

Woodrow Wilson School
SpringTerm, 2001

WWS 402c
Miguel Centeno
Stanley N. Katz

U.S. Policy Towards Cuba: Strategies for the Transition to Democracy
Tuesdays, 7:30-10 p.m.

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General Approach of the PTF:

There is perhaps no policy concern more important to the United States than the maintenance of the global trend towards democratic, market driven societies. Not only is such a trend consistent with the overall policies and ideologies of the US, but it supports American economic and political interests throughout the globe. Despite the success of the last 20 years there is reason to doubt that the US government currently possesses a good sense of what it ought to do to support peaceful transitions to democracy and capitalism. Our confusion vis a vis Yugoslavia and the conflict surrounding China trade policy indicate that this is still a murky area.

This policy conference will seek to provide a model for such a US policy through the close analysis of American present and future policy towards Cuba.

The spectacle of Elian Gonzalez is only the latest indication that relations between the U.S. and Cuba work with their own logic and symbolic order. This task force will analyze the origins and development of this strangest of Cold War legacies. The task force will also use the specific dynamics between the two countries to explore more generic aspects of American foreign policy and its formulation. For example, the discussion of the influence of the Cuban-American community will allow us to explore the domestic basis for other U.S. policies. Most importantly, the Task Force will focus on formulating the best possible set of policies through which the United States can promote a peaceful transition in Cuba.

PTF Procedures:

The Policy Task Force will meet every Tuesday evening for discussion sessions. Limited reading assignments will be made for the first few weeks in order to orient members of the Task Force to general background on the Cuban revolution and the development of U.S. relations with Cuba. The assignments will be from the three books required for purchase, and also from materials on reserve in the Woodrow Wilson School Library. These assignments are, however, exemplary, and you are encouraged to read on their own for fuller information and deeper understanding. We will provide you with a selected bibliography of relevant literature, which should help you to get started on your research. Several outside experts will also visit the Task force, presenting the points of view of their organizations. They will further inform you, but you must take into account their personal and institutional biases. Professors Centeno and Katz will also make clear their own connections to the policy process, and their points of view.

The most important work you will do this term is the research you undertake for your own JP. We expect that each of you will make a proposal to us for a paper topic before the end of the third week of term. We will negotiate individual topics and the range of topics for the group, to be sure that most important aspects of U.S. Cuba policy are touched by one student or another. But of course each of you will also work, along with the instructors and the Graduate Consultant, on the Task Force report. This will be a joint effort, led by the Graduate Consultant, that will take up much of our time at the end of term. Class discussions will be crucial not only to your own progress, but to that of the PTF as a whole. You will be graded on your performance in all of these activities, but we will give primary attention to your JP performance.

As you will see from the schedule below, we will spend the first few weeks reading and talking our way into the subject. For the next several weeks the emphasis will be on researching (and then drafting) your JP. Each of you will then make an oral presentation of your draft to the Task Force, and set about revising it – this will doubtless take another several weeks. The last phase of the PTF will be trying to work out a common policy recommendation as the basis for the Task Force report.

A word to the wise: Each of you must formulate a precise question to be answered as the basis of your JP. It is essential that the policy question you address be well thought out before you begin your final research. The entire paper should be a concise, well-organized response to the policy question. The final paper should be no longer than 25 pages (a rule strictly enforced, since we will stop reading after page 25). Remember Dr. Johnson's response when asked why his most recent book was so long: "It would have been shorter if I had had more time." Less is more in writing an essay, but less is more difficult than more. We encourage all of you to make use of the superb Writing Center at the School from the start. You will find it an important aspect of your PTF experience.

Finally, we will establish a web page for the PTF, using the Courseinfo software supported by the University. This will contain the information in this syllabus, and other material posted later in the term. It will also be the vehicle for our PTF listserv. We encourage general discussion on the listserv. Both of us are available for individual

queries and discussions personally or by e-mail. Professor Centeno has offices in Wallace Hall, and also at Woodrow Wilson College. His office hours are in Wilson College on Mondays from 2-5 PM. Professor Katz does not hold regular office hours, but he works in 428 Robertson with his door open, and you should feel free to stop by at any time he is in the office. He is also in his office most weekends, and will be happy to make individual appointments with you.

Reading required for purchase (available at Micawber Books):

Paterson, Thomas G., *Contesting Castro: the United States and the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution* (New York, Oxford, 1994)

Perez-Stable, Marifeli, *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course and Legacy* (New York, Oxford, 1999)

Schoultz, Lars, *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy Toward Latin America* 2nd ed., (Cambridge, MA, Harvard, 1998)

Websites:

There is a wealth of information on Cuba and U.S. relations with Cuba on the Web. Despite the apparent richness of sources available on the Web, however, you must be alert to the difficulties of determining the provenance and authority of electronic texts. Every advocacy group with an interest in U.S.-Cuba policy is on the Web, but you must be aware of who is creating and promoting the information you access. This is very much part of the larger policy problem we will be studying. As we develop our own website for the course, we will link to some of the principal websites. You may begin with a now dated Website for another course on Cuba: www.princeton.edu/~mexicuba.

Meeting Schedule and Reading: (Some speakers to be announced later):

6 February: Discussion Session

Reading: Lars Schoultz, *Beneath the US*, Chapters 5, 8-9, 17, Skim 11-13.
Marifeli Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*, Chapters 1-2

13 February: Discussion Session

Reading: Thomas Paterson, *Contesting Castro*, Chapters 1-20.

20 February: Speaker: Kevin Sullivan, U.S. Department of State (MPP program, WWS)

Reading: Pérez-Stable, Chapters 3-7
Paterson, Chapters 21-22

JP topics finalized by consent of instructors.

27 February: Discussion Session

Reading: The Special period – to be assigned.

6 March: Discussion Session

Reading: Introduction to domestic actors – to be assigned.

13 March: Discussion Session

20 March: Spring Break

27 March: Speaker: Wayne Smith, Center for International Programs, SAIS

3 April: Student oral presentations

Draft JPs due.

10 April: Student oral presentations

17 April: Discussion session or visitor

24 April: General discussion of PTF group report and recommendations
(led by Graduate Consultant).

1 May: Final discussion of group report
(led by Graduate Consultant).

May: Final JPs due

May: PTF Report due (Graduate Consultant)