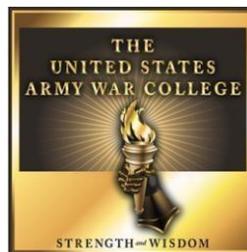


Improving DoD Operations Overseas: Cuba as a New Opportunity

by

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Abstract

President Obama's December 2014 announcement of the normalizing of relations with Cuba provides a tremendous opportunity for the Department of Defense. Collaboration between the Cuban and U.S. militaries could improve regional stability and increase homeland security by enhancing collaboration in the southern maritime approaches to the United States. The establishment of a new Embassy and Country Team will provide a golden opportunity for DoD to create a new model and finally divest themselves of the old two-sided model consisting of a hodge-podge of small DoD entities centered around a Defense Attaché Office and/or a Security Cooperation Office. Establishing just one DoD organization in Cuba as a test model could eventually lead to an update of the current 2013 DoD Instruction C-5205.75, "Implementing Instructions for DoD Operations at US Embassies." Adopting a single DoD concept would reduce the Department's overall costs and personnel, reducing redundancy, avoiding unnecessary confusion for our partner nations, and streamlining mission accomplishment.

Improving DoD Operations Overseas: Cuba as a New Opportunity

Fifty years of isolating Cuba had failed to promote democracy, setting us back in Latin America. That's why we restored diplomatic relations, opened the door to travel and commerce, and positioned ourselves to improve the lives of the Cuban people. You want to consolidate our leadership and credibility in the hemisphere? Recognize that the Cold War is over. Lift the embargo.

—Barack H. Obama¹

On 17 Decembr 2014, President Barack Obama announced the normalizing of relations with the Republic of Cuba.² This sudden policy announcement came as a surprise to almost everyone, Cuban and United States citizens alike. Outcries were quickly heard from the staunch anti-Castro community based in Miami claiming that this would be seen as a victory for the Castro brothers, and a Cuban Government that has shown little to no progress towards expanding democracy and improving human rights for the Cuban people. But the outcries pale in comparison to the many Americans who simply said, “it’s about time!” It is those many Americans (both U.S. and Cuban citizens) who think the antiquated 1961 policy (commonly referred to as the “United States Embargo”), a holdover from the Cold War, failed to achieve its intended purpose over the past fifty-five. Although the President restored relations with Cuba in December 2014, many legislative changes must occur in order to pave the wave for substantive progress, such as ending the embargo, building a new embassy facility, or even possibly beginning military to military engagement.

A year after restoring relations President Obama, in his final State of the Union address on 12 January 2016, continued to push for change with Cuba and made one final plea to lift the embargo on the Cuban Government. However, to date very few policy and legislative changes have occurred to bring to fruition the President’s vision

for a new relationship with Cuba. The United States Government (USG) must work quickly, but deliberately, to make necessary policy changes that have a real impact on the welfare of the Cuban people. In time, this will lead to a reduction in illegal migration and hopefully the Cuban Government will eventually trust the United States Government and realize that cooperation with the United States does not weaken their administration or threaten their sovereignty. On 13 January 2016, General John F. Kelly, stated in his final interview after 45 years of military service, “we’ve normalized now and, regardless of how we think of each other in terms of politics, we have very, very common challenges.”³

Once the U.S. Department of State (DoS) approves the permanent assignment of U.S. military officials to a new embassy in Cuba, the U.S. Department of Defense will essentially have to build its team from scratch. As of January 2016, the only military presence in Cuba is a U.S. Coast Guard Liaison Officer. This provides a golden opportunity for DoD to divest themselves of the current two-sided model. At present, Defense Department entities are centered around a Defense Attaché Office and/or a Security Cooperation Office, with one of the heads of the aforementioned organizations designated as the “Senior Defense Official” for the Embassy. The employment of the Senior Defense Official (SDO) concept was established in the 2008 DoD Instruction C-5105.81⁴ and subsequently updated in the 2013 DoD Instruction C-5205.75, both entitled, “Implementing Instructions for DoD Operations at U.S. Embassies.”⁵ Both DoDI’s have made substantial improvements in the synchronization of DoD operations overseas, but have done little to realize potential cost savings by reducing redundancy between the two separate organizations. This is surprising given the recent fiscal

constraints that DoD has faced over the past several years. Given the re-establishment of relations with Cuba and the eventual need to build a U.S. Defense Department team to support U.S. Embassy-Havana, a unique opportunity exists to build a single DoD organization in country to execute all military missions. The opportunity to open a Defense enterprise from scratch in Havana provides the Defense Department the perfect chance to try a new model and improve upon the existing over-staffed and fragmented operations that currently exist at nearly all United States Embassies globally.

U.S. - Cuban Relations: A Brief History

Since the mid 1700s, the British-American colonies and the Spanish colony of Cuba proved their interdependence and mutual importance as they engaged in both licit and illicit commerce. Historically, Cuba produced and exported vast amounts of both sugar and tobacco to the colonies, and what would eventually become the United States of America.⁶ Cuba was viewed as so important to our forefathers, that Thomas Jefferson once said that Cuba “was the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of States and (we) ought, at the first possible opportunity, to take Cuba.”⁷ Overtime, this created a sense of Cuban distrust towards their North American neighbors. It also reflected a broader goal of the United States to expand throughout the continent, commonly referred to as Manifest Destiny.

Manifest Destiny led to discussions and plans to purchase Cuba from Spain. Nothing happened for close to a century. In 1897, with restless Cuban colonists threatening to revolt against Spain, President McKinley offered to buy Cuba for \$300 million. Spain declined the offer.⁸ With the Cuban War of Independence looming, the United States dispatched the USS Maine to preserve United States interests in Cuba.

On 15 February 1898, a mysterious explosion occurred aboard the USS Maine and she quickly sank in Havana's harbor. Although the cause of the explosion was never determined, the U.S. Government was quick to blame Spain. The explosion helped spark the Spanish-American War. The United States fought the Spanish in both Cuba and the Philippines simultaneously. After only four months, Spain sued for peace and the resulting Treaty of Paris awarded control of Cuba to the United States.⁹ The U.S. Military governed Cuba after the war, but in 1903 the Platt Amendment removed U.S. troops from Cuban soil and made Cuba a protectorate of the United States. It also stipulated that Cuba permanently lease a piece of land adjacent to Guantanamo Bay to the U.S. Government to establish a naval base for the purpose of providing coal to transiting ships.¹⁰ Although Cuba gained independence, the United States continued direct involvement in Cuban affairs throughout the 1900s to include several more United States military interventions. Commerce continued to expand and tourism peaked from 1915-1930. In 1940, Fulgencio Bautista seized power and quickly proved to be a ruthless despot who controlled Cuba through a reign of fear. However, he did receive United States support for decades under the auspices of being an avid anti-Communist. The United States found a Cuban president that they could strong arm into supporting policies that would further exacerbate U.S. investor's control over the Cuban economy. This exploitive approach only furthered Cuban distrust towards the United States Government.

Fidel Castro's 1959 Revolution led to a series of anti-U.S. actions by the new Cuban Government, which included nationalizing U.S. business enterprises in Cuba and increasing ties and relations with the Soviet Union. These actions were deemed

threatening by the Eisenhower Administration and they drove the administration to the point of developing plans for covert CIA actions to overthrow Castro. When President Kennedy took office in 1961, he executed the plans to back an effort by Cuban exiles to overthrow Castro on 17 April 1961 when an invasion landed on the south coast of Cuba at a place known as the Bay of Pigs (La Bahia de Cochinos).¹¹ The attempt was an utter failure and embarrassed the young American president. After the Bay of Pigs debacle, President Kennedy developed a policy to embargo trade and travel to Cuba with the goal of containing Cuba economically, commercially, and financially. Over the next five decades, the policy would see several adjustments, such as the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act and the 1996 Helms Burton Act. Both tightened the noose on Cuba, but they also proved to have only a minimal impact on a country that was already in an economic crisis after the fall of the Soviet Union, its main benefactor. Moreover, Cubans had become accustomed to living an austere lifestyle.¹²

International Relations Theory

International Relations (IR) theory seeks to explain relationships and interactions between countries. Very rarely can just one theory explain a relationship between two countries. More often than not, complex relationships require multiple theories to explain the relational dynamics between the two entities. United States relations with Cuba are a great example. Realism contends that relations are based on power and that nations wield its power to gain influence. Realism helps explain the Cold-war era embargo-centric relationship.¹³ But more importantly, with the opening of Cuba, what will become of United States policy towards military engagement with Cuba? If the United States can build a cooperative security relationship with Cuba, a realist would argue that Cuba could be used a tool to enhance regional relations for the United States.

IR theory is used most often to explain past or current relationships. But IR theory can be equally useful in framing future relationships in emerging and changing environments. With the recent opening of relations between the United States and Cuba, Liberalism provides the best theory to serve as a basis for re-establishing political relations which will eventually set the conditions for military, economic, cultural, and commercial relations to follow suit. Liberalism does not define the world by power and war, but rather by cooperation and interdependence. Linking economies helps prevent war, which led to the creation of the famous liberal saying, “countries with McDonalds do not fight other countries with McDonalds.” A nation does not have to lose out when another nation gains. A liberalist approach to normalizing relations with Cuba would include ending the embargo so the Cuban economy could become linked with the United States’ economy.

The Current United States Strategic Approach with Cuba

The current mechanism for working level discussion with Cuba are the Bilateral Commission Steering Groups led by the Department of State. Currently, five steering groups meet with their Cuban counterparts to discuss the following areas:

- Counter-Narcotics
- Fugitives
- Human Rights
- Direct Mail
- Property Claims¹⁴

The United States Government must ensure it takes a very well thought out comprehensive approach to working with Cuba thru these dialogs. The following four recommendations present an interagency strategic approach based on the principals of Liberalism, and focus on the primary goals of prosperity and security. The four recommended principals are followed by the current United States whole of government

(interagency) plan for slowly building substantial military to military engagement.

Although military engagement is not an initial priority in the re-establishment of relations, it is important for increasing U.S. security and regional stability. Given its close proximity to the United States, a stable and secure Cuba that can exercise territorial control and support regional counter-trafficking efforts will significantly contribute to securing the southern maritime approaches to the United States. A professional Cuban military that supports a democratic regime and works closely with the United States military, could potentially help deflate regional spoilers such as Venezuela, Bolivia, and Nicaragua.¹⁵

The pursuit of economic prosperity should occur before attempting to partner with the Cubans on security matters. As the USG develops policy towards Cuba, every effort should be made to first increase economic and commercial opportunities for Cuba. Given the challenges and animosity caused by the past five decades, it would behoove the USG to make Cuba's economic prosperity a priority as this will diffuse animosity and improve conditions for the Cuban people. Then conditions will be set to pursue security engagements. This will be difficult given the Cuban communist regime's tight control of the economy. Even if Cuba quickly removes its economic barriers, Andres Oppenheimer predicts, "Cuba remains one of the most backward countries in Latin America. It will take many years to get its economy back to life."¹⁶ But Oppenheimer also notes that the potential economic gain from US investors isn't as great as people predict.

Cuba's current regime tightly controls its external borders and sovereign territory. Drug trafficking in the Central Caribbean corridor often circumvents Cuba because traffickers do not want to feel the wrath of the Cuban Government which is not

tolerant of illegal trafficking through its national territory. Hence, security engagement should wait until the economic relationship is established and there is a substantial increase in tourism followed by an opening of trade. In keeping with the economic relationship as the first priority, every effort must be made to lift the embargo. This is the only way to build an economic relationship of trust.

The United States Government must work quickly and deliberately to create opportunities as the process will naturally be slow due to political constraints. It will take time to build trust and a working relationship with a government with which the United States has had almost no working relationship with for more than fifty years. Our President has openly stated in his policy change for Cuba on 17 December 2014, "I do not expect the changes I am announcing today to bring about a transformation of Cuban society overnight."¹⁷ Luckily, the American bureaucratic and legislative process is naturally slow and will allow for gradual transformation. However, the President must apply pressure to ensure the necessary legislation is passed to end the embargo, build a new embassy facility, and give the appropriate U.S. agencies the resources necessary to cooperate with the Cuban Government.¹⁸ Cuba will decide how they open the doors economically and commercially. However, by opening these doors, they will eventually become more capitalistic. But to what extent? Are they likely to follow U.S.-style capitalism, or more likely to follow a China-style authoritarian capitalism? If the United States Government is slow to make changes, American businesses stand to lose a competitive edge to countries like China. Granted, Cuba's small economy is not as attractive to U.S. investors, however, the United States could still lose out economically and politically in the Western Hemisphere. This would potentially cause Cuba to move

towards a more authoritarian type of capitalism. To prevent this from happening, the USG needs to end the embargo and quickly facilitate and encourage U.S. investment before countries like China or Brazil have the opportunity to establish an economic foothold.

Washington should seek to delink Cuba from the negative regional actors and spoilers in the Western Hemisphere. This would not only strengthen our relationship with Cuba, but it would further exacerbate the already weakening relationship between Cuba and its historical partners. It would marginalize those countries like Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Bolivia, which have all but broken relations with the United States. Those countries have often used the image and ideals of Fidel Castro to promote their own anti-democratic policies and have tried to use Cuba as an example of a country that can successfully stand up to U.S. "imperialism." Cuba played a tremendous role for the communists during the cold war. Even with the fall of the Soviet Union, communism continued in Cuba. Although their impact and influence dropped significantly as compared to the 1960's, Cuba still played a role in giving up and coming spoilers, such as Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, someone to turn to for moral support and encouragement in their effort to defy United State policy in the region. Stronger United States relations with Cuba will help deflate the Bolivarian movement that has negatively affected Latin America for the last 15 years.

Lastly, the United States should not antagonize the Cuban Government, but rather provide opportunities to make the Cuban Government gain support from its people. Aside from economic and commercial engagement, as U.S. Government agencies look for opportunities for engagement, we must look for the proverbial low

hanging fruit. These are the types of engagements that are non-political and a win for both sides. In fact, even if it is a win for the Cuban Government, and the USG gets little to nothing out of it, engagement for the sake of engagement at first should be acceptable. In recent years, budget cuts and sequestration have stopped many of the non-specific relationship building international engagements which have had little return on U.S. taxpayer investment (i.e. engagement for the sake of engagement). However, if we are trying to build relations with Cuba from nothing, we must first create opportunities to meet in order to get both sides interacting in a positive fashion; but with one caveat. We must analyze the secondary and tertiary impacts of our engagement. We must not execute tomorrow an engagement that we think today is benign only to figure out later on that we actually took two steps backwards because we didn't realize the secondary and tertiary impacts of the engagement.

Evaluation of the Current Cuban Military Engagement Strategy

The current U.S. Military strategy spearheaded by USSOUTHCOM clearly provides a comprehensive approach for security engagement with Cuba (see Appendix I). Notwithstanding the fact that it may outpace the economic engagement plan, it could delink Cuba from its normal military partners of Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Bolivia (who generally are invited but don't participate in the seven engagements previously discussed). But more importantly, the invitation of Cuban military officials to participate in those high-level non-confrontational strategic engagements does not antagonize the Cubans since the themes for those events are noncontroversial. It seems that one of the greatest challenges is the actual delivery of formal invitations and communications required to coordinate participation in such types of events. This fact serves to reinforce the need for the establishment of Defense Attaché offices in both Washington and

Havana. In September 2014, the Department of State sent a diplomatic note to the Cubans offering the opportunity to exchange Defense Attaches. In November, the Cuban Government turned down the offer. More than likely, the Cuban Ministry of the Armed Forces would want to establish a Defense Attaché in Washington, however, the decision resides with the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Relations. Nevertheless, it may only a matter of time until the Cubans agree to exchange Defense Attaches and establish military offices in each capital.

A History of DoD Operations Overseas

Department of Defense (DoD) Operations overseas are almost always conducted out of a U.S. Embassy and are always within the purview of the Chief of Mission/U.S. Ambassador, one exception is a deployment of forces under the direction of a Combatant Commander. DoD operations can vary in size from only a few personnel to upwards of hundreds. DoD personnel overseas can work in one of several different organizations with responsibilities to different US-based Headquarters. Security Cooperation Offices (SCOs) work for the Geographic Combatant Commander and conduct Security Cooperation, to include but not limited to military engagements, manage partner nation training in the United States and coordinate weapons sales, among other duties. The Defense Attaché Offices (DAOs) work for the Defense Intelligence Agency and have the official responsibility for representing the Services, as well as collecting and reporting information. These are the two largest and most prevalent organizations found in a U.S. Embassy. However, other DoD entities that may be found in a U.S. Embassy include:

- Special Operations Command elements (could include any of the following):
 - Special Operations Command Forward (SOCFWD)
 - Special Operations Forces Liaison Element (SOFLE)

- Special Operations Liaison Officer (SOLO)
- Military Information Support Team (MIST)
- Civil Affairs Team (CAT)
- Force Protection Detachment (FPD)
- Tactical Analysis Team (TAT)
- U.S. Coast Guard Liaison Officer (CGLO)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- Naval Medical Research Unit (NAMRU)
- Various Personnel/Student Exchanges
 - Rhode Scholars
 - Olmstead Scholars
 - Personnel Exchange Program (PEP)
 - Schools of other Nations (SoN)

Prior to 2008, Security Cooperation Offices and Defense Attaché Offices each acted as separate military entities on embassy country teams. Each answered to a different U.S.-based headquarters, as well as the Chief of Mission. Synchronization was often times lacking and was dependent on the personalities leading the in country offices which represented the various DoD agencies. In some instances this led to conflicting military advice being offered to the American Ambassador and the partner nations.

In the 2005-2008 time frame, the Department of Defense began to relook this bifurcated structure in an attempt to streamline the DoD's overseas efforts supporting U.S. Embassies. Several different explanations for the 2008 impetus of change exist, and the truth is probably a combination of reasons rather than just one factor. Some claim that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's created one of his famous snowflakes (the nickname for the messages he would pass to subordinates with his guidance) after visiting a Central American country and meeting two USAF Colonels leading separate DoD efforts in the same small country. Another explanation, and the most compelling reason, was the continual complaints lodged by various U.S.

Ambassadors, that they did not have a single advisor and spokesperson for DoD. Regardless, it was clear to everyone who worked with DoD in an Embassy environment, that DoD operations in U.S. Embassies were not streamlined, often duplicated, and sometimes failed to provide synchronized support and advice to our Partner Nations and/or the Country Team. Furthermore, synchronization, unity of effort, and subsequent successful mission accomplishment all too often depended on the relationships between senior DoD officials assigned in country and how well they worked together, not U.S. interests.

In 2008, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Eric S. Edelman, and the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence, James R. Clapper, signed Department of Defense Instruction Number C-5105.81 entitled, "Implementing Instructions for DoD Operations at U.S. Embassies."¹⁹ This new policy impacted all DoD agencies operating overseas with the exception of the Marine Security Guard Detachment and U.S. Navy Construction Detachments. Much like what the 1986 Goldwaters-Nichols Act did for the Defense Department in terms of making DoD more Joint, DoD instruction C-5105.81 had a positive impact on creating efficiencies of DoD's operations in overseas embassies with the establishment of the Senior Defense Official/Defense Attaché (SDO/DATT) position. It granted the SDO/DATT the authority to merge operations where/when they could legally be streamlined based on regulations and funding sources. This not only made DoD more synchronized and efficient, but also improved the Department's contributions within the Interagency.

In 2013, Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter signed Department of Defense Directive Number 5205.75 entitled, "DoD Operations at U.S. Embassies." This provided

amplifying instructions and directed SDO/DATT's to consolidate common functions to the maximum extent possible to gain efficiencies, "but only if the DAO's and SCO's distinct missions, funding streams, and information sharing environments can be preserved."²⁰ Unfortunately, there are very few areas where SDO's can consolidate common functions that do not impact funding streams or missions. Unit morale funds, recreational book program, hail and farewells, and other non-mission specific or non-appropriated funding programs were quickly consolidated. However, these consolidations represent just a fraction of the overall funds and work load expended by the organizations.

This guidance needs to be further reviewed to take a great concept to the next level, much like Goldwaters-Nichols did for the joint community in 1986. Goldwaters-Nichols, a great first step in making DoD more joint, is currently being reviewed by DoD and Congress for potential modifications for improvement. Likewise, the DoD policy for overseas operations should be updated in order to realize additional improvements that need to be made to further unify DoD efforts overseas. The next DoD Instruction for Operations at U.S. Embassies should focus on funding authorities, training, and mission integration.

Funding

DoD operations at U.S. Embassies still lack the level of efficiency that should be realized, especially given contemporary fiscal constraints. In countries with both DAOs and SAOs, a duplication of resources and expenditures always exists, usually in the support/logistics arena. Both organizations are funded by separate higher headquarters, the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Combatant Commands, respectively, due to Congressional appropriations. DIA is funded with Intelligence funds while the COCOMs

are funded with Security Assistance and Operations & Maintenance funds. These different Congressional funding streams are the main problem preventing a full consolidation of DoD entities operating in an Embassy. There is also a duplication of resources being utilized, since each organization has to fund their own vehicles, equipment, office space, and other routine operations and maintenance costs. But an even bigger waste is the duplication of personnel to do the same exact administrative and logistical type jobs, typically one to three assigned to the DAO and another one to three assigned to the SCO. That's four to six personnel to do jobs separately, abiding by different regulations and SOPs, that two to four personnel could do if the organizations were combined. It is not uncommon to find a Sergeant First Class in a DAO managing five vehicles while a Master Sergeant in an SCO is managing seven vehicles. Obviously these NCO's have other responsibilities, but clearly it would be more efficient for one NCO to manage an entire DoD fleet in the same foreign country. This is just one of several examples of duplication in the logistics and support of DoD entities in Embassies. As long as the funding authorities for SCO and DAOs remain different, it will be difficult to further merge and consolidate efforts. The Office of the Secretary of Defense should work with Congress to merge appropriations to allow for one DoD entity to administer funding of overseas programs. Such an effort would result in the need for fewer vehicles, equipment, office space, and associated funding and personnel to manage those programs.

Training

Training for personnel serving in an overseas assignment varies greatly depending on the billet and owning organization. Personnel assigned to a Defense Attaché Office receive (aside from the job specific training) a higher level of training in

the target language, anti-terrorism, counter-intelligence, overseas driving, personal defensive measure, fiscal law, and ethics. Usually, dependents of DoD members being assigned to DAO's go thru the exact same training as the military member. Incoming personnel assigned to Security Cooperation Offices, Coast Guard Liaisons, member of the Tactical Analysis Teams, and others may receive some of this training. However, all too often it depends on funding availability and the proactive nature of the individuals assigned. Dependents for officials assigned to security cooperation billets are rarely provided the opportunity to attend training. This makes little sense since everyone is subject to the same types of targeting and force protection threats. A disparity in pre-deployment training creates an environment of haves and have-nots within DoD, which leads to morale issues not only with DoD members but among DoD dependents as well.

Mission Linkages

Security Cooperation Offices and Defense Attaché Offices work for different higher headquarters and execute very different missions. Security Cooperation Offices focus on partnering with foreign country's security forces in order to increase their capabilities and capacities in the interest of U.S. national security objectives. Whereas the Defense Attaché Office members officially represent the Secretary of Defense and Services and collect and report for the Intelligence Community. If DoD has personnel assigned to a country, most likely they will start with a DAO and a Defense Attaché. If partner nations receive substantial funds thru the Foreign Assistance Act or have substantial funding of their own to buy U.S. military equipment, then an SCO may be present as well. If the security cooperation program is not sufficiently large, the DAO may handle those responsibilities.

Although the missions are different, both offices require interaction with the partner nation military and it is not uncommon for the Security Cooperation Office to be given information by the partner nation military that is of interest to the DAO. Likewise, it is not uncommon for the DAO to discover a shortcoming in our partner nation's armed forces which the SCO needs to know in order to create a cooperative program to fix the shortcoming. Given the fact that the SCO has funding to support the partner nation, its access to the partner nation military senior leadership may be greater than it is for the DAO, which can sometimes be viewed by the partner nation as an adversarial intelligence collection organization. Clearly, the access of the Security Cooperation Office can be leveraged by the Defense Attaché Office to meet their specific mission requirements. Likewise, the SCO can leverage the DAO's interaction with the partner nation to improve its situational awareness with respect to the effectiveness of the security cooperation programs.

Recommendations

Recommend U.S. Strategic Goals & the U.S. Way Ahead with Cuba

Security and prosperity, both primary strategic goals of Liberalism, benefit Cuba as well as the United States. Given Cuba's close proximity, its security benefits not only the Cuban people, but could enhance security for the United States. Clearly if a country that is only ninety miles from the United States fosters or creates an environment friendly to adversaries of the United States, it would become harder for Washington to defend against those threats. The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 presents a historic example. The current migrant and drug trafficking challenges in the Mona Pass between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico (only 32 nautical miles apart) provide a contemporary example of how a close neighbor's insecurity negatively

impacts American security.²¹ Clearly the U.S. embargo has hurt Cuba more than the United States. Economically speaking, after their Marxist economic policies, the U.S. embargo is probably the greatest factor in preventing Cuba from increased prosperity. However, an economically prosperous Cuba does not reduce opportunities for the United States. Free trade agreements with Chile, Colombia, and Central America & the Dominican Republic have proven that United States and Latin American countries' prosperity is not mutually exclusive.

Recommended Changes for DoD Organizations Overseas

Funding and training for DAO's and SCO's should be analyzed to determine potential cost savings by consolidating efforts under just one DoD organization. The Pentagon should also ensure all DoD members are equally prepared for their overseas mission. The current discrepancies in funding and training, especially for SAOs and DAOs, are not only creating redundancies and inefficiencies, they are also create a cultural divide within the organizations operating abroad. DoD efforts in some countries have made tremendous leaps in consolidating their efforts and unifying the various DoD sub-organizations based on the Senior Defense Official's "coordinating authority." However, much of that success was due to the personal initiative and leadership of a handful of Senior Defense Officials. DoD offices in other countries are still struggling to unify their efforts. The Pentagon should implement the creation of a single DoD organization within all U.S. embassies. This would ensure success is not dependent on personalities and would ensure success is not left up to chance. The challenge will be for the Defense Department to merge the funding streams to support one DoD organization in an Embassy, it could be called "Team DoD." The pending establishment of a DoD enterprise in Havana provides the perfect opportunity to utilize a new model,

Team DoD, to consolidate several separate organizations under the SDO and expand his coordinating authority. The Pentagon can carefully build just one organization from scratch, with representatives from the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Combatant Command, and the various other Defense agencies as required. If the Pentagon breaks the current paradigm and builds just one organization, Team DoD, the current model for command structure could be retained. The Senior Defense Official would serve as the commander. The DAO element would serve as the intelligence entity. The SCO would become the operations and planning element. Support elements from both the DAO and SCO could be combined to form a consolidated personnel and logistics entity. Likewise, a budget section could be comprised from existing personnel assigned to the DAO and SCO for budgeting purposes. The personnel, logistics, and budget entities would gain efficiencies which would allow them to provide support to other entities that currently don't have their own organic support in country such as the Coast Guard Liaison, Tactical Analysis Team, or Special Forces Liaisons.

Given the slow pace of normalization of relations with Cuba, the DoD effort will build slowly. First with accrediting an SDO/DATT and an operations staff member. Next, the mission could add additional personnel as the mutual desire to increase engagement activities increases. Based on priorities, a Navy officer and then Army officer would probably be added to the team. Each individual selected to serve in Team DoD-Havana should be sent thru both attaché and security cooperation officer training. This will ensure each individually is fully prepared and cross trained to perform both attaché and security cooperation responsibilities.

Conclusion

Current Defense Department operations in overseas U.S. Embassies can be inefficient, costly, unsynchronized, duplicative, and confusing to the Interagency and our partner nation counterparts. DoD has attempted to rectify these problems with the issuance of DoD Instructions in 2008 and 2013. These instructions helped synchronize efforts and reduced confusion for the Ambassador, Interagency, and partner nations. But more could be done. This guidance has not created efficiencies and reduced costs and duplication of efforts. The current DoD structures in U.S. Embassies are based on a Senior Defense Official with two principal organizations (SCO and DAO) under his authority along with several other entities operating with a loose affiliation. The best way to achieve efficiency and reduce costs would be to create one DoD organization from the various existing agencies. In many cases, this would allow for a combination of functions leading to a reduction of personnel. However, this could be difficult to achieve in an embassy with existing DoD organizations. The best opportunity for success would be to build an experimental Team DoD from scratch in a country that doesn't currently have any Defense activities.

The normalizing of relations with Cuba presents an opportunity for DoD to try something new and build a Team DoD in country from scratch. Given the deliberate slow pace of increasing relations, the environment is ideal to carefully build a Team DoD, which would begin with reduced responsibilities. USSOUTHCOM's initial engagement plan is to slowly build contacts and trust with a country with which there has been no relations for over fifty years. A slow methodical creation of Team DoD will ensure that U.S. Defense efforts neither overwhelm the US Embassy or our new Cuban partners. Areas of mutual interest such as humanitarian assistance and countering illicit

trafficking provide an opportunity for the U.S. military to help build partner nation capacity for the Cuban Government.

Creating Team DoD-Havana as one unified DoD organization will help realize the potential cooperation with Cuba in the most efficient and cost effective manner possible. Not only will it help ensure a stable and secure Cuba that can exercise territorial control and support the regional counter-trafficking campaign, but it will also provide a model that could potentially transform the way DoD conducts day-day business overseas in U.S. Embassies.

APPENDIX I

DoD's limited Military Engagement Strategy with Cuba

Shortly after the President announced the opening of relations with Cuba in December 2014, the United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), in

coordination with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, developed the following initial fifteen month plan in an attempt to spark mil-mil engagement with the Cuban Military:

1. Cuban Military Participation in USNS Comfort Visit to Haiti

U.S. Navy physicians partnered with a delegation of Cuban doctors to visit both Cuban and U.S.-funded clinics in Haiti during the September 2015 deployment of the U.S. Navy's hospital ship COMFORT to Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The collaboration focused on "sharing best practices in areas of pediatrics, general medicine, optometry, ophthalmology, and general surgery."²² This initial event was extremely positive and received tremendous coverage by both the Cuban and international press.²³ A medical event of this nature, the proverbial "low hanging fruit," proved to be the perfect first engagement as it leverages Cuba's ability to export medical capability, which has historically been one of its national core competencies.

2. Cuban Military Invitation to Participate in Security Seminars Held in Washington

The Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies extended an invitation to the Cuban embassy to participate in several of its Security Defense Seminars in September, October, and November of 2015 held at the National Defense University on Ft. McNair. The Cubans did not respond to the invitation.²⁴ "We don't know if they didn't participate for lack of ability (there are currently no Cuban military personnel assigned to the Cuban Embassy in D.C.) or a general lack of desire by the Cuban Embassy and

their government,” stated Mark Wilkins, the Director for the Center of Hemispheric Defense Studies.²⁵

3. Cuban Military Participation in USSOUTHCOM's Caribbean Security Conference

The Cuban Military was invited to participate in the annual Caribbean Nations Security Conference (CANSEC) from 27-30 January 2016 held in Kingston, Jamaica. This conference is co-hosted by both USSOUTHCOM and the Jamaican Minister of Defense. The National Security Council approved the decision to invite Cuba for the first time to CANSEC, however, the Helms-Burton law prohibits the expenditure of U.S. tax dollars for Cuba so the Cuban military will have to self-fund their participation. This regional conference brings the senior defense leaders from the Caribbean together to discuss cooperative efforts on countering narco-terrorism, illicit smuggling, and response to natural disasters and humanitarian relief.²⁶ On 18 January, 2016, the Cuban Embassy in Kingston sent a diplomatic note to the Jamaican government stating that it accepted the invitation and would send Gustavo Machin Gomez, former head of the Cuban CIA equivalent, as the head of delegation. The Cuban Ambassador to Jamaica, Bernardo Guanche Hernandez; Colonel Victor Lopez Bravo of the Cuban Coast Guard; and Mr. Ricardo Tur Novo, a counselor for the Embassy will also be in attendance.²⁷

4. Cuban Military Senior Leader Visit to Joint Interagency Task Force-South

The United States Southern Command will leverage the Cuban participation in CANSEC 2016 to offer an invitation to visit the Joint Interagency Task Force South in Key West, FL. JIATF-South is a subordinate Joint Command under USSOUTHCOM responsible for the detection and monitoring of illicit trafficking in the southern maritime approaches to the United States. Truth be known, Cuba has been quietly cooperating

with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) for years by providing information on illegal maritime departures headed for the United States. USCG District Seven, based in Miami, claims that has for years received information directly from Cuban Government on illicit maritime departures. The USCG responds and more often than not interdicts the U.S.-bound vessels. Utilizing its Coast Guard Liaison Officer in Havana, the USCG repatriates the Cuban citizens through a long-standing operating procedure between the USCG and the Cuban Government. This unpublicized routine cooperation is proof positive that the Cuban government will cooperate with the United States in areas of mutual interest.

5. Cuban Military Invitation to Participate in USSOUTHCOM Exercises

The Cuban Military may be invited by USSOUTHCOM to observe the annual Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HA/DR) exercise ALLIED FORCES-HUMANITARIAN (FA-HUM) as well as the annual naval exercise TRADEWINDS 2016 to be held in Honduras and Grenada, respectively, in 2016. These exercises help unite regional countries by training and promoting common doctrine which will allow for easy integration during potential future real-world operations. Following a proven model used to bring other countries into the USSOUTHCOM exercise fold, Cuba will most likely be invited to participate in an observer status the first year and then offered the chance to send a few actual participants in subsequent years with the goal of having a platoon size and/or vessel participate in the out years.

6. Cuban Military Invitation - 2016 Conference of Defense Ministerial Americas

Lacking the necessary declaration to defend democracy, Cuba has not been a member of the Conference of Defense Ministerial of the Americas (CDMA). However, an invitation could be extended to Cuba to attend the 2016 Conference of the Defense

Ministerial of the Americas in Trinidad/Tobago if such a public declaration was made. This would be a tremendous opportunity for the Cuban military as the U.S. Secretary of Defense attends and a potential for a bi-lateral meeting between the U.S. Secretary of Defense and the Cuban delegation would most likely occur.

Endnotes

¹ Barack Obama, "Final State of the Union Address," public speech, U.S. Capital, Washington, DC, January 12, 2016.

² Barack Obama, "Cuba Policy Change," press statement, White House, Washington, DC, October 29, 2015.

³ Ben Fox, "Cuba to Attend Security Conference with U.S. for First Time," *Military Times Online*, January 13, 2016, <http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2016/01/12/cuba-attend-security-conference-us-first-time/78688478/> (accessed June 8, 2016).

⁴ U.S. Department of Defense, *Implementing Instructions for DoD Operations at U.S. Embassies*, Department of Defense Instruction C-5105.81 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, November 6, 2008), 3.

⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, *DoD Operations at U.S. Embassies*, Department of Defense Directive C-5205.75 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, December 4, 2013), 1.

⁶ Jaime Suchlicki, *Cuba: From Columbus to Castro and Beyond* (Dulles, VA: Brassey, 2002), 23.

⁷ Arthur Schlesinger, "The American Empire? Not so Fast," *World Policy Journal*, 2008, 14.

⁸ James R. Ferguson, *Cuba: Revolution, Resistance and Globalization* (Auburn, AL: International Relations, 2006), 15.

⁹ Richard Gott, *Cuba – A New History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 42.

¹⁰ Nate Repko, "Readings with Repko," May 23, 1903. <https://sites.google.com/a/ncps-k12.org/amhnews-d-repko-2011/home> (accessed October 30, 2015).

¹¹ Andres Oppenheimer, *Castro's Final Hour* (New York: Simon & Schuster), 71.

¹² Suchlicki, *Cuba: From Columbus to Castro*, 203.

¹³ Robert Bunker, Counter-Terrorism instructor-FBI Academy, Quantico, VA., interview by author, October 23, 2015.

¹⁴ John Heaton, Office of the Secretary of Defense (Policy) - Western Hemisphere Affairs, Washington, DC, interview by author, December 16, 2015.

¹⁵ Bunker, interview by author, October 23, 2015.

¹⁶ Andres Oppenheimer, "Cuba: Very Big Fuss Over Very Small Economy," *Miami Herald*, May 30, 2015.

¹⁷ Obama, "Cuba Policy Change."

¹⁸ Both DoD and DoS sources have stated to the author on more than one occasion that one the biggest obstacles to establishing a DoD office in Havana as part of the newly opened embassy is the lack of available office space.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of Defense, *Implementing Instructions for DoD Operations at US Embassies*.

²⁰ U.S. Department of Defense, *DoD Operations at U.S. Embassies*, 2.

²¹ Asa A. Clark, Thomas F. Lynch, and Rick Waddell, *Understanding International Relations* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1993), 400.

²² Rebecca Bill Chavez and GEN John F. Kelly, "Cuban, US Ties From Aboard US Military Hospital Ship," *Defense One*, November 13, 2015, 1.

²³ Heaton, interview by author, December 16, 2015.

²⁴ Meghan Delaney, Intelligence Analyst-US State Department, Washington, DC, interview by author, December 16, 2015.

²⁵ Mark Wilkins, Director, Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, Washington, DC, personal conversation with author, January 18, 2016.

²⁶ Fox, "Cuba to Attend Security Conference with U.S. for First Time."

²⁷ Cuban Embassy in Jamaica, "Diplomatic Note No 08/2016."