

CHAPTER 2

El Exilio: National Security Interests and the Origins of the Cuban Exile Enclave

Prior to the revolutionaries' triumph in 1959, an estimated 124,000 Cubans had emigrated to the United States. Throughout the 1950s economic and political conditions on the island had spurred an exodus. A common practice among U.S. corporations was to recruit trained personnel straight from Cuban universities. Nor was it out of the ordinary for political refugees to enter the United States illegally. Yet, as much as postrevolutionary emigration represented a continuation of these trends, this exodus and the exile community, *El Exilio*, it created emerged from a unique set of circumstances.¹

The origins of the postrevolution exile must first be understood in the context of the revolution itself and the dynamics it introduced on the island and abroad. Second, an analysis of the exodus and the subsequent communities it spawned must survey the international involvement of the United States as well as its domestic environment in the early 1960s. Finally, the exile community emerges from a society at war with itself, a war that had been carried out through battle with a foreign state. The community contributes to the shaping of its own politics and identity, which in turn influences the subsequent flow of émigrés, just as these successors leave their imprint on the politics and identity of the exile community.

Studies of Cuba and the Cuban community have been marked by some of the same ideological fault lines created by the cold war.² Although many factors have influenced the development of the community, studies of Cuban exile politics and identity have usually emphasized only one of many factors. In the early 1960s, with rare exception,³ studies of the exile community had an island-based perspective. In studying the reasons why people left, scholars who had recently left Cuba explained that repressive conditions had spurred the massive exodus.⁴ These analyses usually omitted U.S. policies as factors contributing to the exodus. In the 1970s, Cuban exile academics who were trained in the United States shifted the point of reference to the United States. These studies looked at

the community as a minority group and emphasized the role that émigrés fulfilled for the U.S. state.⁵ Unlike other Latinos, Cubans were seen as a privileged minority who had been afforded special immigration status because of their symbolic value in the cold war. Other studies looked at U.S. immigration policies as a determining factor in the development of the exile community.⁶

In the early 1980s, island-based academics linked to intelligence-gathering policy centers began to study the community that until then had been officially censured as an area of inquiry. Indeed, those studying the Cuban exile community were monitored closely. Internationally renowned sociologist Oscar Lewis was expelled from Cuba when, as part of his study of a Cuban family on the island, he interviewed family members who had emigrated to Miami. Officially sanctioned Cuban academics emphasized the part the United States played in fomenting immigration, claiming that the U.S. role had been an effort to sabotage the revolution while ignoring Cuban policies as well as the role of the community.⁷

While all these factors have contributed to the emergence and development of the Cuban exile community, our understanding of this community, particularly its origins, has been fragmented by the same ideological divide that so definitively demarcated people's political loyalties; it was either Cuba's fault or that of the United States. In this chapter I attempt a more comprehensive understanding of this period, beginning with an examination of the moment of rupture, taking into account the links between the opposition to Batista and Castro. I continue by looking at the role of the United States in facilitating and defining the movement and development of communities in the United States. I conclude by looking at the politics and identity of Cubans in the United States in the early years. Throughout this chapter I try to understand the unfolding of events within a context I assume has multiple players and states.

This is a difficult task. The fault line of the cold war is not just a theoretical proposition for people whose lives were ruptured by these historical events. For those of us who were young at the time of exile the memory of these early years is intricately interwoven with our childhood. The sharp contrast between our island existence and our U.S. existence has burned powerful images into our memories. The Cuban revolution stands as a monumental event in our lives, making it difficult to decipher the powerful myths it engendered. Many of our families were ardent supporters of the revolution, as was the vast majority of *el pueblo cubano*. U.S. government officials reacted in ways that facilitated the concentration of power on the island under the leadership of one man. This new leadership proved incapable of sustaining a governing structure that included the diverse groups that had supported the revolution. One of the consequences of this failure



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was the mass exodus of almost 300,000 Cubans in the two years following the revolution.

Revolution and Its Opposition

During the 1950s Cubans of all social classes organized into several coalitions demanding political change. Politicians willing to support change through an electoral process clustered around two parties, Los Auténticos and Los Ortodoxos. But this strategy lost its viability after Fulgencio Batista, a mulatto army sergeant, led a military coup in 1952 against President Carlos Prío Socarrás with the support of the United States.⁸ On July 26, 1953, armed men attacked military barracks in Santiago de Cuba, signaling the commencement of an armed struggle against the island's military regime. This act represented frustration over the inability to achieve political change through peaceful means.⁹

The revolutionary movement was composed of many organizations and sectors. It included a faction of the Auténticos that had gone underground after President Prío Socarrás had been deposed. El Directorio Revolucionario, composed mainly of university students heavily influenced by progressive Catholic thought, organized in Havana and advocated a strategy of *golpear arriba* (strike at the top). Their most dramatic act was a failed attempt to take over the presidential palace on March 13, 1957.¹⁰ Fidel Castro's Movimiento 26 de Julio (M-26-7), named after the date of the assault on the Moncada military barracks, amalgamated an array of sectors that had settled on a strategy of guerrilla warfare in the countryside. The Partido Socialista Popular, Cuba's Communist Party, condemned the actions of both El Directorio and the M-26-7.

Seven anti-Batista organizations signed a unity pact in November 1957 forming a Cuban Liberation Council. Within a month Fidel had resigned from the council, claiming that it had not been sufficiently opposed to foreign intervention; years later he admitted that he did not believe that his group could control that many organizations.¹¹ Diverse ideologies, future visions, and strategies were included in this broad coalition, but all were united in their commitment to restore the Constitution of 1940 and to hold elections. The organizations opposed to Batista included:¹²

Los Auténticos: Ramón Grau San Martín, Carlos Prío Socarrás (elected president in 1948 and 1952), removed by Batista military coup; initially advocated peaceful change but later financed various underground armed movements.

- Partido del Pueblo Cubano Ortodoxo (Los Ortodoxos): Offshoot of Los Ortodoxos, founded in 1947 by Eduardo Chíbas, congressman and later senator, who shot himself during his radio program in 1951.
- Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario: Offshoot of Los Ortodoxos, headed by Rafael García Barcena, professor at the University of Havana and La Escuela Superior de Guerra; advocated armed coup led by military officers.
- Movimiento 26 de Julio (M-26-7): Headed by Fidel Castro, formally of Los Ortodoxos; armed movement focused on rural and mountain actions, named after its failed attempted takeover of a military barracks on July 26, 1953.
- Directorio Revolucionario: Founded in 1955 by members of the Federación de Estudiantes Universitarios (sole governing body of university students); headed by Antonio Echeverría; focused on urban armed actions, specifically at “hitting the top”; entered into a coalition with M-26-7 in 1956. Most of its leaders were killed in an attack on the presidential palace on March 13, 1957.
- Cuban Liberation Council: Formed on November 1, 1957; included, among others, M-26-7, Directorio, and Auténticos; Fidel Castro pulled out a month later.
- Segundo Frente del Escambray: Offshoot of El Directorio, headed by Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo (other members of El Directorio joined M-26-7).
- Legion Acción Revolucionaria: Small group headed by Manuel Artime.
- Civic Resistance Movement: Civic group allied with M-26-7.
- Agrupación Católica: Headed by Juan Manuel Salvat and other Catholic students.

Despite the broad popular support enjoyed by these organizations, all met with brutal repression, resulting in an estimated twenty thousand deaths, according to *New York Times* correspondent R. Hart Phillips.¹³ For Cubans of all walks of life the struggle was to regain the nation and the dignity they had lost at the hands of the military dictatorship. On January 1, 1959, Fidel Castro declared victory after a protracted guerrilla struggle in the mountains and began a march across the island that ended in Havana a week later. This marked the end of the movement that resulted in the ousting of Batista.

Disregarding the decisive participation of many organizations and sectors in the struggle against Batista, Castro quickly consolidated power under his command and his organization, the 26th of July Movement.¹⁴ At

first this was done by eliminating Batista supporters and bringing in representatives of the various sectors that had supported the revolution. A fairly representative cabinet was put in place in the early part of 1959, but before long it became evident that Castro would not tolerate differences in his government and an intense power struggle began. Frequent political purges characterized the new regime's administrative style. To the chagrin of many who had fought against Batista, Fidel began promoting members of the Partido Socialista Popular, the Cuban Communist Party, which had not supported the revolution and had advocated accommodation with Cuba's dictators since the 1930s.

Rapid and often unexpected political changes added to the daily turmoil.¹⁵ Legal changes had the effect of concentrating power in the executive. A law passed by the cabinet in February vested legislative power in the cabinet.¹⁶ Formal political institutions were bypassed as Castro overturned court decisions, often announcing his dictates on national television. In one renowned case a court in Santiago acquitted forty-four of Batista's airmen, only to have the case dismissed and a new trial ordered by Fidel.¹⁷ Another major point of contention were elections that had been promised during the revolution but were never held.

In addition, the revolution caused a restructuring of power and class relations that led to a redistribution of land and resources. Once in power the government became increasingly radical. Initial reforms aimed at nationalizing large landholdings were extended to landowners with only moderate holdings. The Instituto de Reforma Agraria (Agrarian Reform Institute) became one of the institutional mechanisms through which Fidel and *los rebeldes* (the rebels) consolidated their power. Economic changes, such as the urban reform that included limits on the numbers of housing units that could be rented, also contributed to unrest.

Opposition to the new government grew. Fissures were evident in many sectors, and there were high-level defections. When Huber Matos, a former commander of the 26th of July Movement, tried to resign from his post with the Instituto de Reforma Agraria, he was arrested for counter-revolutionary activities and sentenced to twenty years in jail. Manuel Artime, who had been part of Agrupación Católica and later headed an armed group against Batista—and who would later play a leadership role in both the political and armed opposition to Fidel—resigned from the Agrarian Reform Institute and left the country before he could be arrested. Pedro Díaz Lanz defected from the air force, and many liberals started to resign from government, including Manuel Urrutia, who had been named provisional president; José Miró Cardona, prime minister; Elena Mederos, minister of social welfare; and later Manuel Ray, minister of public works.

Many of the organizations and sectors that had supported the revolutionary movement opposed the direction taken by Fidel Castro and his supporters. They resented his new alliance with the communists, whom they considered opportunists. They fought back by going underground and again taking up the arms they had used against Batista. The Auténticos regrouped under an organization named Rescate Revolucionario headed by Manuel Antonio (Tony) de Varona and Ramón and Polita Grau. Agrupación Católica began publishing a newspaper titled *Trinchera*. Its members were closely allied with El Directorio Estudiantil headed by Juan Manuel Salvat and Alberto Müller. Manuel Artime went on to head El Movimiento de Recuperación Revolucionaria. All had varying degrees of contact with the United States.

By the middle of 1960 the various political and military organizations that had emerged following Castro's rise to power announced the formation of a coalition in Mexico City called the Frente Democrático Revolucionario. By then these groups were receiving help from the CIA in response to U.S. concerns about communist participation in the government but also for a series of other reasons that had little to do with Cuba. Under the auspices of the CIA the underground was organized under the banner of Unidad Revolucionaria.¹⁸

Repression and Exodus

For many who had supported the revolutionary movement it was the repressiveness of the new government that made them feel betrayed. Arrests, trials, and firing squads first used against Batista's former henchmen were now turned against anyone who was critical of Fidel. Arrests increased and revolutionary justice was quickly dispensed.

The day before the Bay of Pigs invasion the Cuban government made a massive series of arrests. Many adolescent boys were detained in collective jails for days. Detention and incarceration of political opponents became common practice.¹⁹ Prisoners were summarily executed by firing squads. In a particularly dramatic case two young students, Virgilio Campaneria and Alberto Tapia Ruana, were executed on April 17, 1961.²⁰ Their execution drove a deep wedge into the broad support previously enjoyed by the revolution; the reason many people had joined the movement against Batista was because they rejected the arbitrary and repressive methods of his regime.

There was generalized uncertainty about what would happen next. Most people thought that the U.S. government would not sit by and let the situation continue. Rumors of invasion had begun to be heard as early as 1960, and many Cubans wanted to be outside the country when it hap-

pened. Cubans had begun leaving the island early in 1959. Most of these departures were undertaken without much fanfare. According to an analysis of the situation in Santiago de Cuba written by a consulate official, the demand for visas was increasing for a variety of reasons:

Some wish to get away from the possibility of another revolution, others . . . “in case.” Others think that the government is going to place further restrictions on travel, despite official denials. Still others are leaving because of the economic squeeze as a result of revolutionary laws . . . Some persons are going to considerable length to make trips appear casual, e.g., splitting up families or going by different routes to the U.S. or other countries. This, and leaving without publicity, are attempted because they do not want to attract attention which they think might bring intervention or confiscation of their properties.²¹

The exodus accelerated in response to one government action in particular. The government announced that all private schools would be closed, setting off panic among the middle class. This added fuel to rumors that the government was going to take over the *patria potestad* (legal authority) over children. The Catholic Church was particularly vehement in defending its right to provide private education. Priests in Cuba who had lived through the Spanish Civil War and witnessed the separation of families and children voiced their fears that the same would occur in Cuba. For parents whose children attended Catholic schools, this was a sure sign that they would lose power over what happened to their children. Simultaneously, the government initiated a literacy campaign to send all those who could read to the countryside to teach peasants how to read and write, further separating families and dispersing educated people. The rush to get out of Cuba grew. This is when many parents, including my own, decided to send their children—fourteen thousand of them—to the United States.

To Stay or Leave? Patriot or Traitor?

The issue of leaving or remaining in Cuba provided the new government with a political rallying point it could use to mobilize support for the revolution.²² Leaving or staying, as well as one’s position toward those who left, became a litmus test for loyalty to the revolution. For instance, when a great number of professionals began leaving and the loss started to have a noticeable impact on Cuba’s economy, a political campaign was launched to link the act of remaining on the island with patriotism. Dur-

ing a rally at the University of Havana, Cuban president Osvaldo Dorticós asked those present to stand and take an oath that they would stay and give their services to the nation.²³ Those present complied. But pledging one's loyalty was not enough: revolutionary cadres were discouraged from staying in contact with relatives who had left the island. Party militants were explicitly prohibited from writing to relatives. In fact, writing to relatives was one of the criteria used to deny students entrance into the university.

In 1960 Raul Castro, Fidel Castro's younger brother and head of the Cuban Armed Forces, presented outgoing migration as "the normal exodus that takes place when the people take the power in their own hands and liquidate exploitation and the privileged classes. Their departure does not damage the revolution, but fortifies it as it is a spontaneous purification."²⁴

Others had a much harsher view of the exiles. In the early days of the revolution Fidel Castro said, "Those who escape their duty, taking the road to the north, have lost the right to be worthy sons of *la patria*."²⁵ From the beginning the Cuban revolution considered leaving the island a treasonous act; the punishment was to strip the person who left of his or her national identity. People who left were called *gusanos* (worms), a reference to the duffel bags they carried with them.

Dissent was interpreted by Cuba's leadership as a threat to the nation's security. The closing of political space for peaceful or legal dissent meant that those on the island had few options for registering disagreement other than risk imprisonment or leave the country. For many leaving became a way of dissenting. Leaving thus acquired a symbolic value as a political act of defiance, which, in turn, reinforced the idea that those who left were enemies of the state. Furthermore, most Cubans who emigrated went to the United State—a host country that historically had been antagonistic to the homeland. Indeed, the participants in the 1961 U.S.-backed invasion of the island were Cuban émigrés. Thus, the concept of exile and enemy of the state were fused.

For a nationalist revolution the unrelenting exodus of people was indicative of profound systemic political and ideological problems. The revolution, which had been won precisely through the support of broad sectors of the nation, failed to remain inclusive when it came time to govern. Moreover, massive outgoing migration represented a tremendous loss of human resources. Externalizing dissent also had a high cost in that it led to a process of denationalization—the opposite of the goal of a nationalist revolution. In essence the exodus represented a crisis of legitimacy.

The painful rupture that accompanied leaving the country was extremely difficult to reconcile with the immediate past experience of many

Cubans, who had been accustomed to being able to take a ferry from Cuba to Florida, honeymoon in Miami, and maintain a close relationship with friends and relations in the United States. Suddenly a trip that had been an easy weekend holiday had become a bureaucratic and political nightmare.

Eventually, the reaction of Cuba's leaders toward those who left was institutionalized in a series of policies that were enforced by government structures whose function was to guard the security of the nation. As early as 1961, a law was passed that authorized the Ministry of the Interior to grant exit and reentry permits to those wishing to leave the country. If a person had not returned by the date on the reentry permit, his or her leave was considered a "definitive abandonment" of the country and the state had the right to confiscate all of his or her property.²⁶ A law had been passed in 1959 calling for the confiscation of properties of those involved in counterrevolutionary activities, but the law of definitive abandonment included any person who overstayed the sixty-day limit.²⁷ Those who left the island were not allowed to return, even to visit. These policies marked a radical break with legal precedent, as Cuban law had guaranteed free travel to and from the island for all citizens. The use of exit and reentry permits and loss of property rights were justified by the government on the grounds of national security.²⁸ The effect was that those who left became classic exiles: nonpersons in their own country.

While the Cuban practice of exile has roots in its colonial past (Spain, too, had used it as a form of punishment), it contradicted contemporary immigration law that had been put into effect by a U.S. military governor in 1901. This law—an exact copy of U.S. immigration law at the time—does not *recognize* dual citizenship. Everyone born in Cuba or descended from a parent born in Cuba is defined as Cuban regardless of where they live. When traveling to Cuba, they must do so on a Cuban passport. Every Cuban constitution of this century also has stipulated, however, that anyone who acquires the citizenship of another country loses his or her Cuban citizenship. The law leaves room for regulations that define exactly how this is to occur. These regulations require that each case be processed individually; in other words, automatic stripping of citizenship is not allowed. In effect, there is a contradiction between law and practice, for a Cuban passport is required of any Cuban even if he or she has obtained citizenship in another country. Many of us in the Cuban diaspora now have two passports. But, while we may have Cuban passports, because of the postrevolutionary law of definitive abandonment, we have no property or social rights in Cuba.

Another major contradiction has tugged at Cuba's policy toward dissidents and émigrés. While the revolutionary government has maintained publicly that the construction of socialism is "una tarea de hombres libres"

(a task of free men), it simultaneously set up legal mechanisms to punish those who left without authorization. In fact, departures not authorized by the government were considered political crimes. Leaving legally, even when the United States allowed massive immigration, has been very difficult. Once Cuban citizens filed the required papers at the Ministry of the Interior declaring their intent to leave the country, they generally lost their jobs, their property was inventoried, and their children were expelled from special educational programs.

Because of the politicization of emigration, Cuban émigrés have fulfilled several functions for the Cuban state. They have provided the government with ideological ammunition with which to rally their forces. For example, leaflets showing “lazy gusanos” were used to mobilize workers to cut sugar cane. Emigration also became the vehicle through which the government could rid itself of political opponents and consolidate power. If dissenters were externalized, competition for power would be reduced. State structures were created and often expanded to implement these governmental goals.

Massive emigration exacted a high toll on the state. It was living proof that the Cuban government could not effectively incorporate all parts of the nation. In addition, the sporadic and abrupt ways in which Cubans have left the country presented a security threat because these departures could ignite a rebellion against the government.

Once abroad, the ever-present threat of the counterrevolution from *el exilio* helped rationalize the need for strong national security agencies within Cuba charged with protecting the revolution. The conflict between the United States and Cuba required an expansion of Cuba’s governmental capabilities to meet an external threat—an expansion that mirrored the post–World War II growth in the U.S. intelligence apparatus.²⁹ The expansion of the Cuban national security apparatus has been especially pronounced for those agencies dealing with Cubans who leave the island. Among the most important of these is the Ministry of the Interior, which encompassed both immigration services and the nation’s internal and external intelligence agencies. Rapid growth has also been the case for offices within other departments, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Cuban Communist Party, and the Instituto de Amistad Con los Pueblos (the Institute of Friendship with Other Countries),³⁰ an organization that supports solidarity with revolutionary movements throughout the world.

The violent postrevolutionary social rupture within Cuban society and the reaction of the United States to these events have found expression in Cuba’s domestic and foreign policies. These policies have been conceived and developed in the realm of national security. In terms of foreign

policy the overriding concerns are defense of territory and maintenance of sovereignty. In terms of the domestic agenda the preoccupation has been with economic and political stability.³¹

U.S. National Security Interests and Cuban Exiles

During the first years following the Cuban revolution U.S. policymakers operated with the unquestioned assumption that the leadership that had assumed power on the island would not last. The initial transfer of Cubans to the United States was not a mass movement of refugees but, rather, a response to military needs. U.S. government agencies involved in the fight against the Castro government needed ways to evacuate agents working for the underground opposition and their families. The story of how these programs evolved to become unprecedented immigration and relocation programs traverses the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations; a contentious Congress; and a local and national backlash to unbridled immigration from the island to the United States. Furthermore, these years were marked by the failed invasion of the island and events that led to the brink of a nuclear war. Throughout the period Cuban exiles came to fulfill symbolic and political roles for the U.S. government as well as for the Cuban government—roles that in strange ways mirrored each other.

U.S. involvement in Cuban affairs was nothing new, and neither was the presence of Cubans in the United States. During the revolution the official U.S. representative in Havana, Earl Smith, had opted against supporting the popular will, choosing instead to try to help Batista until it became evident that his days were numbered.³² After Batista was toppled, the Eisenhower administration reacted with hostility to the modest agrarian and urban reforms sponsored by the new Cuban revolutionary leadership.³³ Unlike interventions prior to World War II, however, U.S. reactions to the Cuban revolution were cast through the lens of the cold war and became intermeshed with the new crusade to stop communism from spreading in the Western hemisphere.³⁴

Unquestionably, the Cuban revolution challenged U.S. hegemony in the Caribbean. It called for a reordering of political power to protect Cuban national interests rather than U.S. interests. It also called for exporting the revolution to other countries in Latin America. In the McCarthyite mood of the late 1950s, in which anticommunist hysteria permeated American public opinion, it was easy to see a revolutionary movement on an island ninety miles offshore as a test of wills between the United States and the Soviet Union. The immediate U.S. response was to attempt to remove the revolutionary leadership from power using military, political, and economic means.

But, unlike past incursions into Cuban affairs, a new mode of intervention was implemented—a foreign state-sponsored social movement.³⁵ Cuban émigrés became the conduit through which U.S. foreign policies were implemented. Used to try to overthrow and discredit the Cuban revolution,³⁶ these émigrés came to fulfill the military, propagandistic, and symbolic needs of the United States. The resulting relationship between the émigrés and their host country was forged within the evolving national security state.

Exiles: A Cover for U.S. Intervention

As early as spring 1959, during a National Security Council meeting, Vice President Richard Nixon proposed arming and otherwise supporting an exile force for direct military intervention against Fidel Castro.³⁷ He also succeeded in getting CIA and FBI approval of his recommendation.³⁸ On March 17, 1960, President Dwight Eisenhower approved a CIA policy paper that outlined the steps to be taken to “bring about the replacement of the Castro regime with one more devoted to the true interests of the Cuban people and more acceptable to the U.S. in such a manner as to avoid any appearance of U.S. intervention.”³⁹ The document recommended a series of steps that could be taken, including the formation of an “exile” opposition whose slogan could be to “Restore the Revolution,” which, it was to claim, had been lost to a “new dictatorship of Cuba subject to strong Sino-Soviet influence.” It also included the provisions that individual freedoms must be restored and collectivism in commerce and education eliminated. The formation of a political opposition was to be accompanied by a military and propaganda operation.

Yet there were several concerns that needed to be addressed. One was the reaction of other Latin American countries to U.S. efforts to overthrow Castro. U.S. policymakers had been stung by Latin American protests, as evidenced among other things by CIA director Allen Dulles’s testimony to a Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in 1958 regarding Nixon’s tour of Latin America that year.⁴⁰ Thomas Mann, the assistant secretary for Interamerican affairs, wanted thoroughly to conceal U.S. sponsorship.⁴¹ The White House and the CIA were also concerned about reactions from the press and other agencies (such as the State and Justice Departments) to the CIA’s violation of its own charter by its anti-Castro activities in Miami.⁴² When President John F. Kennedy took office he wanted to make sure that, if intervention in Cuba failed, it would not be perceived as his fault but, rather, that of the Cuban exiles directly involved; “plausible deniability,” the ability to hide the CIA’s direct involvement, was critical.⁴³

The CIA promoted multiple organizations at the same time that it tried to get these organizations to form a united front. There were disagreements within the bureaucracy and Congress about the appropriate nature of the organizations that should be supported, with some promoting less ideologically driven politicians and others the more liberal and nationalist groups. But agreements were finally reached, and by early 1960 the CIA had facilitated a meeting of organizations it deemed necessary for a united front. Whether or not this coalition would be considered a government in exile was a point hotly contested by the State Department's lawyers, who were concerned about formal recognition because the United States still had full diplomatic relations with the Castro government. In addition, official recognition would break with past policy in that it would recognize a "government" that existed outside national territory and one that did not control the state apparatus.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, the Frente (Front), as it was first called, was formed in the spring of 1960 at a meeting at New York's Statler Hotel hosted by CIA agent Frank Bender.⁴⁵ The formation of the group was announced publicly in Mexico City on June 21, 1960; it included the following men, described to the president by the State Department as follows:⁴⁶

- Manuel Antonio de Varona, leader of a large faction of the Auténticos, the official political party during the administration of Ramón Grau San Martín and Carlos Prío Socarras (1944–52);
- Justo Carrillo, head of the Montecristi Group formed in 1952 by wealthy professionals and businessmen in opposition to the Batista dictatorship;
- José Ignacio Rasco, head of the Christian Democratic Movement (MDC) formed in late 1959 by young Catholic groups in opposition to the Castro regime;
- Manuel Artime, nominal head of the Movimiento Recuperación Revolucionaria, an underground anti-Castro movement formed in 1959 whose members consisted principally of defectors from the July 26 Movement; and
- Rafael Sardiña Sánchez, former vice president of the Asociación de Colonos Cubanos (Cuban Association of Sugar Cane Cutters). (He is not identified as a member of this group in any lists.)

The fifth member of the group was Aureliano Sánchez Arango, a member of the United Front of National Liberation who had served as minister of education and state in the Prío administration. Both his closeness to the communists and his attitude—he was described by the Americans as a *prima donna*—made him a controversial figure in Washington.⁴⁷

Curiously, one of the CIA operators on the Cuban case listed Antonio Maceo, the grandson of the one of the generals of the War of Independence, as the fifth person. Apparently, there was either confusion or disagreement (or both) within the U.S. bureaucracy regarding the composition of the group.

At the same time, military training had begun two months earlier, when President Eisenhower authorized the CIA to attempt to overthrow the Castro government. Cuban émigrés provided the human resources to implement a military strategy against Cuba that would appear to be Cuban in origin. Estimates of the number of Cubans who received military training from the United States range from two thousand to fifteen thousand.⁴⁸ The most dramatic action would be an invasion, training for which took place in the United States, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. Operatives received a monthly pension from the U.S. government for themselves and their families: \$175 for themselves, \$50 for the first child, and \$25 for each additional child.⁴⁹

Conditions were terrible for those in training. Kept in the dark about the political maneuvering taking place behind the scenes in Washington and Miami, the men in the camps, many of whom had fought for the revolution, felt underrepresented and marginalized. One of their concerns was that the more liberal sectors of the opposition had been excluded from the political organization. Conflicts erupted, and the men went on strike. On March 18, 1961, Tony de Varona and Manuel Ray, at one time described as the Frente's coordinators for the island,⁵⁰ met to negotiate the expansion of the Frente and agree on a spokesman. The strike had resulted in the dissolution of the Frente and the formation of a new civic political structure called El Consejo Revolucionario Cubano (Cuban Revolutionary Council).⁵¹

This expansion was also supported by liberals in the Kennedy administration such as Arthur Schlesinger Jr., whose candidate, José Miró Cardona, former law professor and the first prime minister of the revolutionary government, was elected as coordinator over Felipe Pazos, Ray's candidate.⁵² Tracey Barnes of the CIA described the members' political leanings, underlining the names of the original members of the Frente; there was a discrepancy about Aureliano Sanchez Arango, who at the time did not join the Consejo in protest over the inclusion of former politicians in a provisional government (see table 2).⁵³

The group's platform consisted of twelve points, including the reestablishment of the 1940 Constitution as well as a commitment to hold elections within eighteen months.⁵⁴ The new organization, however, had its opponents in the U.S. government, among them Senator Thomas Dodd from Connecticut, at the time vice chairman of the Internal Security Sub-

committee. On March 23, 1961, he wrote to Secretary of State Dean Rusk about his concerns that Jose Miro Cardona, Manuel Ray, and Felipe Pazos were anti-American and had socialist leanings, calling them left-wing turncoats. In addition, he was extremely concerned about the amount of money being paid to the various organizations directly under the control of the CIA, saying that, "this operation meant that some Cubans had never had it so good as during exile and consequently acquired a financial interest in preserving the Castro regime."⁵⁵

After months of training the Bay of Pigs invasion was launched.⁵⁶ Despite the demand from the soldiers that Cuban exile political organizations and not the CIA be in charge of the operation, the role of the exile organizations continued to be essentially propagandistic. On April 17, 1961, the day of the invasion, the members of El Consejo were locked in barracks at a military camp in Opa-Locka, Florida, unable to communicate with "their" soldiers; in fact, they were not even told that the invasion was under way. This, however, was not surprising given the CIA's view that Cubans were not to be trusted. The CIA's psychological profile of Cubans described them as follows:

From a management point of view the Cuban may seem disappointing in long-range performance and at the same time overly sensitive to criticism. . . . the biggest problem appears to be that of long-term loyalty and control. Essentially, the Cuban is loyal only to himself.⁵⁷

Disregard for the exiles was again apparent when council members tried to see the president after the invasion had failed. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. was worried about the impact of such a visit and warned in a memo:

Exiles who see the President are likely to try to make capital of this when they return to the Cuban community. FBI clearance is not

TABLE 2. Exile Groups

Left	Left of Center	Center	Right
<i>Carrillo</i>	<i>Artime</i>	<i>Varona Rasco</i>	<i>Maceo</i>
Jesus Fernandez (Labor, 30 November)	Collada (Labor for Fraginals)	Fernandez Travieso (student for Müller) Alvarez Díaz Sergio Carbo Pepin Bosch	Vargas Gómez Carlos Hevia Goar Mestre

enough. If this should turn out to be a responsible and representative group, I see no objection. Indeed such a presentation might help in composing the feelings of the Cuban exile community. We do not, however, regard this as a high priority.⁵⁸

Schlesinger did, however, urge the president to call Dr. Miró Cardona, who was afraid that his son, captured in the invasion, would be executed. "The feeling is that his anguish would be relieved if you were to call him and express sympathy." His concern with negative press is reflected in the postscript: "Cardona is holding a press conference from 11:30 to 12:30."⁵⁹

The U.S. attempt to hide its military actions behind a Cuban exile screen failed. But the consequences of having trained a secret army would be felt throughout the next decade. The CIA now had highly specialized small teams with which to carry out a covert war against Castro and other governments.⁶⁰ The military actions had their influence on politics as well.

Foreign Policy Contours of Exile Politics

The *origins* of the Cuban exile are anchored in both the foreign policy objectives of the U.S. state and the internal policies of the Cuban state. Exiles provide the United States with military resources and ideological cannon fodder. As long as Cuban émigrés were exiles and not a part of the United States, the administrations in Washington could deny involvement in the military actions taken by them against the revolution. Because of their exile status, they provided plausible deniability to the CIA and other agencies involved in the covert war against the Castro regime. Exiles also fulfilled the ideological functions of providing evidence that communism is a repressive system; they had shown that they preferred to flee to a free country. Legal definitions within the United States as well as U.S. aid to the exile community contributed to this distinct exile identity. These international, bureaucratic, and political concerns all contributed to institutionalizing practices that in effect *created* Cuban exiles and turned Miami, where most exiles landed, into a foreign city on U.S. soil.

Cuban state policies also influenced the formation of the exile community. By equating fleeing with treason, the Cuban government used (and continues to use) the exiles as a rallying point. Externalizing opposition allows the Cuban government to get rid of its dissidents in a way that renders them impotent to launch legitimate challenges to the government.

Such has been the case for most exiles of the twentieth century, including those from the Spanish Civil War, Vietnamese, and Chileans.⁶¹ Often home country governments equate abandoning the regime with treason, and thus the process of exodus becomes one of delegitimation.

This is particularly effective if the host country is at war with or is antagonistic to the home country. A force tied to one of the nation's historical enemies has little chance of mounting a popular claim against the government. The Cuban revolution delegitimized those who left by defining their exit as "definitive." They were no longer considered part of the nation. Worse, they migrated to the United States, a host country that was a historical as well as a contemporary enemy of Cuba. The revolution fueled an exile that, in the short run, may have externalized opposition but, in the long run, institutionalized exile as a persistent feature of the Cuban and American landscape.

The interaction between U.S. foreign policy objectives and Cuban domestic security policies fueled the creation of a Cuban community abroad in exile. The close interaction of national security agencies within Cuba and the United States created political organizations and ideologies that were then consolidated within the community. In effect, Cuba's need to divide the opposition and the U.S. need to control it may have contributed to the proliferation of the many groups operating in exile.

From 1960 on the CIA's strategy to defeat Castro relied on military action.⁶² These actions institutionalized a series of practices that cemented the military functions Cuban émigrés continued to fulfill for the United States. On the one hand, Cuban émigrés were part of U.S. foreign policy, since they received monies and training from the CIA and carried out orders. On the other hand, émigrés were kept away from the centers of power and treated as nationals of another state. Through this distancing, the United States could avoid taking responsibility for the émigrés' actions. The militarization of this opposition by the United States and the promotion of hard-line policies on both sides of the Florida Straits encouraged antidemocratic tendencies within the community and contributed to the politics of intolerance.⁶³ This had a negative influence on the political culture of the exile.

Once outside national territory and without links to the internal opposition, exile activism became exaggerated and out of touch with the internal dynamics of the island. The United States promoted the exile/soldier as a militant, but, when the United States disengaged from active opposition to the Castro regime, the militant activist came to be considered a terrorist.⁶⁴

Politics is articulated through political organizations. In the case of postrevolutionary Cubans in the United States it was the national security apparatus and policies that had a dominant influence on exile politics. U.S. foreign policies directed at overthrowing and discrediting the Cuban revolution were implemented in part by Cuban émigrés. Having arrived in the United States, many Cuban émigrés participated in military actions

backed by the United States, such as the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. Through these dynamics the U.S. intelligence network gave life to the first political organizations and leaders in the Cuban community. This connection continued after the failure of Bay of Pigs as the U.S. government again tried to engage exiles in its war against Castro.