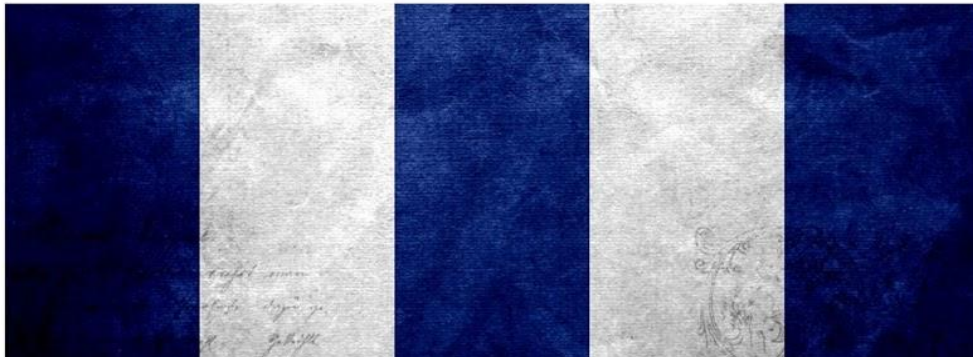


# ALTERNATIVE FUTURES FOR THE CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONSHIP IN POST-CASTRO CUBA

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# ***Alternative Futures for the Civil-Military Relationship in Post-Castro Cuba***

**A Research Paper for the Defense Intelligence Agency**

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## **Executive Summary**

Cuba is a country at a crossroads. Its diplomatic rapprochement with the U.S. and an assured transition from Castro leadership in 2018 portend significant changes for the country. We conducted alternative futures analysis in order to explore various possible outcomes in Cuba. This analytic technique identifies the major drivers in Cuba, as well as risks and opportunities for U.S. policy. In this analysis, we are concerned specifically with what Cuban civil-military relations will look like in Cuba after Castro steps down. We identified economic reforms and government repression as the two drivers that will have the greatest impact on the civil-military relationship in post-Castro Cuba. Our scenario generations lead us to conclude that *the civil-military relationship is likely to remain stable in a post-Castro Cuba, regardless of the success of economic reforms. But, if the Cuban government would allow greater political openness, the civil-military relationship would be less stable. Thus, we assess with high confidence that future political reforms in Cuba are not likely, regardless of the extent to which the regime pursues economic privatization.*

## **Assumptions**

Our alternative futures analysis assumes the following about a post-Castro Cuba:

*There will be a peaceful, planned, transition of power to a civilian leader.*

Raúl Castro has affirmed his desire to step down from the presidency in 2018 at which point Miguel Díaz-Canel will assume leadership. Díaz-Canel is a civilian leader who has not held a significant leadership position in the Cuban military. His ability, or the ability of any civilian leader, to consolidate power is uncertain due to a potential lack of legitimacy in the eyes of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias* (FAR) leadership. That said, we believe that it would be unlikely for the FAR to interfere with the transition. The FAR abides strictly by the *nunca tira* (never shoot) philosophy. This code emphasizes the importance of restraint when interacting with the Cuban citizenry, even dissidents. Interfering with the transition would risk the FAR's current consolidation of power, undermine its commitment to its *nunca tira* legacy, and limit the flow of outside capital coming to Cuba.

*Cuba's economy will benefit in the short term from continued privatization.*

To date, reforms following the enactment of the Guidelines - a detailed plan for policy reforms - have had modest positive impacts on the Cuban economy. Cuba's GDP has only increased moderately but the private sector has grown and may be able to sustain increases in GDP.<sup>1</sup> Fiscal revenues in the private sector have increased by 18% since 2011.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, Cuba has made moderate strides towards its goal of transferring 40% of state workers into the private sector. In 2010, only 16% of the national workforce labored in the private sector. That figure increased to 22% by 2011.<sup>3</sup> Although our quadrant scenarios differentiate between a continuation or reversal of economic reforms, for the next year or two, the private sector and the economy as a whole are likely to continue to grow.

*Popular support for the Cuban Military will continue.*

The Cuban people hold the FAR in high esteem. Conscription is mandatory and thus, it is literally, "an army of the people." Furthermore, the revolution stems from the FAR; the FAR came before the *Partido Comunista de Cuba* (PCC) and is the bedrock of revolutionary Cuba. It proved itself to be highly competent abroad, winning victories and legitimacy for Cuba. In addition, the FAR has taken a wide range of economic responsibilities, is financially self-sustaining and benefits the Cuban economy. Cubans attribute the ability of Cuba to survive the Special Period to the economic innovations of the FAR.

*The Cuban Military will continue to support the Cuban Communist Party.*

The FAR has a high level of support for the PCC because the PCC is heavily staffed by previous leaders of the FAR. After Raúl Castro, who had been the leader of the FAR, became President, he replaced many government officials, including many in the Council of State. The majority of the current ministers were appointed by him. In addition, under Raúl Castro's direction, several top government institutions, especially those involved in managing the economy, have seen their leadership overhauled.<sup>4</sup> This leadership overhaul involved the appointment of FAR leaders into government and institutional positions in order to consolidate the transition of the government into one of assured loyalty to Raúl Castro.<sup>5</sup> In a post-Castro Cuba, the placement of FAR leaders in positions of power within the government hierarchy will give the military a powerful voice in government policy. In effect, the PCC is comprised of FAR leaders. This makes it highly unlikely that there would be tension between the military and the Party.

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<sup>1</sup> (U) <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG/countries/CU?display=graph>, 12/14/2014; The World Bank; **GDP Growth**.

<sup>2</sup> (U) Corrales, Javier; <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/01/06/the-cuban-paradox/>, 9/12/2014; 1/6/2014; Foreign Policy Magazine; **The Cuban Paradox**.

<sup>3</sup> (U) Dominguez, Maria I; 2014; A Contemporary Cuba Reader: The Revolution under Raúl Castro; **Cuban Youth**; 10507-10511 in Kindle.

<sup>4</sup> (U) <http://fas.org/irp/world/cuba/overview.pdf>, 10/4/2014; 4/16/2009; Open Source Center; **Cuban Leadership Overview**; 1.

<sup>5</sup> (U) Corrales, Javier; [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/01/06/the\\_cuban\\_paradox](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/01/06/the_cuban_paradox), 10/1/2014; 1/6/2014; Foreign Policy; **The Cuban Paradox**.

*Cubans will continue to think of themselves as socialists.*

Revolutionary ideology and sentiment are widespread. Although Cubans want to catch up to the rest of the West, they value the egalitarian idealism of their society. The economic reforms that are taking place are seen by outsiders as privatization that is inherently incompatible with socialism. The PCC has been very careful to define these reforms as an “update” to the socialist model, thereby propagating the notion that the reforms are indeed compatible with socialism. The FAR is more rigid in its allegiance to socialism than the PCC itself, and the military does not believe current economic reforms are at odds with socialist ideology. Therefore, any additional reforms that are taken by the military leadership would not subvert Cuba’s revolutionary narrative.

*Generational divides within the military will likely cause limited tension within the FAR.*

The experiences of the older generation of the Cuban military vary significantly from the experiences of its newer members. This could cause tension in regard to economic policy. The Old Guard, or *históricos*, were revolutionaries alongside Fidel and Raúl. They remain in power and are strongly committed to the socialist ideals of the revolution. The Old Guard also includes professional soldiers who were profoundly shaped by their international experiences, particularly in Angola and Ethiopia. These “proletarian internationalists” led the effort to spread socialism around the globe, and take credit for the end of apartheid in South Africa. This generation sees itself in opposition to the U.S. because it actively worked against U.S. interests during the revolution and throughout the Cold War.

The younger generation, the New Guard, was not shaped by the revolution or leadership during the internationalization of socialism in the 1970s - 80s. Rather, their identity is primarily a product of their survival of the severe economic hardships of the post-Soviet era. While they lack revolutionary credentials, the New Guard takes credit for seeing Cuba through the Special Period. This range of experiences within the FAR will cause some ideological disunity within the military, as the Old Guard sees increased privatization as a threat to their revolutionary principles, and the New Guard sees these reforms as the way out of Cuba’s economic abyss.

*The PCC will continue to be apprehensive toward civil society, as it is perceived as a tool for regime change by the U.S.*

The U.S. has utilized Cuba’s civil society as a vehicle to promote regime change. The PCC views these efforts as a threat and has thus repressed civil society in order to ensure the legitimacy of the party. Recent U.S. executive action to allow for a more liberal Cuba policy will not reverse this long-held impression that the PCC has of the U.S. Therefore, it is likely that Cuban policymakers will continue to be suspicious and apprehensive of U.S.-Cuba policy and the PCC’s efforts to thwart civil society in order to limit U.S. influence will also endure.

*U.S. immigration policy for Cuban refugees will remain unchanged.*

As a result of the 1996 revision of the Cuban Adjustment Act, any Cuban who sets foot in the U.S. is allowed to stay in the U.S. and is expedited for legal permanent resident status, followed by U.S. citizenship. This provides a significant incentive for Cubans to emigrate to the U.S.. We assume this policy will continue, encouraging many of the most discontent Cubans, who could potentially be the most influential and active individuals in civil society, to leave Cuba, impeding the formation and leadership of civil society.

*The U.S. embargo will continue.*

While this assumption bears some scrutiny in light of President Obama's recent change in U.S. Cuba policy, we judge it is unlikely the U.S. Congress will lift the embargo in the next four years due to the lack of political support for such a change. The embargo has had a devastating impact on the Cuban economy, and serves as a scapegoat for the PCC, who blames the U.S. for Cuba's ongoing economic woes. This increases negative perceptions of the U.S. and absolves the PCC of its role in Cuba's economic plight.

## Alternative Futures Analysis

### Economic Privatization

#### Quadrant 1: Elite Cooperation and Control

- Civil-military relationship would be highly stable
- Increased privatization grows the Cuban economy, benefiting PCC, FAR and general populace
- FAR and PCC cooperate to maintain control economically and tight control politically, ensuring stability
- In the long term, possible that increasing disparities threaten socialist ideology and PCC, FAR legitimacy
- But, repression limits civil society's ability to organize and population's willingness to protest
- Socialist ideals are re-defined to accommodate increasing privatization and inequality
- Most likely scenario

#### Quadrant 2: Elite Discomfort

- Civil-military relationship would be unstable
- Economic and political reforms facilitate international investment, involvement
- Privatization welcomed in short term, in long term, possible inequality stokes discontent in empowered civil society
- Protests likely to call for return to socialist values (not democracy)
- Military and civilian elite threatened by pace and scope of change

Repression

Openness

#### Quadrant 3: Consolidated State Control

- Civil-military relationship would be stable
- Military and political power consolidated
- Opportunities dwindle, increasing discontent, but motivation for dissent is limited
- Civil society relies on FAR to navigate Cuba out of economic downturn

#### Quadrant 4: Unlikely and Unstable

- Civil-military relationship would be highly unstable
- Highly unlikely given FAR and PCC's interests
- Generational divide - New Guard opposed to centralization, while Old Guard is uncomfortable with the political discourse
- Cubans who feel opportunities are being "taken away" are empowered to criticize PCC and FAR
- FAR and PCC are unable and unwilling to prevent protest

Economic Centralization



## The Most Significant Drivers in a Post-Castro Transition: Economic Reform and Political Openness

This alternative futures analysis revolves around the two drivers assessed to be the most significant to the civil-military relationship in Cuba: the extent of economic reforms and political freedoms in post-Castro Cuba.

*Alternative Futures analysis is a scenario-generation technique that is useful when an environment is complex or outcomes are too uncertain for a reliable prediction. The structured analytic technique helps in identifying the major drivers of a situation, bounding the range of possible future outcomes, and identifying indicators that signal a situation's trajectory.*

### *Economic Privatization vs. Centralization*

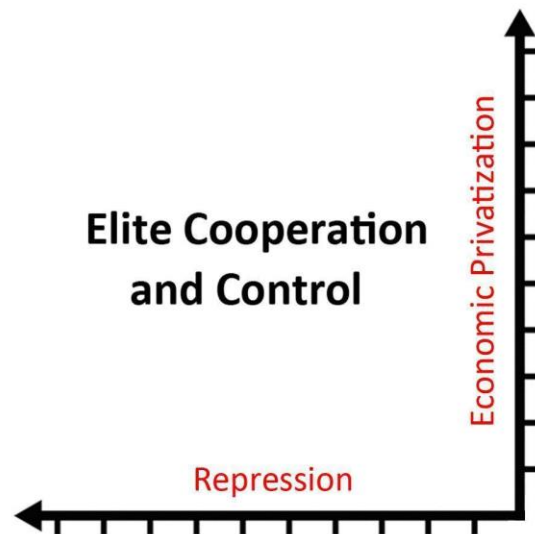
The Y-axis considers economic privatization and economic centralization. Privatization occurs when individuals, not the state, own the means of production. Weak privatization signifies that political elites, particularly the military, continue to own and control most state resources. Travelling down the y-axis toward economic centralization signifies that the state actively controls and administers the economy. Weak centralization is where the Cuban economy currently stands, though political promises and recent reforms indicate that Cuba intends to move toward privatization. Historically, extreme centralization would look like Cuba after Fidel Castro nationalized foreign assets in the early 1960s.

### *Repression vs. Openness*

The X-axis considers the extent of political freedom in Cuba. Travelling toward openness on this axis signifies that civil society can criticize the government, access information, freely move capital, migrate, and question political ideology. At this far end of openness, it is likely that Cuban civil society would be vocal in its discontent with the government; however, it is not likely that this vocalization would lead civil society to call for a new government. Travelling toward repression on the X-axis indicates that civil society would not be able to express itself without fear of reprisal, self-censorship is likely to occur, and the government would closely control movement of individuals and capital. At its most repressive, the government may prohibit protest and jail opposition. Today, Cuba is highly repressive and its government does not permit challenges to political ideology; however some migration and independent acquisition of capital through remittances is permitted.

### **Quadrant 1: Elite Cooperation and Control**

Economic privatization coupled with a more politically repressive government would be in the interest of both the military and civilian elites, facilitating their cooperation and control of the levers of power. The benefits of privatization would extend beyond the military and PCC to the general populace as a growing economy would improve living standards. As a result, the desire to



challenge authority would be limited in the short term. In the long term, however, an imbalance of opportunities could lead to social stratification. This could cause ideological discontent amongst the Old Guard, conservative leaders who are still loyal to the revolutionary ideology. It might also motivate the have-nots to question the legitimacy of the Party and the military. These are potential causes of instability. However, with high levels of repression, and power still firmly in military hands, neither the ideologically rigid Old Guard nor disenfranchised Cubans are likely to protest. Therefore, we judge that the civil-military relationship would be highly stable. We also judge this to be the most likely scenario.

#### *Cooperation between Civilian Elites and Military Means Control, Stability*

In this scenario, Cuba's economy overall would continue to improve with more economic privatization. The amount of resources available in Cuba would increase as the economy grows, allowing living conditions for most Cubans to increase relative to living standards in a centralized economy. Thanks to the redefinition of privatization that the Party's narrative has propagated, elites would be able to justify their wealth as legitimately gained, rather than fearing public anger for what revolutionary-minded Cubans might see as forsaking socialism for personal wealth. Under this scenario, both in the short term and long term, elites would not need to pay for the population's compliance by redistributing wealth because they can enforce society's compliance.

The military would allow civilian elites to prosper in order to preserve the illusion that Cuba is not controlled by a military oligarchy; however, the military would hold the real power in Cuba. While civilian elites could formulate repressive policies toward other Cubans, the military would ultimately control and check this repression.

#### *Social Stratification Creates Potential for Discord*

In the short term, all Cubans would experience an improved living standard from a growing economy. But, in the long term, elites are likely to maximize and consolidate their gains, while Cubans of lower socio-economic status would lack similar opportunities. Growing disparity between the rich and poor and the seeming abandonment of socialist ideals has the potential to cause discord in the long term. While repression would limit the expression of this dissent, it could still affect social cohesion and diminish the CCP's legitimacy as a defender of socialism.

While increased social stratification and ideological resistance to privatization are possibilities, we judge that the likelihood of significant levels of social stratification are low due to the ability of the PCC to provide an effective social safety net.

#### *Repression Limits Civil Society*

Repressive tactics would limit any challenges to the regime's power. While discontent may grow with increasing inequality in the long term, we assess that it is unlikely that civil society would be able to organize and present a viable challenge to the CCP or the FAR. A non-permissive environment for criticism would prevent civil society from effectively organizing and communicating (much as it has to date), although civil society may have more resources or connections to international organizations in a more privatized economy. The PCC would continue to dominate the means of communication, as well as the narrative. And their narrative -



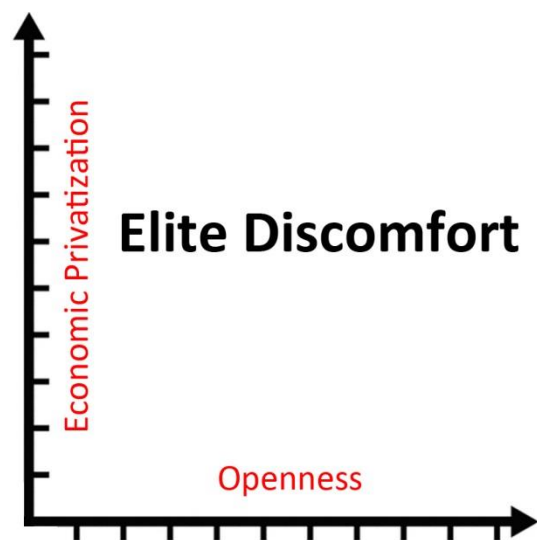
a stronger economy and increased opportunities - would be a compelling one for many Cubans, especially those who have benefited the most.

### *Ideological Loyalty to Revolution Decreases*

The majority of the Cuban populace and New Guard will prosper under the increased privatization and, while still supporting revolutionary ideology, they will become more flexible in their interpretation of socialism. The younger generation of the military, shaped by the trials of the Special Period, believes in their ability to save the Cuban economy through increased privatization without threatening socialism. Economic reforms are, in fact, an “update” and are consistent with Cuba’s socialist ideals. The Old Guard, who fought for socialist values abroad, is not as open minded to these “updates” and would view increasing disparities as a violation of all they have worked for. But these more ideologically rigid leaders will lose power in the long run, and the more flexible interpretation of socialism would likely win out.

### **Quadrant 2: Elite Discomfort**

Similar to “Elite Cooperation and Control,” the increased economic privatization in this scenario would improve the Cuban economy. The PCC, the military and the population as a whole would all benefit in the short term. Over time, however, those in power would consolidate their power and wealth, to the disadvantage of the general population. But in this scenario, the disenfranchised have both the motive and the means to speak out. Greater international involvement would provide a worldwide outlet for their cause, and limit the regime’s ability to control the narrative. The disaffected’s most powerful argument is likely to be centered around the departure from socialist values. Thus, they would likely advocate, not for democracy, but for a return to a more egalitarian state. This would be perceived as a threat to both the military and civilians in power, who would likely try to revert to a less open political atmosphere where they can tightly control the socialist narrative. The elites’ relationship with one another and with the population may become unstable as the perceived threats to their stature and legitimacy rise. Therefore, we judge that the civil-military relationship in this scenario would be unstable.



### *Increased International Involvement Viewed with Suspicion*

With both political and economic reforms, the international community and the U.S. specifically are likely to be more open to engagement and investment in Cuba. This significant influx of resources and access to international markets will improve the quality of life for civil society at large and enrich the Cuban elite. But this international involvement may also make it difficult for the regime to control the pace of reforms, and the extent of political freedoms. Historically,

foreign involvement, and especially any involvement by the U.S., was regarded as highly suspicious by elites who have a vested interest in the status quo. The rapid pace of economic privatization may prevent the elites from maximizing their profits and ownership, and hasten social stratification. Recent announcements from both the Obama administration and the Castro regime indicate that international involvement is going to increase in the near term. Current military and civilian elites may feel threatened by outside capital seeking opportunities in Cuba. They are likely to infer that this capital comes with an ideology subversive to the regime.

Differing perspectives on international involvement are likely to surface in the FAR. For the New Guard of the military, the opportunities offered in this scenario are likely to be well-received; however, the Old Guard would be concerned about an all-too-rapid departure from the socialist ideology. As the reforms progress more rapidly in this scenario, the Old Guard is still entrenched, and they could actively attempt to slow - and even reverse - some of the reforms. The political openness may even lead this rift between the New Guard and Old Guard to be made public.

#### *Civil Society Would Welcome Privatization in Short-term, Protest Possible in Long-term*

In the short term, civilians, both elite and non-elite, are likely to welcome an improved economy. This could change as social stratification increases between the elite and non-elite. As a result of greater openness in society (characterized by increased room for debate and public dissent) civil society would grow in the long term. Economic gains, loosened regulations, and greater international involvement in Cuba would facilitate technological advancements necessary for greater internet access. While internet access would still be unattainable to the most disadvantaged, a significant increase in access to critical commentary would challenge the PCC and its policies.

#### *Dissent Would Not Call for Democratization*

In this scenario, Cuban civil society is likely to emerge, empowered by an international spotlight and motivated by increasing economic disparities. However, civil society would be unlikely to call for democratic reforms because socialism is pivotal for Cuban revolutionary identity. In its purest form, Cubans believe that socialism promotes equality. Therefore, dissenting civil society would likely seek to ally itself with the ideals of socialism and push for greater equality using this rhetoric.

#### *Civilian and Military Elites Threatened by Pace and Scope of Change*

This scenario is unnerving for Old Guard and entrenched PCC elites, who would feel threatened by the extent and pace of both political and economic reforms. Their power and legitimacy may be diminished - making them likely to curtail or even repeal both the political opening and the economic reforms. If they can control the pace of change enough to feel they're still in charge, this scenario could provide stability and increased opportunities. But if the openness allows for too much dissent, or the economic reforms happen in a way that deprives the elite of a controlling share of the profits, this scenario could quickly devolve into the following quadrant.

### Quadrant 3: Consolidated State Control

In this scenario, both the military's power and the Party's hard line ideology would be preserved. Civilians both in the elite and non-elite would experience a lower standard of living but they would be unable to vocalize dissatisfaction for fear of losing remaining resources or provoking further repression. In spite of discontent, it is probable that Cubans would look to the military for assistance in navigating Cuba out of its downward economic spiral. Therefore, we judge that the civil-military relationship would be stable.

#### *Cuban Economy Unlikely to Centralize Completely*

In this scenario, economic centralization leads to a downturn in the economy. The centralization of the economy would rollback many of the changes Raúl Castro began in 2010; however, this centralization is unlikely to reverse military ownership of industry. In the most extreme iteration of this scenario, the Cuban economy would centralize entirely but we evaluate that to be improbable. Cuba has not seen such a consolidated economy since prior to the Special Period.

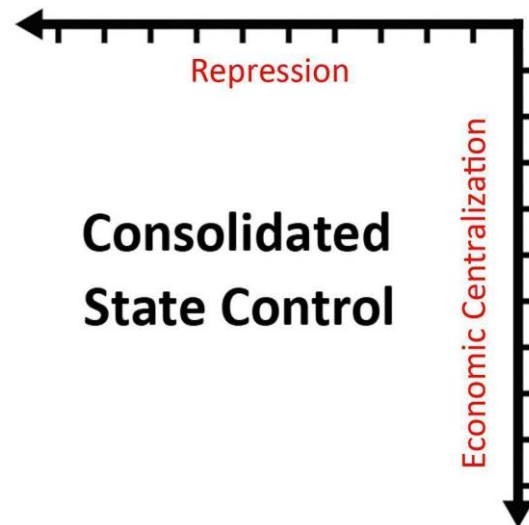
#### *Old Guard Remains Entrenched*

In this quadrant, the power of the military oligarchy continues to increase. However, the gains made by the military in this scenario would fail to enrich the FAR much beyond current levels because the Cuban economy overall would contract. As the pool of resources shrinks, Cuban military elites may seek to redistribute remaining wealth toward the military by giving military elites access to remaining private industry or control of newly centralized private industry.

The FAR would submit to civilian leadership in name only because of its supremacy and would do so in order to preserve the Cuban constitution. This would occur because the Old Guard and New Guard of the Cuban military would coalesce around the need to preserve socialism. The New Guard may lament the loss of greater opportunity under privatization but they are unlikely to be so dissatisfied as to push for privatization. The Old Guard would feel validated as both the military and its socialist ideology are paramount.

#### *Limited Motivation for Dissent*

Civilians would react differently to economic centralization depending on their position in Cuban society. Civilian elites would fear the military's ability to shift remaining resources away from them. They are likely to act in a self-interested manner, embrace the rhetoric of socialism, and remain silent in hopes that they could keep their accumulated wealth and stature. While they'd be disappointed with the diminished opportunities for profit, their desire to keep their status and the threat of political reprisal would keep them quiet.



The general Cuban populace would not see this scenario as dramatically different from their current standard of living. They may resent the inaccessibility of small business ownership that they gained in 2010 but this ownership is not considered a right. The general populace would seek to avoid further losses and remain silent.

#### *Military Would Likely Avoid Direct Confrontation with Civilians*

The military would continue to use socialist rhetoric to justify both the centralization of the economy and their repression of dissidents. This repression is unlikely to take the form of direct violence against protesters. The military would want to preserve respect for its forces through its allegiance to the *nunca tira* policy. Instead, the MININT may temporarily jail those who vocalize dissent or allow these dissidents to leave Cuba. Politically, the military would encourage the PCC to end Cuban emigration if too many civilians decide to leave and damage Cuba's image abroad.

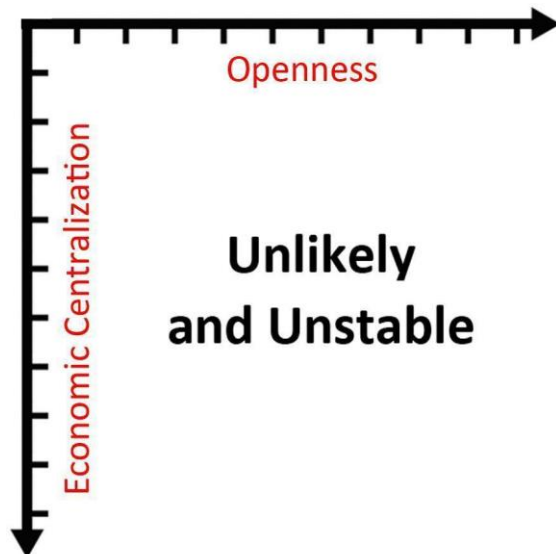
#### *Despite Dissatisfaction, Cuban Society Likely to Rely on FAR*

If the economic centralization results from a global contraction or the failure of economic privatization to bring about positive change, both civilian elites and non-elites are likely to rely on the FAR in the short term to salvage the economy much like it did after the Special Period. During this period, the FAR shifted its agenda to a bread and butter campaign for the Cuban people. The FAR is the institution credited with allowing Cuba to survive after the collapse of the USSR.

An alternative possibility is probable if economic centralization continues in the long-term, the economy continues to worsen, and the FAR is unable to deliver the same "food and butter" assurances that it provided after the Special Period. If this were to transpire, dissatisfaction with the military would grow. Unrest is unlikely to manifest in protests given the high level of repression but, under the most extreme circumstances where centralization continues indefinitely and Cubans fear losing basic living necessities, revolutionary sentiment could return. Invoking "revolution" would refer to the need for a more equitable distribution of wealth - and might appeal to ideologues and disenfranchised civilians alike.

#### **Quadrant 4: Unlikely and Unstable**

We judge this scenario to be highly unlikely since the characteristics of this scenario are unlikely to appeal to any demographic of the Cuban populace. However, this scenario could occur if Cuba reacted to international pressures to address human rights abuses while caving to the power of the Old Guard and retreating to socialist principles. The scenario could also occur if economic privatization fails in either the long or short term. The New Guard and the general Cuban populace would be discontent



with the weakening of the economy that would occur as a result of centralization. Generational divides between the New Guard and the Old Guard would be likely in this environment. In this scenario, we judge that civil-military relations in Cuba would be highly unstable.

*Cubans who Feel Opportunities are Being Taken Away are Empowered to Criticize*

In this scenario, economic centralization would cause the economy to stagnate while those who joined the private sector under Raúl Castro's reforms would likely feel that their opportunities are eliminated by economic centralization. Social stratification may decrease as overall wealth falls throughout the Cuban economy but fewer opportunities for the Cuban general populace, civilian elites, and FAR leadership would lead these actors to be highly dissatisfied. The New Guard, who are tired of watching Cuba stagnate economically, are also likely to be highly discontent. All of these groups will have the opportunity in this scenario to criticize the regime's policies and question its legitimacy.

*Generational Divides between Old Guard and New Guard*

The centralization of the economy would deny opportunities for wealth to the Cuban general populace, civilian elites, and even the FAR. Cleavages between the New Guard, who want to see the end of their country's economic stagnation, and the Old Guard, who feel threatened by the political discourse taking place, could be more serious in this scenario than any other since both groups are directly opposed to one another on both axes and feel threatened. Civil society organizations would be able to capitalize on discontent and lack of repression, resulting in protests. The FAR would likely face unprecedented opposition that it would be uncomfortable addressing in an open forum.

*FAR would be Unable (and Unwilling) to Prevent Protest*

With the ability to finally express oneself without fear of arbitrary detentions or state intervention, Cuban civil society would be able to expand. The voices of those who are discontent, including the New Guard, disenfranchised elites, and the Cuban general populace would now have a chance to be heard as a result of the lack of government repression and greater ability to organize. High levels of openness would allow for criticism of economic policies and the PCC. Criticism of economic centralization would likely aggravate the Old Guard who take this opposition as a threat to socialist ideology. Yet, the Old Guard would be very reluctant to counter this opposition in a public way. Thus, protest and simmering discontent would be very likely in this scenario.

## Implications

While none of these scenarios are likely to occur in such an isolated way (reality is bound to be less clearly defined), this scenario-generation exercise provides several important take-aways as we prepare for a post-Castro Cuba.

- **Cuba would be most stable with high levels of repression.** The Cuban people have mostly become accustomed to government repression; additional crackdowns are unlikely to galvanize protesters. The PCC is very effective at neutralizing opposition movements, making it difficult for protesters and dissidents to operate in any capacity that would affect substantial changes in policy and governance. Our possible futures demonstrate how the PCC and the FAR would be able to deal with opposition in high-repression scenarios.
- **Privatization and Openness would not lead to democracy.** The PCC and FAR are not willing to compromise the revolution. The regime has been explicit, declaring that reforms are “updates” to socialism and, therefore, not at-odds with the revolution. Even with greater openness, the Cuban populace does not hunger for transition to democracy. The belief that Cuba’s future under the PCC and FAR will be bright is growing.<sup>6</sup> Thus, we do not foresee a transition to democracy in any of our future scenarios.
- **The FAR is unlikely to violently oppress the population under any circumstances.** One of the tenets of the FAR is *nunca tira* or “never shoot.” This symbolizes the idea that the FAR is only to be used as a force that protects the Cuban people from outside threats and is never to be used against the Cuban people. However, the Ministry of the Interior (MININT) is the branch of the FAR that is involved in maintaining domestic stability. If a protest did need to be quelled, it would be MININT that would have its reputation tarnished, not the FAR. This increases the probability of civil-military relations remaining stable.
- **The Cuban populace is unlikely to engage in widespread protest or dissident activities. Dissent is most likely if civil society feels as if something has been “taken away.”** There have been many events that Cuba watchers believed would lead to democratization or other significant change. These expectations were not actualized. The Cuban people have become accustomed to their country, their government, and their way of life. If they experience improvements in their quality of life and the government changes its policies, rescinding these improvements, Cubans would likely feel as though opportunities are being taken away and they would be more likely to protest.
- **Cuban civil society is likely to rely on the FAR if the economy performs poorly.** High levels of respect for the FAR continue in contemporary Cuba. If the Cuban people feel that reforms are not progressing well or the economy centralizes, they would likely maintain their confidence in the ability of the FAR to rectify the situation, particularly in the short term. Cuban civil society is unlikely to feel empowered to save the economy without FAR support. However, as stated above, if the reforms progress well and are suddenly reversed, this would cause discord. But it is unlikely that this discord would derail the Cuban tendency to rely on the FAR in times of trouble.

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<sup>6</sup> (U) International Republican Institute; Feb 20 2013; Cuban Public Opinion Survey; pgs 1-12.