

# THE CUBAN APPARATUS FOR ACTIVE MEASURES: PROPAGANDA AND DISINFORMATION AGAINST THE UNITED STATES

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The Cuban Communist Party (CCP) considers the United States to be its main adversary. As such, the United States is Cuba's primary target for its Soviet-style *active measures*, a term which refers to a form of political warfare that was originated by the government of the former Soviet Union consisting of influence operations including white, gray, and black propaganda and disinformation.<sup>1</sup> The Soviets, together with their satellite East Germany, were responsible for perfecting these operations, and since it is well known that Cuba's intelligence agencies were originally shaped and heavily influenced by both the Soviet KGB and the East German Stasi, it is appropriate to refer to Cuba's propaganda and disinformation activities as "Cuban active measures." In fact, the Cuban Interior Ministry's Directorate of Intelligence has an entire department, MIX,<sup>2</sup> dedicated to active measures (in Spanish, *medidas activas*).<sup>3</sup> This paper will explore the present-day apparatus of Cuban ac-

tive measures in the United States by examining its past methodology and resources, and then offer a general assessment of how to counter Cuban active measures as a serious and ongoing threat.

Since Cuba lacks the capability to project a significant military threat against the United States, its government focuses on using active measures that are orchestrated through both its military, under the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (MINFAR), and its non-military agencies, under the Cuban Communist Party (CCP). Although these Ministries are known to overlap when dealing with such activities—especially since both depend on the Interior Ministry's intelligence sectors for research and analysis—this paper will focus only on the efforts of the CCP.

Various agencies working for the CCP that conduct active measures are tasked with designing and carrying out "ideological penetration plans," a phrase coined by the CIA in a report on Castro's propagan-

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1. "Disinformation: Soviet active measures," *Encyclopedia of Espionage, Intelligence, and Security* (The Gale Group, Inc.): <http://www.answers.com/topic/disinformation> [Prof. Herbert Romerstein contributed to this reference]. *White* propaganda refers to a source that is attributed overtly, such as when the Cuban government identifies itself as the source; *gray* propaganda refers to a source that is unattributed, such as when the Cuban government distributes targeted information through a front organization; and *black* propaganda refers to a source that is falsely attributed, such as when the Cuban government infiltrates the entity of a foreign government and uses it to distribute targeted information.

2. Within the Directorate of Intelligence are eight departments whose names all start with the letter M, followed by one or more Roman numerals.

3. José Cohen, "El Servicio de Inteligencia Castrista y la Comunidad Académica Norteamericana," *Serie de Monografías from The Institute for Cuban & Cuban-American Studies (ICCAS) at the University of Miami* (Enero 2002): <http://www6.miami.edu/iccas/Cohen.pdf>. Mr. Cohen is a former Cuban intelligence official who claims to have defected after leaving Cuba in 1994.

da apparatus.<sup>4</sup> Resources utilized by these agencies include, but are not limited to: the Castro brothers themselves; international news agencies and broadcasting; front organizations for “political education” and mobilization; Cuban culture; and international forums. Over time, these “penetration plans” are intended to weaken the United States from within by undermining U.S. academic, political and governmental institutions. Thus, active measures help the Cuban government accomplish its two main objectives: to weaken American influence in the world and to show the superiority of Cuban socialism.<sup>5</sup>

The effectiveness of the plans is determined by how well they contribute to shaping an alternative reality among intellectuals in the United States through academic exchanges and media manipulation, with the goal of converting their targets into allies, or at least neutralizing them. Furthermore, these plans are an attempt to agitate the general population of the United States with divisive propaganda, usually through “front organizations,” to foment mass demonstrations and political upheaval, while also working to influence international opinion against the United States and in favor of Cuba through both traditional and public diplomacy. This method of ideological penetration creates a fertile environment for the Interior Ministry (MININT) to recruit “agents of influence,” whether they become “useful idiots,” “sympathizers,” or “true believers” in the legitimacy of the Cuban revolution and its Communist ideology.

Raúl Castro, the President of the Cuban Communist Party and brother to the ailing Fidel Castro, is likely to continue utilizing these active measures since they have worked so successfully throughout recent history. Moreover, such methods are likely to increase in importance due to Fidel’s declining health, which has impaired his image of strength and invincibility to

the extent that many people have become disenchanted. However, the Castro brothers’ desire for control over the formulation of ideas and their personal obsession with the United States still add considerable character to the bureaucracy of Cuba’s active measures apparatus. Thus, before exploring the methods and resources utilized by the CCP for ideological penetration, it is important to discuss briefly the background and motivations of the men who have ruled Cuba for the last half century.

### THE MEN BEHIND THE APPARATUS

Fidel Castro has disliked the United States for a long time, almost throughout his entire life. Growing up in a United Fruit Company town convinced him that Cuba was a victim of American colonialism and economic exploitation. While attending El Colegio de Belén, a Jesuit school in Havana, he was often observed reading a copy of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* (in Spanish, *La Lucha*) according to Georgie Anne Geyer, an American journalist and author of *Guerrilla Prince: The Untold Story of Fidel Castro*. Under the tutelage of Father Armando Llorente and Father Alberto de Castro, Fidel also was influenced by the works of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, who founded the Spanish *Falange*.<sup>6</sup> But he was most in awe of Mussolini, primarily because he was Latin, meaning that he knew how to mix realistic politics with emotion. Although Castro was not an ideological fascist, this did not stop him from emulating Hitler’s and Mussolini’s successful propaganda techniques.<sup>7</sup>

While attending the University of Havana law school, when Fulgencio Batista was the hated and corrupt dictator of Cuba, Fidel’s dislike for America grew because of the U.S. government’s support of the dictator. After Fidel’s 1959 successful revolt against Batista, although he had denied being a communist, communism soon became an ideology of conve-

4. “Cuba: Castro’s Propaganda Apparatus and Foreign Policy,” *Central Intelligence Agency (FOIA)*, November 1984 (Released July 2003): [http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse\\_docs.asp?doc\\_no=0000972183](http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp?doc_no=0000972183)

5. Gerardo González. Interview with the author (in Spanish). Phone interview. Washington, DC, June 16, 2011.

6. Hans de Salas-del Valle, Ed., “Selected Statements: 1958–2003 Fidel Castro on the United States,” Institute for Cuban & Cuban-American Studies Occasional Paper Series (February 2003): <http://www6.miami.edu/iccas/FidelontheUS-Hans.pdf>

7. Stephanie Tepper, Ed., Transcribed by William Cran, “The Last Communist,” *InVision Production and PBS Frontline* (February 11, 1992): <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/programs/transcripts/1010.html>

nience for him, useful in his efforts to tighten control over the Cuban people and to receive foreign aid from the Soviet Union after the U.S. embargo of 1960. The failed U.S.-backed 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion gave him a further excuse to partner with the Soviet Union in order to secure Cuba's survival.<sup>8</sup>

After Fidel established the CCP in October 1965, he continued his hatred for America. His brother Raúl also shared this sentiment. As a successful democratic society with a capitalist system, the United States is a glaring contradiction of Cuba's struggling system of Communist one-party rule and Socialist economy. In order to hide this fact and divert attention from its own shortcomings, the CCP accuses the United States of being a greedy capitalist society with imperialist ambitions, and the cause of not just Cuba's ills, but injustices throughout the world.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union—Cuba's biggest subsidizer—Cuba's economy has suffered tremendously, and the failures of Fidel Castro's socialist system have begun to show. However, Fidel and Raúl have been able to avoid the political consequences of failure by strengthening ties with new "subsidizers" like Venezuela. Since taking office in 1999, Hugo Chávez has shipped tens of billions of dollars in subsidized oil to the island.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, they use the United States as a scapegoat for Cuba's economic downturn, continuing to blame it on the U.S. embargo. Meanwhile, the numerous economic reforms<sup>10</sup> made since Raúl took over in 2006 have been seen by many in the international community as a sign of hope that he will take the "China approach," allow-

ing economic change while holding onto political control. However, he is more likely to be indulging market solutions just enough to allow his military cadre to profit from Cuba's tourism industry and retail sector, which are controlled entirely by the regime. Roger F. Noriega, Visiting Fellow from the American Enterprise Institute, astutely suggests that Raúl's long record of ideological rigidity indicates that what he finds most appealing about the "China model" is not measured reform but the preservation of absolute political control.<sup>11</sup>

Raúl's primary goal, as it pertains to the Cuban economy, is to build loyalty within the regime's security apparatus by putting loyal "raulistas" in charge of powerful corporate conglomerates such as CIMEX and the Cuban armed forces' own commercial holdings company, GAESA, which controls 40% of the Cuban economy.<sup>12</sup> These enterprises were created "as if they were the private property of certain government officials" and it is through these entities that Raúl and his cronies are able to run operations parallel to the country's economy. For example, GAESA is used as a vehicle to stash away money overseas and CIMEX has two subsidiary banks whose operations are extremely secret and are believed to involve money laundering of drug trafficking proceeds.<sup>13</sup>

When discussing the Castro brothers, it also is worth mentioning the importance of the Coordination and Support Staff to the Commander in Chief (GCA), though as of recently, it may have been dissolved; or, it may have been replaced by Raúl with the military elite running GAESA. Fidel relied heavily upon the

8. Tepper (*PBS Frontline*).

9. Juan Forero and Adam Liebendorfer, "Chavez's cancer highlights close partnership with Castro," *Washington Post* (13 July 2011): [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/americas/chavez-cancer-highlights-close-partnership-with-castro/2011/07/13/gIQAHa1WCI\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/americas/chavez-cancer-highlights-close-partnership-with-castro/2011/07/13/gIQAHa1WCI_story.html)

10. Marc Frank, "Chronology: Raul Castro's road to reform in Cuba," *Reuters* (13 April 2011): <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/04/13/us-cuba-reform-chronology-idUSTRE73C70C20110413>

11. Roger F. Noriega, "Oh, Brother! Another Castro Clings to Power in Cuba," *American Enterprise Institute, AEI* (March 2008): <http://www.aei.org/outlook/27637>. Roger F. Noriega is a former assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs (Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean) and a former U.S. ambassador to the Organization of American States.

12. "Reform in Cuba: Trying to make the sums add up," *The Economist* (11 November 2010) <http://www.economist.com/node/17463421>

13. Maria C. Werlau, "Fidel Castro, Inc.: A Global Conglomerate," *Cuba in Transition—Volume 15* (Washington: Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy, 2005): <http://www.ascecuba.org/publications/proceedings/volume15/pdfs/werlau.pdf>

GCA to accomplish the tasks he envisioned, and Raúl is likely to do the same whether or not the nomenclature remains the same. In 1975, Fidel created this “government within a government” in order to circumvent certain institutional structures and maximize the realization of his desires. Technically-speaking, the GCA reported directly to the President and was identified with the Council of Ministers. Becoming a member of this Staff was the path to power within the Cuban political system.<sup>14</sup> This support staff, along with their active measures apparatus, enabled Fidel and Raúl to maintain their control and influence over the government, as well as secure their economic proceeds.

### CUBA’S METHODOLOGY FOR IDEOLOGICAL PENETRATION<sup>15</sup>

A CIA document from November 1984 that was released in July 2003 has been extremely useful in understanding how the Castro regime conducts active measures, which can be applied on both a “grand strategy” level and on a case-by-case basis. The title of the document is “Cuba: Castro’s Propaganda Apparatus and Foreign Policy.” Although it might be assumed this document is outdated, it is likely not much has changed since the strategy has been so successful, as demonstrated by such Cuban-related espionage cases as Ana Montes or Walter and Gwendolyn Myers. The following is an attempt to bring this “ideological penetration” methodology up to date by applying it to the current situation.

#### Stage One

Fidel Castro—and now Raúl, though it is likely that Fidel still has some influence—decides to designate a particular country or region as a target and calls for an “ideological penetration plan,” either on his own

or in consultation with one or more of his closest advisers. The “target” is likely to be a particular city, town, university campus, group, or even an individual who is found to be in conflict with Cuba’s national interests. Of course, there is always an overarching strategy when dealing with each country, but such “penetration plans” allow for the CCP to break it into more manageable pieces.

#### Stage Two

Raúl (and perhaps, Fidel) holds a meeting with top officials, which is certain to include the Cuban Vice-President of the Councils of State and Ministers, José Ramón Machado Ventura. He has been a member of the CCP’s Politburo since the 1970s and since August 2006 has been in charge of Cuba’s national and international education projects, which involve integrating socialist ideas into school programs.<sup>16</sup> He also is considered to be the second in line to Raúl but, like Raúl and Fidel Castro, Machado is rather old, which puts into question whether he would be a likely successor to them despite his high position.

A top official from the Central Committee’s International Relations Department would be included in this meeting as well and tasked with collecting all pertinent information available on the target. Previously, this Department was led by Jorge Martí Martínez, who only served in this position from March 2009<sup>17</sup> until April 2011 when it was taken over by former Minister of Public Health José Ramón Balaguer Cabrera.<sup>18</sup> One of the Directors under this Department might be designated as the overall “Planning Coordinator,” depending on the geographical location of the target.

Apart from the International Relations Department, there used to be another entity called the Americas

14. Armando F. Mastrapa III, “Equipo de Coordinación y Apoyo al Comandante en Jefe: Cuba’s Parallel Government?” *Cuba in Transition—Volume 11* (Washington: Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy, 2001): <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/ascel/pdfs/volume11/mastrapa.pdf>

15. Ibid, “Castro’s Propaganda Apparatus” (*CIA*), Annex, pp. 33–35.

16. “Cuba: Key government figures,” *BBC News* (Last Updated: 25 February 2008) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7253131.stm>

17. “Report: Cuban Leadership Overview, Apr 2009,” *Open Source Center* (16 April 2009) <http://fas.org/irp/world/cuba/overview.pdf>

18. “Miembros del Buró Político, el Secretariado y el Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba,” *Cubadebate* (19 April 2011): <http://www.cubadebate.cu/noticias/2011/04/19/miembros-del-buro-politico-el-secretariado-y-el-comite-central-del-partido-comunista-de-cuba-foto/>

Department (DA), which was considered “the most powerful branch of Cuba’s security apparatus” and was organized into four regional sections—Central America, South America, the Caribbean, and North America—as well as the Center for Latin American Studies (CEAL) and the Center for North American Studies (CEA).<sup>19</sup> The DA no longer exists since it was absorbed into the International Relations Department, but some of its entities still do.<sup>20</sup> For example, the CEA continues to serve as a venue for propaganda through academic exchanges with the international community. After the purge of CEA by the Cuban government in 1996, Maurizio Giuliano wrote a book entitled *El Caso CEA*, in which he reveals secrets of the purge. This includes testimony from the Center’s former Assistant Director, Julio Carranza, who discusses preparations made by Cuban officials both before and after any trip was made abroad by a CEA member. Prior to a trip abroad, the selected CEA member would meet individually with numerous officials to analyze in great detail the objective of the trip and the surrounding context, and then would receive precise instructions on how to act; a debriefing would take place immediately upon the member’s return, usually by the same officials.<sup>21</sup>

### Stage Three

The Planning Coordinator would then meet with several key officials such as the Interior Minister, Lieutenant General Abelardo Colomé Ibarra, who would be asked to obtain an area analysis of the target from his Director of Intelligence (DI),<sup>22</sup> Brigadier General Eduardo Delgado Rodríguez, as well as a list of the target country’s nationals living in Cuba from his Directorate of Counterintelligence. Foreign Relations Minister Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, or

in this case, his Director for North America, Josefina Vidal Ferreiro—both of whom have remained in their positions as of April 2011<sup>23</sup>—would be asked to task the Cuban Embassy in the target area for a country analysis. If there is no resident Cuban diplomatic mission, the Ministry must make the best use of its resources at home and abroad.

This analysis from the Ministry of Foreign Relations is likely to focus on the target’s intellectual community by classifying key people according to their political leanings. It would also provide a study of all cultural areas by putting together a list of the best actors, musicians, and other performers, and then analyzing local cultural tastes to identify which Cuban cultural figures would be well received; and when relevant, it also would provide a separate study on the universities. Another useful resource would be long-term Cuban infiltrators inside the United States such as Carlos and Elsa Alvarez, who monitored the Cuban exile community under the guise of an associate professor and a psychological counselor at Florida International University (FIU) while also reporting to the Cuban DI until 2006 when they were caught. Moreover, the Red Wasp Network (La Red Avispa) is an example of successful active measures that not only monitored the intentions of Cuban exiles and of the U.S. government toward Cuba, but also sowed discord and conflict among exiles and included the murder of four members of Brothers to the Rescue.<sup>24</sup>

Next, the Planning Coordinator might meet with Culture Minister Abel Enrique Prieto Jiménez and ask him to provide a list of Cuban cultural figures who could play a role in the penetration plan. These individuals would consist of well-known Cubans already living in the United States who are friendly to

19. “Intelligence: America Department (DA), Central Committee Communist Party of Cuba,” *GlobalSecurity* (Page last modified 28 July 2011): <http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/cuba/da.htm>

20. González, Phone Interview.

21. Maurizio Giuliano, *El Caso CEA: Intellectuales e Inquisidores en Cuba ¿Perestroika en la Isla?* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1998): 87–88.

22. Formerly known as the General Directorate of Intelligence (DGI).

23. “Miembros” (*Cubadebate*).

24. Stéphane Lefebvre, “Cuban Intelligence Activities Directed at the United States, 1959–2007,” *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 22: 3 (2009): 452–469.

the CCP, or people who could plan a visit to the United States in the guise of performing in the arts or engaging in other cultural presentations.

Finally, the Planning Coordinator would meet with someone from the Central Committee's Ideological Department that is supervised by Rolando Alfonso Borges, who would be tasked with disseminating target-specific propaganda through *Prensa Latina* and other organizations and publications under the department's control. In the past, this task would have been given to the head of the Revolutionary Orientation Department (DOR) under the Ideological Department; however, it no longer seems to exist.<sup>25</sup> The Ideological Department, in coordination with the International Relations Department, is crucial for conducting active measures, especially while the plan is in operation, which will be discussed in more detail below.

#### Stage Four

The Planning Coordinator then gathers all of this reporting into an overall ideological penetration plan that is submitted to the Politburo for approval. A member of the Politburo—or perhaps now, a member of the Secretariat—is then named to supervise all subsequent activity. Due to the important role of culture, the Ideological Secretary or the Minister of Culture is a likely candidate.

#### Stage Five

The designated Politburo or Secretariat member and the Planning Coordinator then oversee the drafting of a specific penetration plan, which can take several months and includes specific names, dates, itineraries, and costs. The Ministry of Culture is asked to take the next step by sending a representative to the target country to identify contacts there and find out what cultural events have been scheduled and which Cuban performers or intellectuals could take part. The Ministry also might begin to invite intellectuals

and performers from the target country to participate in various activities in Cuba.

Meanwhile, the International Relations Department (formerly handled by the DA) pursues its own direct contacts with the target country's intellectuals. The Ideological Department (formerly handled by the DOR) also begins to prepare articles on the target country's culture for publication in Cuban outlets and develops media contacts who can arrange for the placement of articles on Cuban performers and intellectuals who will be visiting the country.

The Ministry of Foreign Relations then focuses on identifying political contacts in the target country that Havana can use to gain support for, or reduce opposition to, Cuban cultural initiatives. Together with the Minister of Investment and Economic Cooperation, Rodrigo Malmierca Díaz, the Foreign Relations Minister develops specific plans for offering economic assistance to the target country. Originally, this economics ministry existed as the State Committee for Economic Cooperation (CECE) under the Council of Ministers. The ministry had been created for accepting foreign aid and investment, but over time was utilized for overseas economic assistance activities. International collaboration with countries such as Spain is also known to have been conducted through the CECE on behalf of the State Committee for Labor and Social Security, the Ministries of Public Health and Construction, the National Tourism Institute and other Cuban institutions.<sup>26</sup>

#### Stage Six

Virtually any Cuban entity can be tasked for these assignments, such as the government's various institutes and organizations that cover a wide range of topics. In the final stage, a budget is prepared and after approval or modification by Castro, the funds are dispersed to the various offices charged with implementing the plan, which the Politburo and/or Secretariat review regularly.

25. González, Phone Interview.

26. "Spain and Cuba: Supplementary Agreement on international technical cooperation in the fields of social and labour affairs. Signed at Havana on 26 January 1987," *United Nations—Treaty Series*, Vol. 1650, I-28377: 197. [http://untreaty.un.org/untfs/120001\\_144071/7/4/00005392.pdf](http://untreaty.un.org/untfs/120001_144071/7/4/00005392.pdf).

## RESOURCES FOR CUBAN ACTIVE MEASURES

The Cuban government has vast resources at its disposal that can be used as weapons of political warfare against the United States. With the advent of the internet and advancements in technology, the possibilities for enhancing and expanding these instruments are almost endless. This will be discussed in greater detail below, beginning with Cuba's residual weapon against the United States, but whose influence has declined in tandem with his health: Fidel Castro.

### Fidel's Charisma

Fidel's sensitivity to nuance and the charismatic personality he conveys, with the utmost attention to detail through his tight control of the mass media, has enabled him to create a cult of personality around himself. He has even been able to make use of Che Guevara's romantic revolutionary reputation, as the famous image of Che continues to remain in mass production in the form of shirts, mugs, and any other piece of merchandise imaginable. Fidel is a keen political warrior who possesses that which is most valued in the arena of political warfare—an understanding of the *Zeitgeist*, or an acute sense for the “spirit of the times.” His sensitivity toward current socio-political trends and his ability to manipulate his audience by saying to them what they want to hear help him to dissolve the ideological adhesive of his adversaries.

Raúl seems to have inherited Fidel's appreciation for micromanagement of the Cuban government and mass media, but not Fidel's charisma, which could present a problem for him. However, his fierce reputation allows him to maintain control even if out of fear. Furthermore, his kinship to Fidel allows him to ride the coattails of his brother, adding to his legitimacy. In the meantime, Fidel continues to make his

presence known to the Cuban people and the rest of the world by communicating with the public through various venues of communication such as his *Reflexiones del Comandante en Jefe* (now called *Reflexiones del compañero Fidel*),<sup>27</sup> which serve as a steadying force until Raúl can exert his own more positive influence. Of course, Raúl seems to be attempting this practice with his own version of *Reflexiones*, but with a much longer title.<sup>28</sup>

### News Agencies

A majority of the Cuban government's propaganda activities are conducted through official news agencies, but, unlike the United States, these news agencies consciously serve as vehicles for active measures under the Ideological Department (formerly handled by the DOR), which manages the CCP's “international media empire.” Of course, its activities are meticulously synchronized with and supplemented by the personal efforts of the Castros and other top Cuban officials.<sup>29</sup>

Inaugurated on 9 June 1959, *Prensa Latina* ([www.prensa-latina.cu](http://www.prensa-latina.cu)) is the Cuban government's official international news agency and is perhaps its most effective propaganda weapon. It disseminates a daily stream of white propaganda that is hostile to democratic nations, and also serves as a cover for intelligence collection and disinformation operations. On occasion, it fulfills diplomatic functions by using branch offices as *de facto* embassies. It even has a special services department that offers a variety of journalistic support materials, such as photographic packages of events or personalities and compilations of basic data for background presentations.<sup>30</sup> The main internal Cuban news agency is *Agencia Cubana de Noticias* (AIN) ([www.ain.cu](http://www.ain.cu)), which is based in Havana and does not have offices in other countries. Although still an organ of the CCP, it is less political-

27. *Reflexiones del Comandante en Jefe*. <http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/reflexiones.html>.

28. *Discursos e intervenciones del Presidente de los Consejos de Estado y de Ministros de la República de Cuba, General de Ejército Raúl Castro Ruz*. <http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/rauldiscursos/index2.html>.

29. “Castro's Propaganda Apparatus” (*CIA*), p. 6.

30. “Castro's Propaganda Apparatus” (*CIA*). Additional special services included: recorded interviews with leading political, cultural, and sports figures; political or economic commentaries on a single country or an entire region by experienced observers; and feature articles on virtually any subject.

reflexionally charged with stories about scientific advances, cultural events, and other neutral topics.

The newspaper with the largest circulation is *Granma* which, since its founding in 1965, has served as the official news organ of the Communist Party. The international reach of *Granma* expanded significantly with the advent of the Internet; its website, *Granma Internacional Digital* ([www.granma.cu](http://www.granma.cu)), brings much of the print edition's content to the web, presenting it in Spanish, English, French, Portuguese, and German. The other two national newspapers with international reach are *Juventud Rebelde* ([www.juventudrebelde.cu](http://www.juventudrebelde.cu)) and *Trabajadores* ([www.trabajadores.cu](http://www.trabajadores.cu)).

In international broadcasting, *Radio Habana Cuba* ([www.radiohc.cu](http://www.radiohc.cu)) is managed by the Cuban government, while the most important television station that has international reach is *Telesur* and its affiliate that is tightly controlled by the government, *Cubavisión* ([www.cubavision.cubaweb.cu](http://www.cubavision.cubaweb.cu)). *Cubavisión* has an international version as well and offers a streaming Internet feed, *TV en Vivo*, through which the current programming on the network is available internationally for those who are unable to access it through television. It offers various programs such as “Mesa Redonda,” which is on every evening with a variety of national and international themes. According to Gerardo González, a Cuban exile and former CEA scholar prior to the 1996 purge, programs like “Mesa Redonda” are meant primarily to serve as a venue for the government's propaganda and Castro's “Battle of Ideas.”<sup>31</sup>

### International Front Organizations

In coordination with the expertise and support of MININT's Directorate of Intelligence, gray propaganda is likely to be organized by the International Relations Department, but previously, it would have been run by the DA. It is interesting to note the DA had what remained of the National Liberation Directorate (DLN), which was reorganized into its depart-

ment and was responsible for covert Cuban activities in support of national liberation movements and the efforts of “friendly” regimes.<sup>32</sup>

Just after the revolution in 1959, Castro established *Casa de las Américas* ([www.casadelasamericas.com](http://www.casadelasamericas.com)), which soon became an influential literary institution, especially through its prestigious literary contests with monetary prizes. *Casa de las Américas* was meant to mobilize the region's more militant intellectuals and to create an acceptance of the Cuban revolutionary ideology by reshaping popular conceptions of armed struggle and making it respectable; hence, revolution became synonymous with idealism.<sup>33</sup> The large presence of Latin Americans both within the United States and abroad who have been affected by this ideology contributes significantly to international public opinion against the United States.

Castro also established *The Cuban Institute for Friendship Among Peoples* (ICAP) ([www.icap.cu](http://www.icap.cu)) in 1960, with the goal of establishing a “mechanism of communications between the various social strata of a given country” that could respond with speed and flexibility, while remaining informal. ICAP is a host of “friendship” associations that are responsive to the directions of Cuba and charged with refuting in their respective countries the “distorted” version that North American imperialism presents of Cuba's social work and its internationalist assistance to other peoples.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, the ICAP assists in bringing “brigades” of foreign groups to Cuba for propaganda exploitation; the branch for Americans is the *Venceremos Brigades* ([www.venceremosbrigade.net](http://www.venceremosbrigade.net)). Aside from receiving a “political education,” these trips require the brigades to engage in hard labor, such as the harvesting of sugar or other agricultural and construction work in many parts of the island. There also are organizations for “educating” foreign journalists, such as the Cuban Union of Journalists (UPEC) ([31. González, Phone Interview.](http://www.cu-</a></p>
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32. “America Department” (*GlobalSecurity*).

33. “Castro's Propaganda Apparatus” (*CIA*), p. 17.

34. *Ibid*, “Castro's Propaganda Apparatus” (*CIA*), p. 13.

baperiodistas.cu) that in actuality trains them to be instruments of the Cuban Communist Party.

Other groups are designed to attract members based on their ethnicity, religion, or political views and then to subject them to “agitation” through propaganda so that they will feel alienated and then motivated to participate in mass demonstrations when necessary. There are front organizations for legal battles (usually against the U.S. intelligence agencies) and lobbying as well, on behalf of Cuba on matters that concern the CCP.

### **ARTISTIC EXPRESSION, ATHLETIC EXCELLENCE, AND FILM PROPAGANDA**

The CCP also utilizes cultural diplomacy through performance artists, athletes, and the cinema to appeal to the American people and use them as “innocent messengers” of its propaganda. Polished performances in the arts convey a favorable impression of the Cuban social system. Organizations for the performing arts include the Cuban National Ballet ([www.balletcuba.cult.cu](http://www.balletcuba.cult.cu)), the National Folkloric Ensemble ([www.folkcuba.cult.cu](http://www.folkcuba.cult.cu)), and the Irakere jazz rock band.

Competition is very intense for international-class athletes in Cuba due to the CCP’s vested interest in showing its superiority in order to earn international respect; the CCP also uses them to establish contacts. Of major importance to the CCP are games held by the Central American and Caribbean Sports Organization (CACSO), to which immense resources are dedicated. Cuba also continues to boast about its numerous medals won at the Olympic Games.

For the CCP, cinema is a more direct form of propaganda, and its films are almost always political, promoting hostility toward the United States. The International Festival of the New Latin American Film, now known as the Havana Film Festival ([www.habanafilmfestival.com](http://www.habanafilmfestival.com)), serves as a useful tool for anti-American propaganda and disinformation. In fact, it was formed and is still run by the Cuban Institute on Cinematographic Arts and Industry (ICAIC) at the Ministry of Culture. The Cannes Film Festival has been known to give awards for Cuban films as well. However, the difficulty of mass distribution of Cuban films has been an obstacle for Castro, which is a

likely reason why he continues to collaborate with some Americans in Hollywood, such as Oliver Stone and Michael Moore.

### **International Forums**

Cuba’s diplomats in the United States, many of whom are clandestine intelligence officers handling “illegals” or clandestine spies, operate out of two main locations: the Cuban Interest Section in the Swiss Embassy in Washington, D.C. (<http://www.cubadiplomacia.cu/sicw/EN/Mission/InterestsSection.aspx>), currently headed by Ambassador Jorge A. Bolaños Suárez, and the Cuban Mission to the United Nations in New York (<http://embacuba.cubaminrex.cu/Default.aspx?tabid=2536>), headed by Ambassador Pedro J. Núñez Mosquera. The CCP utilizes traditional and public diplomacy through its propaganda at international forums to promote exchanges and cooperation with all spheres of U.S. society as well as to maintain communication with the Cuban community residing in the United States and offer it consular services. The CCP also hosts international forums in Havana, usually at the impressive Palacio de Convenciones.

### **GENERAL ASSESSMENT**

There is much that our government can learn from Cuban active measures, not only to counter their efforts, but also to extract ideas from them for our own use, especially in the way Cuba conducts overt foreign propaganda through its Ideological Department. The CCP has an impressive system of coordination that runs its own propaganda and disinformation activities, separate from the military, while making use of the military’s intelligence collection and analysis in addition to its own. This is an extremely efficient method that creates an environment conducive to interagency coordination, creative thinking, and cross-analysis, which helps the Cuban government to constantly improve its methods, as well as reduce or eliminate any errors and redundancies.

The non-military sectors of our government (especially the State Department) that should be conducting propaganda and countering active measures on a mass scale seem completely averse to the concept of coordinating with the military. Unfortunately, these sectors seem to think “propaganda” and “influence”

are bad words, when in fact they are vital instruments of statecraft, for example providing much help to President Ronald Reagan and his administration during the Cold War. It will take political will from our leadership to initiate and approve policies for improving U.S. strategic communication. Equally, our government also must protect its citizens by effectively exposing these active measures—we should not only concern ourselves with catching Cuban spies, but also with neutralizing the CCP's ideological penetrations that aid in creating such spies.

Furthermore, the civilian sectors of our government should focus on telling the truth through overt or white propaganda, but with a coordinated strategy for what should be said and how to say it. Countering propaganda and disinformation from our adversaries requires the ability to detect it and then to use the mass media to correct it on a mass scale. Herbert Romerstein, who founded and directed the Office of Counter Soviet Active Measures at the now-defunct U.S. Information Agency (USIA), puts it best:

The reason we were successful in exposing Soviet *active measures* was that we did it in a coordinated way. We raised the costs to the Soviet Union of spreading their lies, causing problems that snapped back on them, making it more of a problem to spread their propaganda and disinformation.<sup>35</sup>

One would think we have continued to improve our countermeasures, but instead, at present, it seems we are falling far behind our adversaries in terms of a coordinated and proactive strategy. As of now, the U.S. Military is best at countering and conducting *actives*

*measures*, but the rest of the U.S. Government must also catch up and play its part.

Of course, some efforts are being made that should be encouraged and expanded upon. Todd Leventhal is the State Department's expert on conspiracy theories and misinformation and he also helps U.S. embassies to identify and rebut other nations' disinformation.<sup>36</sup> However, given the number of embassies that we have throughout the world, there should be experts like Mr. Leventhal assigned to every embassy. The State Department also has a few other programs such as the Digital Outreach Team (DOT)<sup>37</sup> that counters misinformation on a regular basis. But its engagements are limited, with a team of only ten people who cover Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Chinese.<sup>38</sup> The DOT was included in State Department's 2011 Congressional Budget Justification—though it is not mentioned at all in the 2012 version—with a request to add a permanent program manager and one program officer for video capability; however, this seems to be very little for such an important function.<sup>39</sup>

Just as the Castro brothers secured Cuba's survival during the Cold War by collaborating with the Soviet Union for economic aid, it is likely they will do the same with countries like China and Venezuela (depending on Chávez's struggle with cancer and its political outcome). As Cuba continues to draw closer to these countries, protecting our political security is going to become more important, especially in the information age. This is especially true when competing with military dictators who have unlimited ac-

35. J. Michael Waller, "'Wahhabi Lobby' Takes the Offensive," *Insight on the News* (July 12, 2002). <http://www.islamicsupremecouncil.org/CMS/Topics/Leaders/1191031362002.htm>.

36. Todd Leventhal, "Rumors, Myths, and Fabrications," *Blogs at America.gov* (Archived): <http://blogs.america.gov/rumors/author/leventhalta/>. Mr. Leventhal has since created a new website on America.gov that is called "Conspiracy Theories and Misinformation" ([http://www.america.gov/conspiracy\\_theories.html](http://www.america.gov/conspiracy_theories.html)). Also, according to the State Department's Telephone Directory as of 17 May 2010, he is a senior officer for Policy, Planning and Evaluation (IIP/P) at the State Department: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/112065.pdf>].

37. "Digital Outreach Team," *Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State* (April 2009): <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/116709.pdf>.

38. "Congressional Budget Justification," *Department of State* (FY 2010): 299 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/123413.pdf>.

39. "Congressional Budget Justification," *Department of State* (FY 2011): 282 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/136355.pdf>.

cess to both their civilian and military sectors for active measures and who do not have to deal with the “turf wars” similar to those within the U.S. Government. As a free and democratic society, our government luckily does not have unchecked control as dictatorships do, but the tradeoff is that we face a

greater challenge in synchronizing our efforts. We must keep in mind that while we are still harnessing our own techniques and countermeasures, our adversaries continue to exchange ideas, to recruit more spies, and to undermine our society with their ideologies.