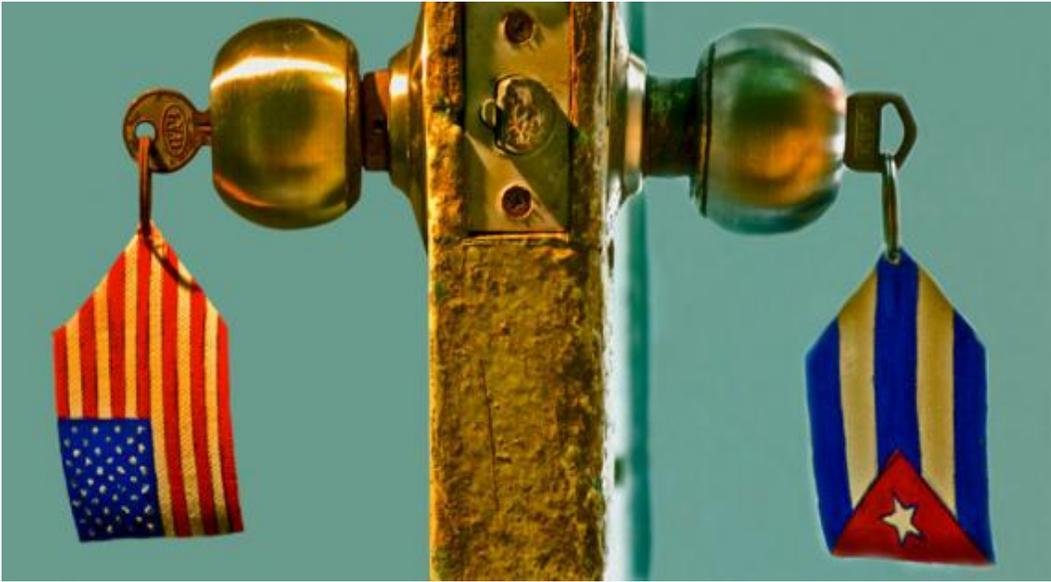


From Threat to Partner? A Regional Security Framework for Engaging Cuba

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April 2017





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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ken E. Gause'.

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Abstract

As Cuba opens up to greater foreign tourism, commerce, and exchange, it faces growing pressures to bring its security capabilities and practices in line with those of the international community. The recent adjustment of relations between the United States and Cuba presents fresh opportunities for the two nations to enhance security and development within a framework of cooperation in the Caribbean region. We propose a new strategic framework that would include alternative, cooperative initiatives especially at the multilateral level, to promote progress on important, shared security issues and get beyond wrangling over a checklist of disagreements and bureaucratic gaps. Three critical issues could serve as the core of this framework: migration; disaster preparedness; and transnational organized crime. Each area is important for the regional community in its own terms and encompasses some of the most challenging issues for current U.S.-Cuban negotiations.

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Executive summary

After 55 years of mutual antagonism and conflict, relations between the United States and Cuba have begun to improve. This resulted when shifts in economic and strategic policy in Havana under the leadership of Raúl Castro coincided with the Obama administration's desire to end an approach which, it argued, had failed to move Cuba toward democracy. Since diplomatic relations were normalized in July 2015, both governments have invested in a series of parallel agency-to-agency working groups designed to iron out the many practical steps to achieving a functioning relationship. Progress has been made on environmental issues and, most notably, the security arrangements necessary to support airline passenger screening and safety.

The new administration of President Donald J. Trump is reviewing these programs and the policies, which allow greater economic, cultural, and diplomatic exchange between the two countries.* But even if the United States modifies or reverses these policies, Cuba's economic reforms and international economic relations will almost certainly continue to expand. Tourists spend around US\$8 billion a year on the island (around 10 percent of Cuba's gross domestic product), and the port at Mariel and the "Special Development Zone" of which it is part, have attracted significant non-U.S. foreign investment.

This tactical approach to improving bilateral relations has distinct advantages. Focusing on working-level government-to-government exchanges serves as confidence-building counterweights to persistent ideological differences and the lack of trust on both sides. But a tactical focus necessarily limits the interests and capabilities of both sides to reach for a larger understanding of how future cooperation bilaterally and regionally will work. Deep divisions remain on critical issues, including the end of the economic embargo, the status of the Guantánamo Bay naval base, immigration policies, human rights, and other key issues, and will likely persist for some time. It remains to be seen how Cuba can preserve its one-party, Communist regime while integrating into a region where democratic norms

* Tom Batchelor, "Donald Trump 'Reviewing Cuba Policy,' Says White House," *The Independent* (London), February 3, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/donald-trump-cuba-white-house-policy-review-a7562201.html>, accessed February 5, 2017.

and free markets are woven into the international fabric. A broader strategic discussion is needed that transforms the framework of bilateral exchange to focus on areas of cooperation and to accelerate the realization of mutual benefits.

We argue for a strategic framework that would seek to find alternative, cooperative initiatives rather than wrangling over a checklist of disagreements and bureaucratic gaps. We argue that the technical working groups—as useful as those bodies may be—can be inherently self-limiting. Without a complementary, parallel strategic engagement, current differences can ignite longstanding antagonisms, information exchanges can easily become bureaucratic obstacles, and new opportunities for creative cooperation can too easily be ignored and lost. Most importantly, a technical, incrementalist process will not, by itself, compel the shifting of mindsets and the undertaking of difficult policy decisions which must occur for this bilateral rapprochement, and Cuba’s wider integration into the international community, to succeed.

This paper identifies three critical issues that could serve as the core of a new strategic agenda: migration; disaster preparedness; and transnational organized crime. Each area is important in itself and encompasses some of the most challenging issues for current negotiations. But taken together, the three areas also present possibilities for stepping beyond and outside of current debates to find not only new answers to past problems but new principles and interests for agreement as well.

Over the long term, both Cuba and the United States have strong incentives to work together—not only to solve existing problems but also to prepare to solve those that cannot be anticipated so easily. The processes of normalization will generate new tensions and difficulties. Port security, for instance, which is already high on the tactical list for U.S.-Cuba discussions, will take on a much different character if the anticipated links between travel through the Panama Canal to the new deepwater port at Mariel, and its connections on to Europe, become entangled with expanding Chinese and Russian interests in the region. Normalization of migration policies will also prove to be disruptive. It will entail, for example, more migration, not less. Increased tourism and trade with and through Cuba, and the new port, will inevitably attract criminal trade in drugs, humans, weapons, and counterfeit goods, requiring international cooperation to address. Greater integration through family visits may lead to expanded social problems.

Without a larger strategic discussion, and despite the progress of the numerous working groups, the progress of rapprochement and normalization is uncertain and tentative. Recently, at the 2016 Seventh Party Congress, President Raúl Castro bluntly declared his mistrust of U.S. intentions, labeling them “a perverse strategy of political-ideological subversion against the very essence of the revolution and Cuban culture, history, and values.” Trust is not built through negotiation alone. Incremental changes in policy in areas of low political sensitivity are helpful and

pragmatic, but they will not create the momentum and, ultimately, the breakthroughs in attitude and policy necessary on both sides for the two governments, and the two countries, to construct a new bilateral and regional future. We hope this essay, and particularly the recommendations it puts forth, may help effect this strategic shift.

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Introduction

The restoration of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba in July 2015 has produced a series of dramatic events. On August 31, 2016, for instance, JetBlue flew the first regularly scheduled commercial flight to Cuba since 1961. Postal service between the two countries has been restored, and cruise ships now visit Havana and other Cuban ports.

Behind these events, both governments have invested in a series of parallel agency-to-agency working groups designed to iron out the many practical steps to achieving a functioning relationship. Progress has been made on environmental issues and, most notably, on the security arrangements necessary to support airline passenger screening and safety. The tactical purpose and professional style of these working groups draw heavily on the problem-solving steps used during the toughest periods in the bilateral relationship. They also mirror the longstanding day-to-day joint efforts of the U.S. Coast Guard and the Cuban Border Guard in rescuing imperiled boats at sea.

Both governments, along with many outside observers, have supported this deliberative, go-slow approach to the normalization process.¹ To a degree, the years of isolation and the sheer gap between the two countries' capabilities make this tactical approach nearly inevitable. The focus on the internal wiring of government-to-government exchanges serves as a confidence-building counterweight to persistent ideological differences and the lack of trust on both sides. Some experts also argue that this tactical incrementalism best serves to prevent an obstructionist overreaction from various entrenched Cuban and U.S. sectors. In Cuba, the concern especially covers the reaction of the military.² In the United States, although the

¹ U.S. Department of State, "United States and Cuba Hold Inaugural Bilateral Commission in Havana," September 11, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/09/246844.html>, accessed September 19, 2016.

² Philip Brenner, "Overcoming Asymmetry: Is a Normal US-Cuban Relationship Possible?" in Michael Erisman and John M. Kirk (eds.), *Redefining Cuban Foreign Policy: The Impact of the Special Period* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006).

general public has supported normalization for years, important segments of Congress and various political groups also caution against moving too quickly.³

As critical as confidence building is, however, moving slowly carries risks. Incremental progress through technical working groups is relatively easy to halt and reverse, either by bureaucratic drag or by overt political decision. A slow pace also allows for inevitable problem areas to grow into larger tensions and compete against the benefits of positive change. The risk is clear. Already, several members of the U.S. Congress have seized on tactical issues related to standardizing airline and port services, thus challenging the substantial benefits of expanded commercial air travel and seaborne trade.

A tactical focus on normalization limits the interests and capabilities of both sides to reach for a larger understanding of how future cooperation bilaterally and regionally will work. Deep divisions remain on critical issues, including the end of the economic embargo, the status of the Guantánamo military base, immigration policies, and human rights, and will likely persist for some time. What is needed is a broader strategic discussion that transforms the framework of bilateral exchange to focus on areas of cooperation and to accelerate the realization of mutual benefits.

We believe in the value of a new strategic framework that would seek to find alternative, cooperative initiatives rather than wrangling over a checklist of disagreements and bureaucratic gaps. We argue that the technical working groups—as useful as those bodies may be—can be inherently self-limiting. Without a complementary, parallel strategic engagement, current differences can ignite longstanding antagonisms, information exchanges can easily become bureaucratic obstacles, and, perhaps most importantly, new opportunities for creative cooperation can too easily be ignored and lost.

This paper identifies three critical issues that could serve as the core of a new strategic agenda: migration; disaster preparedness; and transnational organized crime. Each area is important in itself and encompasses some of the most challenging issues for current negotiations. But taken together, the areas also present possibilities for stepping beyond and outside of current debates to find not only new answers to past problems but also new principles and interests for agreement.

Those areas of potential dialogue and engagement build on important precedents. These include:

³ Benenson Strategy Group, “New Poll: Bipartisan Majority Supports Ending Cuban Embargo,” <http://www.bsgco.com/insights/new-poll-bipartisan-majority-supports-ending-cuban-embargo>, accessed September 15, 2016.

- U.S. and Cuban military medical cooperation in 2015 when the USNS *Comfort* visited Haiti
- Similar local coordination between Cuban and U.S. military doctors during the international response to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti
- The longstanding dialogue and cooperation between the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and Cuban forces on the open seas to rescue shipwreck victims and protect the borders
- Routine “fenceline” dialogues between Cuban and U.S. officers about emergency response and other issues that arise with the presence of U.S. facilities, personnel, and operations on Cuban soil at Guantánamo.

In the past, these efforts have been largely sporadic and ad hoc; however, they have been frequent enough to require the creation of processes for outreach and communication.

The challenges of migration, crisis response, and transnational organized crime pose few security or strategic sensitivities, and in general are politically palatable to both capitals. This is not to suggest that these three areas are noncontroversial⁴—particularly with respect to issues involving military forces. Indeed, some U.S. analysts have warned against a new dialogue between the U.S. and Cuban militaries. Cuba’s military not only is still in charge of the nation’s defense against foreign and domestic enemies; it also manages most of Cuba’s key economic sectors, including agriculture and food production. Critics warn that allowing the Cuban military to be at the forefront of bilateral dialogue and potential cooperation with the United States will only strengthen Raúl Castro, the military’s commander-in-chief, and the control that his government seems intent on retaining over the island and its people.

Undoubtedly, the Cuban military will, necessarily, be at the center of this process. We recognize that the Cuban government, chiefly through its military, will insist on strong state controls over any reforms and societal and economic developments. Cuba’s military leadership and middle ranks—the nation’s elites, the defenders of its sovereignty, and the managers of most of its economic activity—must remain

⁴ For critiques of the new U.S.-Cuban rapprochement, see Michael Gonzalez, “Cuba: Obama’s Next Foreign Policy Disaster,” *National Interest*, April 15, 2015, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/cuba-obamas-next-foreign-policy-disaster-12634>, accessed September 19, 2016; and Peter Brookes, “Obama Trip Rewards Cuba for Failing Its People,” Heritage Foundation, February 26, 2016, <http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2016/2/obama-trip-rewards-cuba-for-failing-its-people>, accessed September 20, 2016.

satisfied that the nation's opening does not threaten them but rather offers new opportunities for modernization, prosperity, and more assured national security.

A larger goal of U.S. policy with respect to the Cuban military (as well as other armed forces in the region) is to promote the development of professional modern militaries within the rule of law and under civilian control. However, if the new U.S. administration decides to continue bilateral dialogue and cooperation, the United States should engage Cuba's military without preconditions. The strategy should be to work as effectively as possible with the Cuban military and government today in areas of common interest, and, over time, impress upon Cuba's government the benefits of modern, civilian-led national defense and security forces. These benefits should be conveyed not through demands or warnings, which would be counterproductive, but through exposure to the successful models of regional militaries and police across the region.

However, while paying heed to the political interests of key actors within Cuba, the United States must also insist on the recognition of core values and interests that it shares with the democracies of the Americas and around the world. This does not mean rhetorically: a liberal Cuban democracy is not on the horizon—and it does not need to be, for mutually beneficial understanding and cooperation to evolve. We suggest that Cuba, as well as the United States, can come to recognize the benefits of reforms and the abandonment of counterproductive policies, if they move ahead together toward shared goals.

The remainder of this paper will discuss the three critical issues that can help form a new strategic agenda: migration, emergency preparedness, and transnational organized crime.

Migration

The Bilateral Migration Accords have long served as one of the few mechanisms for official dialogue between the Cuban and U.S. governments. Emerging from periodic migration crises, the problem-solving, technical discussions have sought to turn dangerous and chaotic situations, such as the Mariel boat lift in 1980, into safe, orderly, and legal migration. Agreement on migration policy, however, now rests on shaky foundations, and reveals how technical exchanges can be overwhelmed by strategic neglect.

Routine working group meetings on migration mask deeper tensions between the two countries. Cuban authorities protest U.S. immigration policies that they believe fuel illegal migration from Cuba, underwrite human smuggling, and place at risk the lives of many family members. The Cuban view also holds that U.S. policy remains dominated by a Cold War mindset aimed at promoting regime change through the granting of special immigration status to professionals linked to critical sectors of the Cuban economy and society. As they did in the 1960s, exceptional U.S. migration policies both promote a brain drain and politicize an otherwise normal flow of family members across the Florida Straits. Adding to a long list of exceptional policies, including the Cuban Adjustment Act, and the operational distortion of U.S. asylum policy involved in “wet feet, dry feet” interdiction rules, in recent years the United States has targeted medical professionals through the Cuban Medical Professional Parole Program, and, most recently, has influenced Central American governments to treat Cuban migrants uniquely and assist them on their way to the U.S. border.

The flow of Cuban migrants has increased considerably in recent years, sparking wide-ranging concerns both in Cuba and in the United States.⁵ Although the general increase is in line with an uptick in migration from the Caribbean and Central America as a whole, the recent surge has been attributed to Cubans seeking to take advantage of the special treatment they can receive from the United States before normalization ends the privileges.

⁵ Tim Rogers, “Exodus of Cubans Walking to the U.S. is Quickly Becoming the Americas’ Own Refugee Crisis,” *Fusion*, <http://fusion.net/story/229892/exodus-of-cubans-walking-to-the-u-s-is-quickly-becoming-the-americas-own-refugee-crisis/>, accessed September 21, 2016.

According to the USCG, the relatively “controlled” flow of Cuban migrants across the Florida Straits has become more violent.⁶ Migrants report that they are sometimes attacked by smugglers while on Cuban soil or at sea, and others have been intercepted carrying machetes and other weapons. Official and informal observers now report that illegal smuggling has become a way of life in the South Florida community, raising issues of corruption, money laundering, and fraud among U.S. citizens and residents in the area.

Much of the flow, however, has shifted from the Florida Straits to circuitous, and equally or more dangerous, routes through multiple Caribbean, South American, and Central American countries.⁷ These are run largely by transnational criminal networks which provide the smuggling off Cuba’s coasts to other countries, and then the overland trafficking that follows, as well as committing visa fraud. Thousands of Cubans a year now negotiate their way through the interconnected gangs and criminal networks that control migration through Central America and Mexico. They are routinely defrauded, harassed, and abused.

For the United States and its regional partners, the Cubans’ presence in the region and the special treatment they receive from the United States has become a matter of diplomatic tension that has inflamed disagreements rooted in Cold War era alliances.⁸ The most recent episode occurred in late 2015, when Nicaragua refused to allow Cubans to cross its territory on their journey to the United States, leaving some 8,000 Cubans stranded in Costa Rica and another 3,000 in Panama. The United States assisted Costa Rica with the feeding and care of the Cubans, and coordinated flights to Mexico and El Salvador so they could continue on their journey.⁹ The episode roiled U.S. relations in the region. The presidents of several Central American nations rebuked the United States for its policy, which encourages and even assists uncontrolled Cuban migration while criminalizing migration from other countries.

The current conditions of the migration flow underscore the Cuban government’s mistrust of U.S. intentions. The image of tens of thousands of Cubans leaving their country for a better life in the United States is not viewed as part of the broad

⁶ Jonathan Blitzer, “The Cuban Migrant Crisis,” *New Yorker*, January 16, 2016, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-cuban-migrant-crisis> accessed December 20, 2016.

⁷ Mark Krikorian, “The Cubans Are Coming!” *National Review*, January 18, 2016, <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/429939/cuban-immigration-surge-stop>, accessed September 20, 2016.

⁸ Jens Manuel Krogstad, “Surge in Cuban immigration to the U.S. continues into 2016,” *FACTANK News in the Numbers*, August 5, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/08/05/cuban-immigration-to-u-s-surges-as-relations-warm/>.

⁹ “Cuban Migrants: The Exodus Through Central America Continues,” *Newsinamerica.com*, <http://www.newsinamerica.com/eng/pgint.php?id=16035>, accessed September 20, 2016.

regional pattern of normal migration from underdeveloped to developed world, but rather is seen as a sign of political repression in Cuba and forced movement.

The two governments need a fresh start, a strategic approach that shifts the focus of migration policies and crafts new pathways that will support mutual interests and benefits. A new strategic approach to migration could include four key components: (1) temporary mobility, circulation, and exchange; (2) “non-immigrant” opportunities; (3) building a binational community; and (4) demographic futures. These elements are discussed in turn below.

Temporary mobility, circulation, and exchange

For both the United States and Cuba, the Cold War era framework for migration policies has stressed the permanent resettlement of Cubans to the United States. For the United States, migration policies would rescue Cubans from the Communist government. For Cuba, migration programs would release regime opponents and those defined as social and economic deviants, and prevent the United States from claiming ideological victory.

The future of migration should reinforce and reach beyond openings in travel and trade by offering a range of new, legitimate opportunities rooted in temporary exchanges and circulation between the United States and Cuba. Cubans and Americans increasingly can travel back and forth,¹⁰ and current travel restrictions on U.S. citizens will likely become increasingly irrelevant under the rapidly diversifying routes. Future opportunities will be more about building binational families, communities, and businesses. As is evident elsewhere in the world, transborder communities are vibrant social and economic entities that are rooted in relatively easy circulatory movement. Cuban family members, benefitting from the current flow of remittances from their U.S.-located relatives, are already demonstrating these advantages with the rise of privatized small businesses. These exchanges can be enlarged both as macro-strategies to stimulate overall investment and capacity improvements and as micro-efforts to target particular social and economic needs.

For this future success, the core of the migration discussion should shift from permanence to multiple avenues of temporary circulation and exchange. New agencies in each government, and new social sectors, would be engaged, broadening

¹⁰ The United States maintains travel restrictions on U.S. citizens, but these are increasingly irrelevant as more opportunities to visit and move become available.

interests and opportunities. The U.S. Departments of Commerce, Transportation, and Education, as well as others, would take center stage in fostering new joint programs.

“Non-immigrant” opportunities

The legal framework for this exchange-oriented future is already in place, although it is a generally overshadowed part of U.S. immigration policy and is extremely underutilized in discussions with Cuba. As millions of travelers and migrants already know, the United States offers multiple categories of entry to support a range of interests. Business visitors, temporary workers, students, the exceptionally talented, and many others join those who are simply visiting the United States for a short period. These avenues of exchange sit largely unused in the case of Cuba, but could become the framework for alternate migrations in the future.

Simply using the existing visa categories to expand Cuban exchange would be a significant move, but it also would invite a very different concept of cooperation between Cuba and the United States that might serve larger interests even more. These exchanges could become more than individual opportunities—that is, more than a fellowship, or a temporary job, or a business trip. The exchanges could support the creation of binational institutions that link and support activities involving the joint participation of Cubans and Americans.¹¹ Within various models, a binational institution would be capable of operating in both countries as a multinational entity. International hotel chains just beginning to open in Cuba, for instance, could expand and offer work opportunities for both Cubans and Americans. Binational universities could move beyond special visitation programs and offer the same credentials. Students would have greater choices and broader exposure. Medical institutions could share expertise, equipment, and personnel, often using technology to overcome the barriers of distance. Medical personnel could work in both countries, opening up a professional binational community for Cuban doctors that would keep them from having to leave Cuba for further career advancement. Educating Cubans and Americans together might also decrease the shortcomings of providing medical treatment to the poor and/or rural residents of the United States.

The reality of these benefits is, of course, part of a future vision. But the focus on exchanges and binational institutions could alleviate concerns in Havana about permanent migration and extraordinary programs. It also would build confidence

¹¹ For an elaboration of this point, see Robert L. Bach, “What is the US Waiting For? Time for a New Migration Framework,” in Soraya M. Castro Mariño and Margaret E. Crahan (eds.), *The New Era of Cuban-United States Relations* (draft title), forthcoming, 2017.

and trust between the two governments in a much stronger, more organic manner, rooted in reciprocity and mutual benefit.

Building a binational community

How rapprochement between the United States and Cuba will involve Cubans on the island and Cuban-Americans is a central one. Relationships of course have already moved in significant ways beyond the old antagonisms. Much of this change will be, and should be, played out outside of government efforts. Nongovernmental, civic cooperation is one of the greatest beneficiaries of accelerated travel, trade, and exchange.

Moreover, strengthening binational community initiatives offers a range of opportunities that may have surprising mutual benefits. For example, the ways in which families and communities interact across the Florida Straits influence, and often distort, efforts to improve stability, safety, and security. Cuban-American families are often victimized by smugglers who prey on intense emotions to extract what amounts to a ransom for their family members in Cuba. U.S. immigration authorities, in turn, are reluctant to enforce laws against this nexus of smuggling and trafficking because it would twice victimize the Cuban-American family. This vicious circle simply intensifies the dangers that smuggling represents and perpetuates the special treatment in U.S. law that Cuban migrants seem to enjoy over other nationalities.

These family entanglements have also led to widespread fraud and money laundering within South Florida communities. Decades ago, at the height of the refugee programs for Cubans, the United States built federally funded public assistance programs designed to ease resettlement. Some provisions of these programs continue and are expansively abused. Recently, as part of an exposé published by the *Tampa Tribune*, billions of dollars in Medicare fraud in South Florida were linked to new Cuban migrants. They migrate to the United States, use their special status under U.S. law to access public assistance, then return to Cuba, often with suitcases full of U.S. dollars. One of the original sponsors of these programs, Congressman Torricelli, has called for repeal as a way of normalizing and strengthening legitimate exchanges.

Demographic futures

Finally, opportunities for future collaborative initiatives may also emerge from demographic trends in Cuba, in South Florida, and within the binational community. Cuba is rapidly urbanizing and aging, creating new demands on social support

mechanisms throughout the island and future labor force needs. The two governments could sponsor a long-term project designed to study complementary trends and to craft innovative efforts to respond to them. Several of the binational institutions mentioned above could provide the foundations for this cooperative design work, strengthening professional exchanges and creating opportunities for intergenerational as well as binational collaboration.

Emergency Preparedness

Caribbean-wide environmental and climatic risks provide the United States and Cuba with an array of opportunities to work together on both immediate, urgent problems and longer-range preparedness and prevention. In 2012, for instance, Hurricane Sandy struck the coasts of both Cuba and the U.S. Atlantic seaboard, causing the most economic damage that either area had experienced in the last 50 years. The hurricane's costs to the New Jersey and New York coastal communities topped \$50 billion and included over 120 deaths. In Cuba's second largest city, Santiago de Cuba, the storm killed 11 people—in a country where fatalities from disasters are rare. Over a quarter (27 percent) of the surrounding province's 3 million residents lost access to housing, water, and food.

Cuba's ability to recover from such damages resembles that of its Caribbean neighbors more than that of its North American neighbors. Throughout the Caribbean, for example, the costs of rebuilding from large-scale storm damage repeatedly erases all gains in gross domestic production (GDP). Emergency preparedness for the entire region is now an economic as well as a humanitarian long-range strategic interest.

Environmental risks are not limited to storms. Cuba, like parts of the United States, faces the chronic risk of persistent drought. Currently, Cuba is facing its most severe water crisis since 2004, with 144 municipalities affected and some 100,000 people depending on special water deliveries. In early 2016, nearly a third of Cuban territory was affected by water deficits.¹² Cuba and the United States share in the suffering from persistent drought. Drought ravages the capacity to sustain agricultural development, provide food and water security, and, in the long run, protect against the rising risks of insect-borne disease.

Cuba and the United States have cooperated on emergency preparedness before, and there is clearly an opportunity for region-wide collaboration to assess these risks and prepare preventive strategies that build joint capabilities. Cuba occupies a

¹² International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, "Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA) Cuba: Drought," June 2, 2016, <http://reliefweb.int/report/cuba/cuba-drought-emergency-plan-action-dref-operation-n-mdrcu003-update-n-1>, accessed September 21, 2016.

meteorologically strategic location in the Caribbean region that has supported targeted cooperation between the two governments for decades. Even during periods of isolation and opposition, the U.S. National Hurricane Center and Cuba's Instituto de Meteorologia and Centro Nacional de Prognosticos have maintained good relations and shared information. Hurricane-hunting planes based in the United States, for instance, have routinely crossed Cuba's air space, with the Cuban government's permission, to gather climatic data.¹³

For much of this time, however, the United States has been unwilling and largely unable to provide direct assistance to Cuba or to participate in joint Caribbean initiatives to foster preparedness and resilience. Without cooperation, Cuba's ability to improve its hurricane monitoring and other disaster surveillance systems has lagged. The U.S. embargo on Cuba has restricted U.S. funds from reaching Cuban communities directly, because it prohibits U.S. funds from supporting any activities in Cuba through which the Cuban government would benefit. Cuba's emergency system, of course, relies on both the military and the system of government-sponsored neighborhood organizations to respond to and recover from emergencies. Several international organizations and private aid groups can use U.S. funds for their own purposes, but this avenue offers limited help.

For their part, Cuban officials often mistrust U.S. intentions in offering assistance; they say that U.S. aid to non-government organizations (NGOs) and private groups in Cuba are tied to broad efforts to undermine the regime's authority. For example, Cuban officials are wary of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which also directs international emergency assistance, because of its direct role in a series of "democracy promotional programs" that they see as explicit efforts to overthrow the revolutionary government.¹⁴

A new approach is needed, preferably on a regional scale—one which draws on international partners to help build a mechanism for disaster management that could bring Cuba and the United States together. Ironically, the lack of U.S. engagement has done as much to isolate the United States as it has to prevent financial support from reaching the Cuban government. Cuba currently works with other Caribbean countries on emergency preparedness and is supported by the European Union and others in both its technical and its governance activities. The Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), for example, has operated with European

¹³ Marc Lacey, "U.S. and Cuba Work Together on Storms," *New York Times*, August 20, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/21/world/americas/21storm.html>, accessed September 22, 2016.

¹⁴ See, for example, Catherine A. Traywick, "'Cuban Twitter' and Other Times USAID Pretended to be an Intelligence Agency," *Foreign Policy*, April 2, 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/04/03/cuban-twitter-and-other-times-usaid-pretended-to-be-an-intelligence-agency/>, accessed September 21, 2015.

and regional support for over 25 years. In May 2016, the European Union agreed to contribute millions of euros to bolster the Caribbean's preparedness efforts, responding to the link between natural disasters and top-priority economic risks. Cuba also participates in the World Food Programme's (WFP's) south-to-south initiatives.

The absence of the United States in these and related activities has consequences. First, the United States loses the value of providing humanitarian support to a geographical neighbor and working with a diversity of segments of Cuban society. Second, it loses an opportunity to prepare for the future by reducing natural disaster risks that may emanate directly from Cuba. As travel and tourism radically increase the number of family, business, and institutional activities linking Cuba and the United States, disasters in Cuba will likely spawn increased emergency migration to the United States, as well as calls from political leaders in U.S. communities whose constituents have family in Cuba and need direct assistance, and efforts to combat public health risks (e.g., Zika). Events surrounding emergencies in Haiti repeatedly show the need to anticipate these risks and to prepare collective, regional responses. In this bilateral U.S.-Cuba future, capabilities to respond to increasing risks call for approaches not currently recognized by either U.S. or Cuban leaders.

Whether or not the United States and Cuba could agree on direct assistance programs, newer strategic approaches could spark cooperation in other ways. Below, we discuss two of those potential ways: a regional strategy, and a governance platform.

A regional strategy

The natural risks shared widely around the Caribbean offer opportunities for broader, cooperative initiatives. Cuba, for instance, is not alone in its struggle with environmental and climactic risk. The WFP, for instance, recognizes drought damage in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Haiti, as well as Cuba, caused or exacerbated by this year's El Niño effects.

Even though Cuba and the United States differ in terms of governance, there is strategic value in the complementarity of capabilities from each system. Medical services offer one of the best examples for future collaboration. During both the Haiti earthquake and the Ebola crises, for instance, U.S. and Cuban medical personnel found themselves working in close proximity, often by accident, but by all accounts productively and positively. They increasingly do so as well during regular deployments of U.S. and partner nations' medical staffs to under-serviced coastal towns in the region on U.S. hospital ships, in a mission called Continuing Promise run by U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) .

Beyond these specific initiatives, medical services also offer a foundation for more systemic stabilization and improvement in health and well-being throughout the region.

A governance platform

Beyond finding shared interests in preparing for disasters, combatting disease, and promoting health, the two nations will have to find ways to construct standing mechanisms to train and exercise complementary assets and even deploy them to affected areas of the region. As the United States and Cuba seek ways to initiate military-to-military contacts, for instance, emergency preparedness offers both a safe and a humanitarian-focused set of issues around which to build a cooperative planning and exercising platform. Commander of U.S. Southern Command, Admiral Kurt Tidd, often points to disaster response as one of three areas in which U.S.-Cuban bilateral security cooperation can best advance. The other two are humanitarian assistance and medical services.¹⁵

For these initiatives to succeed, U.S. strategy will need to move beyond “contingency planning” to build more systemic infrastructure capacities that focus on resilience throughout the region, including Cuba.¹⁶ Neither the Cuban nor the U.S. government is organized in a way that facilitates cooperative regional resilience efforts that include the diverse civilian and military capabilities required for regional emergency preparedness. Cuban emergency preparedness rests in the hands of the armed forces, which operate directly in local communities. The United States responds in the region through the Department of State and focuses on coordination of resources when officially requested.

The United States could strengthen its governance structure through several initiatives. First, it could integrate FEMA and its preparedness expertise more fully into the Department of State’s international efforts and, more importantly, into the multilateral activities led by Norway, Germany, and others. Second, it could involve the National Guard much more fully in the various planning and exercising activities. The National Guard resembles the Cuban military in terms of working with local communities. Involvement of the National Guard would also bring state

¹⁵ Hal Klepak, “Cuba Welcomes Military Cooperation with US in the Caribbean,” *TeleSur.com*, January 30, 2016, <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Cuba-Welcomes-Military-Cooperation-with-US-in-the-Caribbean—20160130-0025.html> , accessed August 17, 2016.

¹⁶ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), “U.S., Cuba Agree on Efforts to Improve Maritime Navigation Safety,” March 21, 2016, <http://www.noaa.gov/media-release/us-cuba-agree-on-efforts-to-improve-maritime-navigation-safety>, accessed September 19, 2016.

governments, such as that of Florida, into the discussions with Cuban and regional partners. These new efforts could strengthen both Cuban and U.S. efforts to foster closer civilian-military cooperation at home and throughout the region.

Transnational Organized Crime

Migration control and safety, and emergency preparedness and response, are promising areas of cooperation for the U.S. and Cuban security communities. The primary mission of the U.S. and Cuban militaries, however, is defending national security (and in Cuba's case, defending the ruling regime). Today, the leading threat to the security of all the Caribbean Basin nations, including the United States, is transnational criminal networks and the violence, corruption, and narcotics sales on which they thrive. The improvement of dialogue and mutual understanding in this area, and the development of channels and mechanisms for information exchange and, ultimately, for cooperation, must be a critical long-term goal for bilateral and regional security.

In March 2016, Cuban officials were invited to visit the headquarters of the Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South), the U.S. effort responsible for the detection and monitoring of regional sea- and air-borne narcotics shipments. During their visit, they likely noticed several aspects of JIATF-South: (a) its technological sophistication at integrating intelligence from numerous air-, sea-, and land-based sensors simultaneously and virtually in real time, across most of the Caribbean region; (b) its capacity for fusing intelligence from across the U.S. security community, including the Departments of State, Treasury, and Homeland Defense, in addition to Defense; and (c) the numerous foreign liaison officers who are embedded in the JIATF's staff, as conduits for information exchange. The United States may struggle to control movement across its shorelines and borders, but its capacity for regionwide monitoring is unparalleled.

For decades, drug-smuggling networks and cartels have been a clear, significant threat to Cuba as well as the United States. Although operating with decades-old equipment, and throughout years of economic misery, Cuba's security forces have been highly successful at blocking or deterring regional criminal organizations from crossing or penetrating its territory. The U.S. government has repeatedly complimented Cuba on its success—though so far with little active partnership—at addressing this shared threat.¹⁷

¹⁷ George Withers, "Building Bridges in Unlikely Places: U.S.-Cuban Cooperation on Security Issues," Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), March 24, 2012,

There are good reasons to endeavor to develop shared efforts against transnational crime, particularly in its regionally virulent form of narcotics trafficking and sales. Even limited cooperation on this shared security problem could quickly reap significant mutual benefits. Moreover, Cuba's openness to cooperate regionally in this area would speed the integration of its armed forces and government more meaningfully and purposefully into the growing regional security framework.

A strategic security agenda centered on addressing transnational organized crime, looking 10 to 15 years in the future, could be built around three initiatives: military-to-military engagements; information exchanges; and the inclusion of Cuba in regional capacity-building efforts.¹⁸

Military-to-military engagement

Security cooperation against transnational crime is led by law enforcement agencies, not militaries. As with the areas of migration and emergency preparedness, the U.S. defense department mostly plays a support role, built upon its superior capacities for logistics and surveillance (integrated through JIATF-South). The interagency character of regional security cooperation—across the region's democracies as well as with the United States—provides various potential pathways on which to enlarge the strategic discussion with Cuba. Security cooperation, defined broadly, will ultimately involve a network of institutional relations that both link and crisscross connections between the Cuban and U.S. militaries and various civilian agencies. Nevertheless, the fact that Cuba's security sector, unlike those of other Latin American partners, consists almost entirely of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) suggests that for years to come the military-to-military dynamics will be at the center of this cooperation.

Military-to-military engagement has progressed significantly since the beginning of diplomatic relations. In addition to the April 2016 visit by Cuban officials to JIATF-

<https://www.wola.org/analysis/building-bridges-in-unlikely-places-us-cuban-cooperation-on-security-issues/>, accessed August 17, 2016.

¹⁸ Official U.S. concerns about Cuban support for international terrorism—a perennial issue since the 1960s—have abated in recent years. Following a U.S. State Department review in the spring of 2015, the Obama administration submitted a report to Congress justifying the repeal of the designation of Cuba as a state sponsor of international terrorism. The administration certified that the Cuban government “has not provided any support for international terrorism during the preceding 6-month period” and had taken significant steps to strengthen its counterterrorism laws. Mark P. Sullivan and June S. Beittel, “Latin America: Terrorism Issues,” Congressional Research Service, RS21049, December 15, 2016, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/RS21049.pdf>, accessed December 18, 2016.

South and to a U.S. Coast Guard base in Key West, Cuban officials also participated as observers at an annual SOUTHCOM-sponsored Caribbean Nations Security Conference, held in Jamaica in January 2016. Most recently, the United States and Cuba held a Counternarcotics Technical Exchange in July 2016, the third of its kind and part of a broader, bilateral Law Enforcement Dialogue.¹⁹ Officials on both sides point to such meetings, although tentative, as among the most promising exchanges in the new era of normalization.

We hope that these dialogues and visits continue, because over time they will help break down misconceptions, improve mutual understanding, and open pathways for more productive engagements. However, the greater strategic benefits for Cuba, the United States, and the regional community of nations will come from the integration of Cuba into ongoing regional security initiatives and programs. One first step in that direction would be for U.S. military services, through their component commands which support SOUTHCOM, to advocate with their regional partners to invite Cuban observers to annual meetings among the service chiefs from across the hemisphere. The Conference of American Armies, the Inter-American Naval Conference (IANC), the System of Cooperation Among the American Air Forces (SICOFA), and others have long traditions of promoting dialogue, cooperation, and interoperability at the operational level.

Another possible step to facilitate dialogue and confidence-building between the FAR and other militaries of the Americas would be for regional partners to invite FAR officers to observe annual security exercises. The SOUTHCOM-led Tradewinds exercise, for example, is an excellent opportunity to showcase existing levels and processes of security and law enforcement cooperation and interoperability in the Caribbean. Another opportunity would be to find a way to invite Cuban observers to a tabletop game, or mission rehearsal exercise, involving U.S. interagency partners and international partners in a response to a humanitarian crisis in the Caribbean. Recently the Cubans have refused similar offers, arguing that they reject U.S.-dominated security operations in the region; however, their views could shift as they come to recognize the leadership roles played by other nations' militaries and the benefits that accrue to Latin American militaries from such dialogue and cooperation. The United States and its partners may also want to limit somewhat the information and technologies used in the events, if they distrust the intentions of the FAR, but such inconvenience should be minimal given the generally non-kinetic, public-security nature of the missions involved and the "basics" nature of the modes of interoperability practiced.

¹⁹ U.S. Southern Command Office of Strategic Communication, Command Message Guidance (Unclassified), 19 September 2016, 12-13.

Ideally, in the more distant future the FAR and the U.S. government would both recognize the benefits of including Cuba in regional multilateral exercises, and could contemplate an invitation for Cuba to observe SOUTHCOM's larger, hemisphere-wide and military-civilian PANAMAX exercise. PANAMAX, like Tradewinds, would offer a venue for Cuban military officials to witness the sophistication and capacity of intra-American partners for real-time, operational security cooperation. We can use the same logic by which the United States and its allies view the presence of Chinese observers at international military exercises in the Pacific: the Cubans will see the value of participating in such highly efficient and technically advanced task forces, and will be exposed to their counterparts across the region in ways that build respect, understanding, and confidence.

Information sharing

As in any bilateral cooperative security arrangement, the sharing of information will be a critical component of future cooperation. Information exchange could bring significant benefits, and insights, to Cuban security forces, providing both greater awareness of trafficking patterns and a forward-looking capability to plan and execute their patrolling and interdiction operations more efficiently and effectively. For the United States, routine information exchange and cooperation with Cuba on the monitoring, interdiction, and questioning of detained smugglers would improve U.S. control over its southern coastline. As always, the regional dimension will be critical to the success of this cooperation. Information exchange will provide a new operational rationale to Cuba's regional security engagements, particularly with neighbors such as Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico—countries which routinely conduct counter-narcotics operations based in part on intelligence shared with and by the United States.

Including Cuba in this region-wide effort would be a major advance toward its regional integration and, as cooperation persists and advances, its interoperability with neighboring security forces. For example, it is easy to envision the hosting of a Cuban liaison officer, alongside those of other regional partners, at JIATF-South, with all partners exchanging and learning from one another and from their U.S. interagency colleagues. JIATF-South's impressive success has been partly due to its design, which allows inter-personal sharing of cleared information, including legally sensitive information for various international parties, without putting at risk access to any nation's classified information or systems.²⁰

²⁰ United States General Accounting Office, "U.S. Southern Command Demonstrates Interagency Collaboration, but its Haiti Disaster Response Revealed Challenges Conducting a Large Military

What's more, from the U.S. perspective the opening of a channel for the sharing of information and intelligence with Cuba—however limited at first concerning specific drug-smuggling targets—would offer numerous benefits. Cuba's intelligence-gathering capabilities across Latin America are impressive, not only within the region's governments and political circles but also in some of the region's most remote areas and communities, where Cuban ideology and medical services have given Cuba a long-standing presence and privileged knowledge of local affairs.²¹ For the coming years, the exchange of information would be highly restricted, and circumscribed, by both parties. But once understandings and protocols were established for the purpose of interdicting narcotics and other illegal shipments, that crack in the doorway might widen if the mutual benefits from such an exchange were clear.

Closer to home, the improved bilateral sharing of Cuban information about law enforcement events on the Island, and active smuggling networks which pose a security problem for the United States, are of immediate value to both sides. Cuban information on suspect activities on the Island is, naturally, comprehensive and could serve to warn the U.S. Coast Guard and other agencies of impending events. The United States, though, also has impressive capabilities for regional observation, including over and around Cuban territory, which could help the Cuban authorities improve their own awareness and operational planning.

The exchange of information would be a necessary step toward wider cooperation in terms of shared law enforcement and security concerns. Though we have highlighted information from military sources and for the purpose of mil-to-mil sharing, information exchanges between Cuba and other U.S. departments or agencies should also continue to develop. For example, technical talks between Cuba and the U.S. state department on human smuggling and travel documentation fraud are already underway.²² Information exchange on law enforcement matters could pave the way for joint criminal investigations and a range of other areas of cooperation—for example, in the areas of port and airport security. Because in the United States, these types of security heavily involve state and city authorities, they too should be encouraged to participate in this outreach. Also, as in other areas, providing a regional framework in which Cuba may participate without limitations or

Operation," July 2010, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10801.pdf>, accessed September 20, 2016.

²¹ William Rosenau and Ralph Espach, "Cuba's Spies Still Punching Above Their Weight," *National Interest*, September 29, 2013, <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/cubas-spies-still-punch-above-their-weight-9147>, accessed September 21, 2016.

²² U.S. Department of State Media Note, "United States and Cuba Hold Technical Talks on Human Smuggling and Fraud Prevention," February 5, 2016, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/02/252186.htm>, accessed September 20, 2016.

encroachments on its sovereignty, will likely be an important component of this cooperation. Providing Cuban officials with examples of similar, productive U.S. cooperation on law enforcement and joint investigations with other regional partners, or of cooperation among regional partners, could mitigate the government's concerns and facilitate progress.

Regional capacity-building

Cuba's internal security apparatus is unlike any other in the region, given the uniqueness of its regime. Most likely, the Cuban government will not entertain any notions of changing its model for years to come. That model is fundamentally contradictory to the practice of law enforcement and rule of law under constitutional democratic norms, which shape governance in all the other nations of the Caribbean Basin.²³

Nevertheless, the police, public security, and military forces of Central American and most Caribbean nations today operate with doctrine, technologies, and systems that are more modern and sophisticated than Cuba's. If offered in the spirit of multinational technical exchange, Cuban police, like the FAR, should be interested in learning about how other nations' law enforcement systems work and how greater information exchange and coordination with the Cuban police might develop. A series of regional-level exchanges of subject-matter experts (SMEs), where experts could explore and discuss the challenges they face from transnational threats such as criminal networks, and how they address them, would be a good first step toward creating venues for bilateral dialogue and exchange.

One medium-term objective for this dialogue could be the inclusion of Cuba in the numerous joint training programs underway in the region. This could be coordinated bilaterally with regional partners, and might not involve the United States at all. Today, nations including Colombia, Mexico, Chile, and Brazil engage in international police and security SME exchanges and training across Central America and the Caribbean. These exchanges, joint training programs, and increasing efforts at intra-regional security assistance strengthen Latin America's collective capacity for law enforcement under the rule of law and while protecting human rights. Cuba's involvement would be constrained at first, but the engagement of its government and security forces in these efforts—even if just as an observer—would offer important short- and long-term benefits.

²³ Although Venezuela and Nicaragua are democracies, they are so corrupted and weak—with no constitutional authority or political rights for their citizens, and no prospects for the peaceful transition of power under open elections—that they are in fact autocracies as well.

Developing regional cooperation against transnational crime and drug smuggling that includes Cuba would first require an objective appraisal of Cuba's capabilities in these areas. The Cubans, likewise, could benefit and learn from a clear assessment of their own capabilities relative to those of their neighbors for air-, land-, and sea-focused detection and monitoring, information exchange, interdiction, and international and national legal processing and management of criminal cases. With more information, the U.S. and Cuban governments and armed forces, potentially in partnership with other nations, could begin to discuss areas where their capabilities are complementary, and where gaps exist. They could then explore and discuss areas where security assistance or other forms of cooperation from the United States or partner nations (for example, Mexico, Colombia, or Brazil) could help Cuba address those gaps. With political support, the U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the U.S. Department of Defense, and other agencies could allocate funding and other assistance for Cuba in ways and with capabilities that would be much more helpful and effective, and at a much larger scale, than anything Cuba has or could receive from its erstwhile partners Russia or China. Also, this assistance could yield immediate benefits for Cuba's regional relations.

The mutually beneficial exchange of information on criminal networks and activities can be conducted on various scales and does not necessarily require a significant outlay of resources. The initiation of efforts toward greater SME exchanges, interoperability, and ultimately cooperation would require a more significant commitment in terms of resources. Routine and effective security assistance and cooperation require dedicated teams communicating daily, beyond the capacity of a single U.S. Coast Guard officer at the U.S. embassy in Havana. Cuba would need to accept the presence in Havana of American military personnel within the embassy, and SOUTHCOM would need to explore the possibilities of having a similar liaison in Miami.

Conclusion

The United States and Cuba must do much more than make a diplomatic march through checklists of discrete agency issues. Beyond checklist engagement, the United States needs a new vision for the region, and perhaps for the hemisphere, that articulates a place and a role for Cuba over the next 10 to 20 years. The emergence of a strategic dialogue about the merits and goals of regional security cooperation is, in our view, a much-needed complement to the early steps taken to establish tactical cooperation and confidence. Strategy guides the longer run, and for the United States and Cuba to identify pathways to beneficial joint outcomes, priorities and programs should look beyond resolution of past difficulties and capability gaps.

Such a future strategy will necessarily need to face up to some of the fundamental differences between the two countries and their perspectives on the region. Widespread cooperation with the United States, even if it is achieved in a mutually beneficial and reciprocal manner, would be historic and radical for Cuba. Cuban leaders seem acutely aware of the risks. They have studied transitions in China and Vietnam and have acknowledged their successes and applicable strengths. Central to those countries' experiences was a steady, even expanding, role of the state and military in encouraging and even owning trade and foreign investment. This will likely be the case for Cuba as well. In Cuba, as elsewhere, the military will remain in particular the most competent and legitimate state institution for some time.

For the United States, learning to work with Cuba's military will be a challenge. In the short term, encouraging Cuba to participate in regional security mechanisms and contingency exercises should be effective. U.S. and Caribbean partners have already taken initial steps in this direction, and the Cubans have responded well. But longer-term strategic issues should be addressed more fully, even if the early encounters are difficult. For example, Cuba is unlikely to abandon its ties to problematic partners such as Russia, North Korea, and Venezuela. But some prospect of talking, training, and operating with neighboring forces from Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and elsewhere within a highly institutionalized regional security architecture that includes the extraordinary capabilities and resources of such U.S. government agencies as the U.S. Coast Guard, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and U.S. Southern Command, offers Cuba's military a much more promising future.

In a constructive long-term vision of a safe, secure, and successful region, U.S.-Cuba relations will also need a strong civilian-military framework. Most of the safety and security issues will have more to do with law enforcement, natural disaster preparedness, and civil protection than with a more traditional notion of national defense.

The two governments should work together, both to share practices, cultures, doctrines, and techniques, and to construct cooperative new approaches to common challenges. In this paper, we have suggested several areas and ways in which the two governments can begin to forge new futures for the region.

In each area, we have focused on building mechanisms to support the joint pursuit of common opportunities. These mechanisms, by nature, require reciprocal actions and gains, ranging from professional learning opportunities to complementary operations in emergency preparedness and medical services. We have also pointed to the long-term value of binational institutions, which establish trust and mutual benefit by working together within the same, albeit broader, rules and regulations. These initiatives aim at the future, and so expand the strategic space for cooperation.

Over the long run, both Cuba and the United States have good reason to work together—not only to solve existing problems but, even more important, to prepare to solve those that cannot be anticipated so easily. The processes of normalization will generate new tensions and difficulties. Port security, for instance, which is already high on the tactical list for U.S.-Cuba discussions, will take on a much different character if the anticipated links between travel through the Panama Canal to the new deepwater port at Mariel, and its connections on to Europe, become entangled with expanding Chinese and Russian interests in the region. The normalization of migration policies, if it occurs, will be disruptive. It will entail, for example, more migration, not less. Increased trade will likely add to smuggling and human trafficking. Greater integration through family visits may lead to expanded social problems.

The way in which relations between the U.S. and Cuban governments evolve will either exacerbate problems or mitigate new disruptions. We know that without a larger strategic discussion, and despite the progress of the numerous working groups, the progress of rapprochement and normalization is uncertain and tentative. Recently, at the 2016 Seventh Party Congress, President Castro bluntly declared his mistrust of U.S. intentions, labeling them “a perverse strategy of political-ideological subversion against the very essence of the revolution and Cuban culture, history, and values.” He continued, “We are neither naive nor ignorant of the desires of powerful external forces that are betting on what they call the ‘empowerment’ of non-state forms of management as a way of generating agents of change in hopes of ending the

revolution and socialism in Cuba by other means.”²⁴ Trust is not built through negotiation. Rather it is learned through collective experience—constructing new solutions together, with mutual respect, professional commitments, and reciprocal benefits.

²⁴ Fulton Armstrong, “Cuba: Raul Clarifies the Lack of Clarity on Future,” AULA Blog, <https://aulablog.net/2016/04/22/cuba-raul-clarifies-the-lack-of-clarity-on-future/>, accessed September 21, 2016.

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