for being attractive to the eye but impossible or too difficult to exercise in practice. To that retort stand in contrast the historical facts narrated here, which envelop the great reason why, even though it is difficult to carry out, committed diplomacy must be increasingly the norm: innocent lives, saved by diplomatic action. As these examples seek to prove, the diplomatic field can obtain concrete results, which enable the recognition, assistance and even the freedom of victims of dictatorial persecution. No diplomat should feel out of bounds when doing so. Quite the opposite.

⁶² Nonetheless, it is necessary to point out that cases like Sugihara's or Menéndez's refer to individuals who came not only from authoritarian regimes, but some of the most oppressive types. These and other exceptions are an important illustration of the importance of individual character and morality, which are simply enhanced when they emerge in a liberal democratic culture.



APPENDICES

REQUEST FOR RECOGNITION OF THE CUBAN CIVIL MOVEMENT⁶³

Cuba is currently governed by the only remaining dictatorship in Latin America and is the country where values of freedom are most visibly disdained. A one-party system rules with an ironclad ideological monopoly, which has even arrived at the extreme of writing its inalienable status into the Constitution. This has allowed the government to perpetuate itself in power for more than five decades, impeding the expression of a civil society that, for all the repression and in the face of innumerable obstacles, has risen up to brandish the flag of peaceful transition to liberty and plural democracy for the Cuban people.

Hope for the recovery of the true sovereignty of the Cuban people and of respect for human rights is strengthened by citizens' initiatives carried out by this civil movement, through the construction of independent institutions and the promotion of norms of behavior that break with submission, fear, lies and the lack of freedom of expression of human beings.

Democratic solidarity has been a key factor in the development of the Cuban civil movement. Faced with the awakening of hope within the country, the international community has reacted with respect and support. Internationally recognized political figures have met with Cuban civil leaders, and the world's principal democratic countries have opened the doors of their embassies not only to the island's government, but also to its civil opposition.

⁶³ This request, together with the request for a hearing, was presented January 19th, 2004 by CADAL to the then-Foreign Minister of Argentina, Rafael A. Bielsa, and was signed by the writers Marcos Aguinis, Juan José Sebrelli, María Sáenz Quesada, Sylvina Walger and Fernando Ruiz.

Nevertheless, in general and collective terms, our region, faced with this opening to the incipient civil movement, has not declared itself in a definitive manner. Regional organizations of Latin America and the embassies of our countries in Havana have the moral obligation to respond positively to this hope for a peaceful change, hope that springs from within Cuban society itself. We should not be the ones who remain silent towards a regime that represses and attacks civil activists while rejecting the opening of space for dialogue and democratic construction.

It is time for our governments to instruct their embassies in Cuba to open to all Cubans, as much in their cultural activities as in official receptions. In this way, each Latin American country will be in contact with diverse expressions of the Cuban reality and will contribute to the encouragement of social and political pluralism in that country. This would represent a large step on the path to democracy by stimulating public accountability and strengthening political integration in the region.

We the undersigned express our liveliest interest in that the foreign ministers of Latin American countries order their embassies in Havana to make possible the participation of independent civil society representatives in those activities that, world-wide, are habitually carried out with authorities and government officials along with representatives of the wider society.

This act, apparently simple, of formal consideration of citizens that do not occupy official positions and that represent the plurality of civil society, could constitute recognition of their decisive role in stimulating the opening of spaces for freedom.

THE EXERCISE OF RIGHTS IS NOT A CRIME: CALL FOR THE LIBERATION OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS IN CUBA⁶⁴

We the undersigned direct ourselves to the democratic governments of Latin America, requesting them to demand that the Cuban regime liberate all people in that country who find themselves imprisoned for crimes that by international standards are basic rights.

We agree that the region should normalize its relations with Cuba, but for this to happen the government of the Castro brothers must reconcile its internal laws with regional standards by eliminating restrictions of the most basic human rights. In contrast to any country in which a violation of human rights may occur, in Cuba fundamental liberties are expressly violated by state policy. The Cuban Constitution, Penal Code, special laws such as “Number 88” and the judgments of the People’s Courts are irrefutable evidence of human rights violations in that country.

Analyzing certain aspects of Cuba’s political order via the study of its institutional and legal organization, one concludes that the Cuban regime, through its fundamental institutions, the content of its laws and the interpretation given to them by judicial bodies, is organized on the base of supreme State power. This power is superior to and frequently violates basic human rights in the name of its own interests.

As in all authoritarian regimes, violations of rights and of forms of republican democracy, lack of checks and balances of state power and failure to respect the basic judicial guarantees of citizens go much further in deed than in legal and constitutional texts.

Nevertheless, the Cuban regime has frequently invoked its achievements in the areas of health and education in order to silence criticism

⁶⁴ Declaration promoted by CADAL and diffused March 18th, 2010, on the seventh anniversary of the wave of repression known as the Black Spring of Cuba.

of basic human rights violations. But to maintain that human rights are respected in a society where any citizen may be detained by authorities without reason, may not express political ideas, has no right to associate or meet with others, to carry out free enterprise or trade, to dispose of their property, to enter or leave the country, etc., is the same as maintaining that a slave enjoys human rights because their master provides food and a place to sleep, and cures them when they are sick.

It is certain that the politico-legal regime of Cuba violates the majority of those basic guarantees expressed in all of the international instruments endorsed in the last decades and that currently form part of international human rights law.

For example, a Human Rights Watch report published November 2009 points out that:

Scores of political prisoners arrested under Fidel Castro continue to languish in Cuba's prisons. And Raúl Castro's government has used draconian laws and sham trials to incarcerate scores more who have dared to exercise their fundamental freedoms. Raúl Castro's government has relied in particular on a provision of the Cuban Criminal Code that allows the state to imprison individuals before they have committed a crime, on the suspicion that they might commit an offense in the future. This "dangerousness" provision is overtly political, defining as "dangerous" any behavior that contradicts socialist norms. The most Orwellian of Cuba's laws, captures the essence of the Cuban government's repressive mindset, which views anyone who acts out of step with the government as a potential threat and thus worthy of punishment... the "dangerous" activities in these cases have included handing out copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, staging peaceful marches, writing news articles critical of the government, and attempting to organize independent unions.

It is worrying that Latin America shows itself to be so indifferent in the face of the injustices suffered by the Cuban people and so accommodating to their illegitimate government. This is evidence of a clear limit to the region's democracy. It is especially worrying that countries which suffered terrible dictatorships and which received in their "years of lead" important

demonstrations of international democratic solidarity do not recognize the peaceful Cuban opposition, considered subversive by its government for demanding respect and public diffusion of the principles of human rights.

It is time for Latin America to place itself on the side of Cuban democrats, and to demand that the Castro brothers' regime begins a political opening, guaranteeing such basic rights as freedom of association and expression, and making possible the liberation of many political prisoners by a more benign application of the rule of law. March 18th, 2010 marks the seventh anniversary of the wave of repression known as the Cuban Black Spring, which culminated in the detention of 75 peaceful opposition figures, including journalists, operators of independent libraries and promoters of the Varela Project, a referendum initiative that sought changes to the system in force on the island. Most of those detained are currently still in prison, together with many other political prisoners jailed before and after that date for crimes that exist only in Cuba. Several are in very bad conditions of health and February 23rd, this year saw the death of Orlando Zapata Tamayo, recognized by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience. He was completing a long sentence for crimes such as "disrespect, insubordination, defamation of institutions, public disorder and showing contempt to the figure of *comandante* Fidel Castro".

For the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights:

Mr. Zapata Tamayo was one of the victims in Case Number 12.476 in which the Inter-American Commission recommended to the State of Cuba that it order the immediate and unconditional release of all the victims in the case and overturn their convictions, inasmuch as they were based on laws that impose unlawful restrictions on their human rights. The report on the merits in this case, approved on October 21st, 2006, also recommended that the State adopt the measures necessary to adapt its laws, procedures, and practices to international human rights laws; redress the victims and their next of kin for the pecuniary and non-pecuniary damages suffered as a result of the violations of the American Declaration established in the report; and adopt the measures necessary to prevent a recurrence of similar acts. The State of Cuba has not complied with the IACHR's recommendations.

We wish to make known to all Cuban democrats our solidarity with their cause, and at the same time call on public opinion in Latin America to not remain indifferent to the injustices suffered in Cuba. Latin American democracy will not be consolidated as long as Cuba remains – with the complacency of regional governments and bodies – under the power of a one-party regime that considers the exercise of rights to be a crime for which innocent people may be deprived of liberty for long years, even losing their lives.

JULIO CÉSAR STRASSERA, PATRICIO AYLWIN, GRACIELA FERNÁNDEZ MEIJIDE, GUILLERMO O'DONNELL, RICARDO GIL LAVEDRA, SANTIAGO KOVADLOFF, VICENTE PALERMO, DANIEL SABSAY, PEPE ELIASCHEV, BEATRIZ SARLO, JUAN CARLOS VEGA, FERNANDO IGLESIAS, CLAUDIA HILB, EMILIO DE IPOLA, CARLOS LAURÍA, ANDREW GRAHAM-YOOLL, SERGIO FAUSTO, MARÍA MATILDE OLLIER, GABRIELA IPPOLITO, MARCOS NOVARO, RICARDO UCEDA, GUILLERMO ROZENWURCEL, JESSICA VALENTINI, DEMETRIO MAGNOLI, PATRICIO NAVIA, SYLVINA WALGER, RAFAEL ROJAS, DANIEL MUCHNIK, ANTONIO CAMOU, MARÍA SÁENZ QUESADA, CARLOS FACAL, RICARDO ROJAS, FERNANDO RUIZ, SILVIA URANGA, CLAUDIA GUEBEL, HÉCTOR LEIS, EDUARDO VIOLA, PAULO UEBEL, PAOLA SILVA, EDUARDO ULIBARRI, CÉSAR RICAURTE, ROBERT EISENMANN, DILMAR ROSAS, HUGO MACHÍN, RICARDO LAFFERRIERE, HEINZ SONNTAG, ANDRÉS CAÑIZALEZ, ROMEO PÉREZ ANTÓN, DIEGO CAMAÑO VIERA, CARLOS BASCUÑÁN, GABRIEL PALUMBO, ALEJANDRO NOGUEIRA, CLAUDIO PAOLILLO, CARLOS GERVASONI, RICARDO LÓPEZ GÖTTIG, BERNABÉ GARCÍA HAMILTON, CARLOS KOHN, MARIANNE KOHN BEKER, RODOLFO RICO, HUMBERTO GARCÍA LARRALDE, ALEJANDRO OROPEZA G., CAROLINE B. DE OTEYZA, CARLOS WALTER, MARTA DE LA VEGA, ROCÍO SAN MIGUEL, MANUEL ALCALÁ MURILLO, VANESSA BLUM, JOSÉ CANTERO, JORGE MALDONADO, PATRICIA ÁLVAREZ, CECILIA LUCCA, GABRIEL SALVIA, SABRINA AJMECHET, TOMÁS BOROVIANSKY AND RAÚL FERRO.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES⁶⁵

Faced with the impossibility of being present in the “VIII Civil Society Hemispheric Forum and Special Session with Civil Society of the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities (CISC)”, we present our written recommendation to the member states of the Organization of American States (OAS). We consider this recommendation vital to the discussion and exchange of ideas on the theme of the XLI General Assembly and other matters of the agenda of hemispheric cooperation.

We, the Center for the Opening and Development of Latin America (CADAL), an institution recognized by your organization, are pleased to draw to the attention of the Permanent Council of the OAS, our recommendation: that member states instruct their diplomatic representatives in Havana to adhere to, in their embassies, the first article of the Inter-American Democratic Charter⁶⁶, by offering recognition, protection and Internet access to members of the Cuban civil movement who peacefully seek political opening in their country and who are victims of personal insecurity generated by the State, whose laws expressly penalize aspirations to civil, political and economic freedoms.

⁶⁵ This petition was sent on April 13th, 2011 to OAS Secretary-General José Miguel Insulza via several different channels. Later, April 20th, 2011, CADAL sent the following message to Dr. Irene Klinger, Director of the Department of International Affairs, Secretariat for External Relations, Organization of American States: “As suggested by your department, a week ago we sent a recommendation to the Secretary-General and until now have only been advised of its reception. We have received no formal response from the Secretary-General. As we mentioned to you in an opportune moment, we would hope to receive a formal response to our recommendation, and for it to be distributed among the representatives of member states”. The following day we received an unsigned response from the Department of International Affairs, copied to OAS officials Jorge Sanín, Eric Ambrose and Nicolás Sforzini. It read: Mr. Salvia, in the name of Dr. Irene Klinger, director of the Department of International Affairs of the Organization of American States, we thank you for your communication, which we will respond to in the coming days”.

⁶⁶ “The peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it”.

Beyond regional democratic solidarity, this recommendation is motivated by the fact that, following the ending of Cuba's suspension from the OAS⁶⁷, the one-party regime of that country has demonstrated manifest disinterest in the harmonization of its laws with the practices, purposes and principles of the OAS.

Inasmuch, the member states of the OAS cannot limit their relations in Cuba to government officials who lack democratic legitimacy, such that their representatives on the island ought to reach out to all sectors of Cuban society, including those who participate in peaceful opposition, as is done by democratic countries in the rest of their embassies in the hemisphere.

Our recommendation is founded on the principals expressed January 23rd, 2004 in the magazine *Debate* by Héctor Timerman, current Argentine Minister for Foreign Relations, International Trade and Worship.

The Argentine past gives us an obligation to play a leadership role few countries can aspire to occupy: for example, in the struggle against the violation of human rights and in active solidarity with those who are deprived of them. Because we were victims, we must not forget the current victims. ... For example, with relation to Cuba, it would be incumbent upon us to receive [families of political prisoners], comfort them and be their spokespeople to the Castro regime. What use is it to celebrate our National Day in the Argentine Embassy if the dissidents are not present? Can freedom and independence be applauded, while their families watch from outside because they haven't been invited?

In an interview carried out in late 2003, Timerman recognized that:

One of the lessons we have learnt during all these years of struggle for human rights is the importance of the political influence that can be attained by foreign governments ... I remember – and I imagine that it will be important for our Cu-

⁶⁷ On June 3rd, 2009 the Foreign Ministers of the Americas adopted Resolution AG/RES. 2438 (XXXIX-o/09), which ruled that the Resolution of 1962, by which the government of Cuba was excluded from participation in the Inter-American system, should cease to have effect in the Organization of American States. The Resolution of 2009 declared that the participation of the Republic of Cuba would be the result of a process of dialogue initiated at the request of the Government of Cuba and in accordance with the practices, purposes and principles of the OAS.

ban colleagues who are imprisoned at this moment – that we were categorically helped here in Argentina by the embassies of France, Italy, Venezuela and the United States, and that one of the ways they helped us was, in fact, to take us out of that condition of inexistence that the regime wanted to impose on us.

Chile and Uruguay had similar experiences to those mentioned by the Argentine foreign minister during the military dictatorships of the Southern Cone.

For its part, we also consider that the liberation of political prisoners currently underway in Cuba is an opportunity for the OAS to request the government of that country to give way to the guarantees of a democratic system and to create channels for the free expression of its people. A first step would be for the Cuban government to recognize freedom of association and expression, eliminating the legal regulations that restrict and repress the exercise of these fundamental rights. The recognition of the right to freedom of association and expression in Cuba would allow the legal existence of political parties, independent unions and civil society organizations, and would make greater international cooperation possible. Freedom of association and expression, including independent journalism, would also help develop the civic culture in Cuba by allowing access to analysis, information and alternative opinion and reflection.

Finally, while the Cuban government denies its citizens the right to free association, the OAS should consider the participation of civil society within its own organization. In this manner, through a special recognition of Cuban civil society groups by the OAS, this body would cease to extend to these activists the illegality currently imposed on them by an anti-democratic regime through its legal repression of the most fundamental civil and political liberties

We look forward to your formal response to our recommendation.

Our most sincere regards.

Support received from Cuba

1. Yoani Sánchez, Havana.
2. Guillermo Fariñas, 62010306200, Villa Clara.
3. Jorge Olivera Castillo, independent journalist.
4. Darsi Ferret Ramírez, CI: 69110229321, Havana.
5. Manuel Cuesta Morúa, Arco Progresista.
6. Laura Pollán, Ladies in White, Havana.
7. Óscar Espinosa Chepe, Havana.
8. Miriam Leiva, Havana.
9. Dagoberto Valdés, Convivencia magazine.
10. Elizardo Sánchez Santa Cruz Pacheco, Havana.
11. Librado Linares García, CI: 60060914924, Villa Clara.
12. Ricardo del Pino Barbán, Havana.
13. José Daniel Ferrer García, former political prisoner.
14. Héctor Fernando Maseda Gutiérrez, 43011822367, Havana.
15. René Gómez Manzano, 43121900964, Havana.
16. Roberto de Jesús Guerra Pérez, independent journalist, Havana.
17. Juan Eugenio Leal García, 52122701867, Havana.
18. Luis García Vega (Lucas Garve), CI: 51041305206, Havana.
19. Julio Antonio Aleaga Pesant, CI: 60043013985, Havana.
20. Julio Alberto Romero Muñoz, CI: 70072616920, Camagüey.
21. Juan Carlos Linares Balmaseda, CI: 67073022284, Havana.
22. Óscar Mario González, Havana.
23. Aimée de las Mercedes Cabrera Álvarez, 56111500393, Havana.
24. Laritza Diversent Cambara, 80060403759, Havana.
25. Frank Delgado Macía, 76101903106, Havana.
26. Ana Margarita Perdigón Brito, 71032602370, Havana.
27. Enri Saumell, Havana.
28. Gerardo Sánchez Santa Cruz Pacheco, Havana.
29. Magaly Norvis Otero Suárez, independent journalist, Havana.
30. Aída Valdés Santana, Coordinadora Nacional de Presos y ex Presos Políticos, Havana.
31. Damián Sánchez Sáenz, Buró de Información Comisión Martiana and JACU.
32. Julio Antonio Rojas Pañal, independent journalist and librarian.
33. Abel Mirabal, blogger.
34. Héctor Julio Cedeño Negrín, journalist.
35. Guillermo Enrique Abella Salazar, journalist.

36. Jesús Adolfo Reyes Sánchez.
37. Alfredo Guillermo Rodríguez Burgos.
38. Sergio García Argente.
39. Julio César Peña Laballe.
40. Pedro Fontanels Miranda.
41. Hildebrando Chaviano Montes.
42. Silvio Benítez Márquez.
43. Joisy García Martínez.
44. Fernando Edgardo Palacio Mogar, Partido Liberal Nacional Cubano.
45. Jorge Castorberi Díaz Díaz, CI: 61122915384, Havana.
46. Adolfo Pablo Borrazá, independent journalist, Havana.
47. Moisés Leonardo Rodríguez Valdés, CI: 47020201152, Artemisa.
48. Frank Correa Romero, CI: 6301110669, Havana.
49. Manuel Guerra Pérez, 76071241247, Havana.
50. Juan Antonio Madrazo Luna, 68120407566, Havana.
51. Leonardo Calvo Cárdenas, 63110601325, Havana.
52. Manuel Aguirre Lavarrere, 55072129029, Havana.
53. Ileana de los Ángeles Iglesias Nodarse, 51061227397, Pinar del Río.
54. Mayra Josefina Nodarse Nodarse, 48070808278, Havana.
55. Rigoberto Rodríguez Capaz, 67012615480, Havana.
56. Magalys Broche de la Cruz, Villa Clara.
57. Juan Alberto de la Nuez, Gramma.
58. Alberto Adolfo Moreno Fonseca, Havana.
59. David Ávila Perdigón, Havana.
60. Lázaro Prieto, Havana.
61. Enrique Pérez González, Havana.
62. Denis Díaz González, Pinar del Río.
63. Daniel Almeida Cuba, Havana.
64. Jesús Silva Cala, Pinar del Río.
65. Félix Ceferino Reyes Gutiérrez, 63112017289, Villa Clara.
66. Yuniel Larena Ibáñez, 84100713565, Havana.
67. Damaris Moya Portieles, 73102719073, Santa Clara.
68. Pedro Larena Ibáñez, 63061416502, Cienfuegos.
69. Alcides Rivera Rodríguez, 62070416722, Villa Clara.
70. Idania Yánes Contreras, 73052619298, Villa Clara.
71. Julio Columbie Batista, 67081726347, Ciego de Ávila.
72. Víctor Castillo Ortega, 64113004408, Villa Clara.

73. Maribel Rodríguez Prieto, 68110505794, Villa Clara.
74. Maisel Luis Fernández Toledo, 79012510686, Cienfuegos.
75. Alberto Reyes Morales, 53080825623, Villa Clara.
76. Léster Fernández Zamora, 80040411164, Villa Clara.
77. Guillermo del Sol Pérez, 65083122402, Villa Clara
78. Michel Oliva López, 76112004605, Villa Clara.
79. Frank Reyes López, 64072816489, Villa Clara.
80. Justo Luis Alonso García, 77020711264, Cienfuegos.
81. Yanisbel Valido Pérez, 87101715135, Villa Clara
82. Natividad Blanco Carrero, 56122420857, Villa Clara.
83. Liosvani Alfonso Castillo, 75031309624, Cienfuegos.
84. Jorge Luis Oliver Díaz, 68072215964, Cienfuegos.
85. Pablo González Villa, 64120906506, Cienfuegos.
86. Jorge Félix Pérez Ricabal, 59112002866, Cienfuegos.
87. Yoel Morera Martínez, 72071003180, Cienfuegos.
88. Ricardo Pupo Sierra, 63040306849, Cienfuegos.
89. Aramilda Contreras Rodríguez, 45082904910, Villa Clara.
90. Luis Enrique Monzón Rivero, 68061318822, Villa Clara.
91. Jorge Vázquez Chaviano, 69110803303, Villa Clara.
92. Juan González Febles, CI 49052122461, Havana.
93. Guillermo González Acuña, Havana.
94. Teresa de Paz, Havana.
95. Elizabeth García Guerra, 74061807654, Havana.
96. Carlos Miguel Siena, 62070202084, Artemisa.
97. Adalberto Blanco Abreu, 64058700024, Artemisa.
98. Alejandro Sánchez Zaldivar, 65012230907, Artemisa.
99. Laura Rodríguez Iglesias, 82102105011, Artemisa.
100. Idalberto Acuña Carabeo, 69111100601, Havana.
101. David Águila Montero, 73071800222, Havana.
102. Richard Roselló Socorro, 65012382541, Havana.
103. Rubén Carty Lowe, 56012403860, Havana.
104. Juan Carlos Boos Batista, 67062414341, Havana.
105. Guillermo Enrique Abella Salazar, 59101507803, Camagüey.
106. Lázaro Armentero Maturell, 91010707223, Havana.
107. Jorge Luis Artiles Montiel, 82090917249, Villa Clara.
108. Joselino Ascencio López, 630219164810, Villa Clara.
109. Leticia Rodríguez Iglesias, 78082504339, Havana.
110. René López, 57021401921, Havana.
111. Fernando Edgardo Palacios Mogar, 71071729627, Havana.

112. Ronald Mendoza Méndez, 75010728188, Havana.
113. Daniel Anselmo González Gómez, 62080300868, Havana.
114. Ignacio Estrada Cepero, 79110212704, Villa Clara.
115. Leannes Imbert Acosta, 77052329051, Havana.
116. Augusto César San Martín, 67042026289, Havana.
117. José Carlos Pérez Hernández, 68011329506, Havana.
118. Lázara Mitjans Cruz, 65093010479, Havana.
119. Lázaro Yuri Valle Roca, 61087607885, Havana.
120. Gustavo Puente Muñoz, 65090901621, Havana.
121. Vladimir Alejo Miranda, 63010502563, Havana.
122. Andrés Gómez Soria, 71022325625, Havana.
123. Rosario Torres González, 88111231297, Havana.
124. Jesús Verdecia, 7112303130, Havana.
125. Alfredo Betancourt, 78070805664, Havana.
126. Juan Carlos Baso Botato, 67062414541, Havana.
127. María Nélide López Báez, Havana.
128. Tania Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Red Juvenil, Havana.
129. Benito Jon, Coordinadora Obrera Cuba, Havana.
130. Miriam Celaya González, 59100900595.
131. Rafael Pérez González, 46092502824.
132. Carlos Emilio Valhuerdi Obregón, 65040506208.
133. Licet del Carmen Zamora Carrandi, 70080605975.
134. Yesmy Elena Mena Zurbano, 75122607472.
135. Javier Sol Díaz, 75070307601.
136. Ramón Jiménez Arencibia, 38051822469.
137. Exequiel Enríquez López, 68041015909.
138. Rolando Ferrer Espinoza, 64111405983.
139. Omayda Padrón Azcuy, 66151105472.
140. Héctor Doniesky Bermúdez Santana, 71122415641.
141. Remberto Anastasio Delgado Girola, 58050204800.
142. José Lino Asencio López, 63021916481.
143. Yasmin Conyedo Riberon, 87110815293.
144. José Alberto Botell Cárdenas, 72090405464.
145. Feliberto Pérez del Sol, 70042905640.
146. Yayme Llanes Núñez, 75071007458.
147. Sander Reyes Machado, 76012907501.
148. Berkis Toledo Rodríguez, 73113003930.
149. Ramona Rodríguez Hernández, 52122802639.
150. Rolando Toledo Rodríguez, 43051404808.

151. Juan Galván Hernández, 66122026766.
152. Odalis Quintana Hernández, 66021105956.
153. Juan del Pilar Goberna Hernández, 45101209184, Havana.
154. Ramón de Armas Cantilo, Havana.
155. Juan José Basurto Expósito, Havana.
156. Damián Sánchez Perdomo, Havana.
157. Pedro Izquierdo Rodríguez, Guantánamo.
158. Amaury Portuondo Bataller, Havana.
159. Adela Inés Jiménez Torta, Havana.
160. Rafael Rosales Beliz, Havana.
161. Andrés Hernández Ramírez, Havana.
162. Domingo Eduardo Mesa Pérez, Havana.
163. Rodolfo Bartelemy Cobas, Guantánamo.
164. Rolando Rodríguez Izquierdo, Havana.
165. Roberto Ernesto Díaz Vázquez, Havana.
166. Mercedes Sabina Izquierdo Maseda, Havana.
167. Pedro Antonio Scull, 39042700625, independent unionist, Havana.
168. Katia Sonia Marti Veliz, 80072707191, Partido Cuba Independiente Democrática (CID), Havana.
169. Ricardo Santiago Medina Salabarría, 68102321704, CID and blogger, Havana.
170. Abdel Rodríguez Arteaga, 75090324144, CID, Havana.
171. Aimeé Cabrales Aguilar, 70092306498, CID, Havana.
172. Lisbán Hernández Sánchez, 81071804145, independent journalist, Havana.
173. Alexander Calá Reyes, 78012131263, CID, Palma Soriano, Santiago de Cuba.
174. Nivaldo Amelo Ramírez, 67011840969, CID, Palma Soriano, Santiago de Cuba.
175. Rafael Céspedes Rodríguez, Partido Republicano, Havana.
176. Josiel Guía Piloto, Partido Republicano Cubano, Havana.
177. Marilina Ortega, 6503020316, Corriente Martiana.
178. Beatriz Barrios, 68052101422, Corriente Martiana.
179. Aniesta Barrios Paz, 74061200185, Corriente Martiana.
180. Antonio Luis Alejo Puente, 60112602087, Havana.
181. Orlando Pérez Pineda, 43080426748, Fundación Cívica Cubana.
182. Juan Carlos Brinas Ricardo, 70090714386.
183. Juan Luis Becerra, 49120708703, Havana.
184. Rebeca Martínez, Havana.
185. Cecilia Guerra Alfonso, 59051013455, Havana.
186. Vladimir Alejo Montes de Oca, 86100706605, Havana.

187. Basilio López Iribarne, Comisión de Atención a Presos Políticos y Familiares.
188. Alexey Spengler Santana, 75041004983, Havana.
189. Nelsy Sierra López, 51031308537, Havana.
190. Yoanis Frías, 82102831028, Havana.
191. Héctor González Palacio, 51022800042, Havana.
192. Maydelín Blanco Ramírez, 94050326577, Havana.
193. Vidal Aguirre Chacón, 45040919260, Havana.
194. Agustín Valentín López Canino, CI: 55121605081, Havana.
195. Ada López Canino, CI: 63070624196, Havana.
196. Yusmila Reyna Ferrera, CI: 76102633795, Songo La Maya, Santiago de Cuba.
197. Jorge Quicutis Romero, Havana.
198. Noslie de la Caridad Quicutis Gómez, Havana.
199. Norley Quicutis Gómez, Havana.
200. Javier Jiménez Hernández, Havana.
201. Vladimir Ossorio González, CI: 63110730043, Camagüey.
202. Osmany Díaz Cristo, CI: 70102010448, Havana.
203. Pedro Argüelles Morán, Ciego de Ávila.



“I just finished five years of diplomatic service at the Embassy of Sweden in Havana. It has been a great privilege for me to have the chance to know deeply the difficult life conditions and the tough work of the Cuban opposition. During my 18 years in different diplomatic positions in Latin America I have not known of violations to freedom of expression so infamously planned like in the case of Cuba. For instance, the violation of the right to internet access and the right to meet and associate. I will never forget the strong impressions I felt through the human contacts with the Cuban dissidents.

My trips to the interior of the country have confirmed me the deplorable situation of human rights in Cuba, viewing it from the point of view of the relatives of the political prisoners and the active members of civil society. The persecution by authorities has been in many occasions even more intense and cruel in the interior of the country. A very particular aspect of the case of Cuba is how the authorities incite public officers to organize what they call “actos de repudio” (repudiation acts) against opposition demonstrators. It is a very humiliating form of persecution for the victims as well as for the state actors.

I do not feel the award as something personal for me but as an institutional award: for the Embassy, for Sweden and for the European Union. We will carry on with our presence in Cuba to support the rights of the Cubans bringing about the opening in the country and to the world”.

Ingemar Cederberg