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PANEL TWO – AFTER FIDEL: POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE

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PANEL TWO – AFTER FIDEL: POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE

MS. HUDDLESTON: As Peter said or Jurgen said in our last panel, people keep talking about whether we're after Fidel or not. And we're going to have to wait another month or so to find out whether we're after Fidel or not.

That's when the National Assembly will meet, and they will select who will be the President of the Council of States and the Council of Ministers. We'll have to take a poll here and see how many people think it'll still be Fidel.

I've always said that I thought it would be very, very difficult to still have Fidel around, and (inaudible) in the position of President of Cuba, but we will see. No one thought that we would have an 18-month succession that perhaps is going to go on for yet another 18 months.

Again, I want to welcome everybody. I'm so delighted that we have such a great turnout, and obviously, it's a compliment to this really outstanding, truly really outstanding panels, and the people who have agreed to join us today.

This panel, as you see, is panel two, After Fidel: Political and Social Change, and really no one is better to talk about this than the panelists that are here with me this morning.

I think -- I'll do what I -- I'll take my cue from Peter, and I'll introduce all the panelists. And first of all, I'm going to introduce the Assistant Provost at the University of Miami, Andy Gomez, because it seems as if we couldn't get his bio into the list of bios.

But he is -- he needs no introduction, but it would have been nice to have him in the list of people who were there. He's very well known for his work with the Center for Cuba and Cuban American Studies. And he is a Senior Fellow with them, and he has done a lot of interesting work on social change in

Cuba.

We also have with us Professor Marifeli Pérez-Stable. And I know Marifeli best for her recent book that she edited and wrote and looking forward. And I particularly liked it because it was optimistic in looking forward on Cuba. But really it is one of the best texts that you can read.

Marifeli is a Vice President of Inter-American Dialogue and also a professor at Florid International University.

Phil Peters is an old State Department colleague. But I notice he doesn't mention that too often. Phil and I worked together when I used to work on the Cuba desk, and he was in charge of public diplomacy for the Latin American Bureau.

He is now a Vice President with the Lexington Institute, and I'm sure he will mention to you his blog, which is a great blog and very interesting on keeping you up to date in Cuba. And he also is a consultant with the Cuban Working Group, which is a group of Representatives in the House of Representatives who would like to see a change in policy on Cuba.

And Raj Desai is a colleague with me at Brookings, a Visiting Fellow at Brookings, and we're delighted to take advantage of his expertise on other issues as well as Cuba to feed in to the panel, and that's what we've been trying to do today is to pull a little bit of outside expertise on other areas as well.

And so with that, I'm going to ask Marifeli to get us started. Thank you very much.

DR. PÉREZ–STABLE: Thanks a lot, Vicky. You know, Cuba is the largest of the Caribbean islands, which it doesn't really mean very much, and it's not really that important. But here you all are, and here we are, because for some reason or another whenever the topic is Cuba, people show up and not just Cubans or Cuban-Americans.

The succession has, in fact, started, but it isn't by any means completed. And I -- that's why I think that a critical moment for that succession will be actually -- it's supposed to be two weeks from now, February 24th, when the new National Assembly of Popular Power is constituted, and they are empowered by the Cuban Constitution to name the President of -- to elect the President of the Council of State.

The Cuban Constitution is weak among the old communist constitutions in that it says that the President of the Council of State is also the President of the Council of Ministers. More often than not, but almost all the time, in the old Soviet world, these -- because they were largely ceremonial posts, they were held by other (inaudible) the Secretary-General of the Communist Party.

So we will know in two weeks, as Vicky pointed out, whether, in fact, the interim nature of the succession is symbolically at least sealed with the name of perhaps one person who both charges that is not Fidel or a slight amendment to the Constitution, which the Assembly is also empowered to do by the Constitution, to say that you can separate the two charges, and then name two different people.

I thought it was given that Cuba doesn't have a free press, I thought it was unusual that on January 20th, when the National Assembly elections were held, there were three videos show of people -- I mean, leaders voting -- Raúl Castro, Carlos (inaudible), and the (inaudible). They mentioned a whole bunch of other people who were voting, but those three had videos, and I watched them in the course of -- that Sunday I watched them -- Raúl 's I actually watched three times to see if I could figure out something, but I couldn't.

So all right. The -- so that -- I think that that's an important marker, whether, in fact, that Fidel -- Fidel may be elected President of the Council of

State, and he may decline. (Inaudible) suggested that a few days ago.

But the point is that that's an important marker. It is an important marker for the Cuban people as symbolic if not in substance at least in symbol break with Fidel in that sense.

The economy is the immediate issue that the successors need to deal with. The macro economy has been improving since 2004, but not breakfast, lunch, and dinner. That is, that the achievements of the revolution are -- health, education, sports, whatever you want to name as the third -- the failures are in breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

And so in that sense, although in a completely different context, Cuba is facing -- the leadership of Cuba is facing a situation not unlike many countries in Latin America where the macroeconomic fundamentals are fine, but the trickling down to ordinary people is not as established.

There has been an ongoing sort of debate since July of 2006. Have there been any changes in Cuba?

And usually when you pose a question like that, you get a yes or a no, when, in fact, it's yes and no.

I myself have been -- I mean, I tend more towards the yes, although not spectacular changes. But the slowness of the pace of change in Cuba has o do with the fact that Fidel Castro has been very much a personalist leader over the many decades that Cuban studies have -- and I've been in that field for a while -- how important is Fidel? How important are institutions?

And, in fact, the answer is that Fidel has been a lot more important than we in some ways have understood.

The slowness of the pace has to do with the fact that the networks of decision making, which may or may not have coincided with institutions that guided Fidel, are now -- have been in the process of being dismantled. And Raúl

, who is, because he's not charismatic, thank God, Raúl has to vitalize -- I'm not sure whether I want to say revitalize -- vitalize the institutions such as they are in Cuba and that takes time, especially, I mean, we're going to have change of Administration. No matter the party, it's going to be a new President, and there's going to be, you know, the first few months maybe year of the new Administration, people are going to be in a state of flux. Imagine after 47 years of Castro in power in Cuba.

So the slowness of the pace I identify in that context, in the context of Fidel (inaudible) and Raúl who is more institutionally based in the context of Cuba, which, of course, does not mean the give and take of democracy. It means another give and take.

Let me say a few words about society, Cuban society. Everything that I have said so far refers to the government, to the political elite of Cuba in one way or another.

And I'll just mention some of the sectors of Cuban society. The new class of "entrepreneurs," many of them former military or intelligence officials, people who are working in the mixed sector of the economy. Would they be -- at a moment of economic opening, would they be more likely to support an economic opening or actually be afraid of the competition that a more open economic restructuring would represent?

I don't know the answer to that, but that new class could go either way in that sense.

The intellectuals. Last year, '07, started with a great debate among intellectuals because some of the more sinister characters of the basically neo-Stalinist cultural policy of the 1970s were resurrected and there was a debate within the revolutions, with or without quotes.

And that is better than had been the case until 2006. At some

point, the envelope has to be pushed beyond what the revolution means because who defines what the revolution means? Castro, Fidel, has been defining it, but without him how are those margins defined?

The debate and the more open debate within those parameters is a positive change.

The youth of the country -- you know, in 1990 that means that kids who are going to be turning today, I mean, today, this year, will not have known the old Cuba allied to the Soviet Union.

The youth is disaffected, and I'll only cite references to blogs written by Cubans but in foreign blogs -- and there are no -- well, there a few underground Cuban blogs, but the are -- they were written by Cubans about the discussions that were held between September and November of '07 and in almost every one of them, the bloggers, who can't publish in Cuba, but publish abroad, the bloggers say that -- the youth are disaffected. We have to win them back for the revolution.

Quickly, because I see Vicky getting ready to pass me a little note, the opposition. It is true that the opposition in Cuba is fractioned; that it's infiltrated by state security agents; that is small, although it is for the first time since the '90s, it exists throughout the island, albeit in small numbers.

What I want to say about the opposition is not to put a date on when or if there will be a movement in Cuba akin to Solidarity in Poland, but to say something that I think is -- had said about Eastern Europe, the old Eastern Europe, the opposition then was also, except for Poland, small, unknown, and beleaguered.

But the ideas that they defended turned out to be majority ideas after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

So I think that that's important to keep in mind.

Ordinary Cubans I just want to mention that the Gallup Organization, which supposedly conducted another, a second round of polls this January, but I haven't been able to confirm that, but in September of 2006, yes, they went to Cuba and they conducted a poll with the same questionnaire that they used for their Gallup World Poll that polled 117 countries -- that polled in 117 countries.

And those polls, unsurprisingly, show that ordinary Cubans I should say of Havaneros and Santiagedos -- they were only able to poll in Havana and in Santiago -- they are satisfied or more or less satisfied with health, education, et cetera. But what is striking is that there, except for those education and health care, Cubans show markedly -- Havanero and Santiagedos -- show markedly lower sense of personal freedom and of well being than the overall average for Latin America, the most significant being that whereas more than 80 percent of Latin Americans say that they have enough freedom to decide what to do with their lives, 62 percent of Cubans say that they don't have enough freedom to decide what to do with their lives. That's a problem not only for Cubans, but it's a problem for the leadership. What kind of platform is this leadership going to put forward to reach Cubans who aren't thinking so much about history, but about breakfast, lunch, and dinner and their professional development?

I'll end with a question, two questions actually. The current leaders of Cuba say that they will be in power forever. If they really do believe that, they have another coming to them. But the point is do they or some of them, many of them, in the privacy of their thoughts think of themselves as going into the opposition.

And then the other side of that question is those of us who oppose the Cuban Government here and there, especially, do we consider that most of those people in the government today will have rights as an opposition to another

type of government. I think that in thinking about the political problem of Cuba, the political issues in Cuba that way I think because I'm loading the deck of cards because I think that negotiations and dialogue of the Cuban government within itself and with the Cuban people are a prerequisite for a Cuba that is at peace.

MS. HUDDLESTON: Marifeli, thank you very much for those insights. I think we'll go next to Andy Gomez:

DR. GOMEZ: I'm delighted to be here with you. Part of my job as the University of Miami's Assistant Provost is to try to measure the education of our students, and one of the things that the students keep telling us that we don't need to have technology in the classroom, so I guess I have to be an example, and, therefore, I'll try to be a little bit different.

Someone asked of the earlier panel that someone wanted to know whether the panel had been in Cuba or not. Yes, I've been in Cuba. No, I am not allowed to go back to Cuba, unfortunately. I do stay in touch with many of the groups in Cuba and individuals, particularly Cuba's youth.

And I have traveled extensively through East and Central Europe.

Do we really know what Cubans want? Do we really know what Cubans want? And rather to tell you and lecture to you what I think should happen, I'm going to invite you to think with me outside the box, because I don't think this is only applicable to Cuba, but as you can see this is applicable to an particular country or governments that are going through change.

Carlos Pascual asked if change comes from within, how is that going to happen. Who are these people? And what is it that they want?

Well, let's look at the Cuban population today? Roughly about 11.4; eight million born after 1959. Eight million have not seen anything else.

More importantly, and Marifeli referred to this very briefly, 2.2 million born after 1992, the fall of the Soviet Union. I dare to say this is

particularly the group has very little, very little interest on what Fidel Castro is going to die or not and less in terms of what Raúl is going to do to a great extent in terms of political reforms, because I do think most of the time we spent a great deal of time talking about political and economic change without taking into consideration what the human needs are and how can we transform the psychological behavior of different groups.

The other point, which I think is interesting and Jaime Suchlicki mentioned earlier, 62 percent of the Cuban population today is Afro-Cuban. Interesting, in Cuban-American exiles, 86 percent is Caucasian. So in terms of remittances and so forth or whatever that, one is not going to the other.

Another very interesting fact that I think I'd like to share with you in terms of the Cuban-American community is what I think the Cuban-American community primarily is concentrated in South Florida. Fifty-one percent of those (inaudible) in the South Florida have arrived after 1980, the majority. Fifty-one percent have arrived after 1980.

Those that have arrived since 1994 I dare to say have more psychological ties to the island, because they tend to have relatives, friends, and whatever not.

So, if that's the case, I think the greatest challenge, particularly for the 2.2 million Cubans that Raúl Castro is going to have or whoever is going be part of that is meeting the basic needs of the Cuban population. They don't care about what political reform, I don't think, to some extent or they care less -- but meeting the basic needs -- public safety was a (inaudible) in (inaudible), so they want public safety, more food, better housing, jobs training, education, and we have to recognize that if there is a success in the Cuban Revolution it's the high level of education among this population, a very high level of education.

Unfortunately, that 2.2 million Cubans see very little hope for the

future. And in the last three years, 30 percent of the enrollment in higher education at the universities across the island has declined.

And, of course, health care. Health care that was promised by the Revolution and today is best the health care offered by the Cuban Government is available to those that can pay.

Let's move on. So, what is the psychological impact of living in a totalitarian state, and I'll just mention a few for us to think about and for you to take with you.

Distrust of the state and the authorities. So, if you think once change began, and I'm being very careful and I'm using the word change because I think its' a little bit premature to start talking about democratic change, as you will see. But I'm talking about change. Once there is change, and institutions begin to play a significant role, how is that population going to turn to those institutions for assistance if they have been living in a system that they no longer trust?

The prison mentality and this applies to both inside the government and in society to great extent, where the individualistic importance of one's self has been diminished and it is the state control and mentality that's what's important.

Lack of initiative and abdication of personal responsibility, particularly to the state, a mistrust of others, and then when my colleague Damian Fernandez at FIU calls lo informal, the informality. And, by the way, that applies not only in Cuba, but that also applies in South Florida. Informality, whereas, we try to find the best way to get to our own personal needs, if you will.

Let us move on. Change process. If there is a change, I dare to say that that change can take a very long time. In order to plan for the future, you have to look at the past, and in Cuba in 1958, I dare to say that most of civil

society did not have the solid foundations in order to move democracy forward; and, therefore, the Cuban Revolution.

But to go from totalitarian control to the preservation of the maintenance of a democratic system could take an entire generation. It could take an entire generation.

And the idea that we need to think about is particularly Cuban-Americans in South Florida how tolerant are we going to be and what role we are going to play.

On the right, the ideological transfers of values and attitude. What we learned from East and Central Europe that as the system changed, the older you were -- and I can tell you just from my own personal experience; I don't know about you guys the older I get, the less change I want not only at work, but in my household.

The older generation had become nostalgic for the ways things were, not that they were better, but they knew how to behave within the box, where the younger generation wanted change and wants change faster than the current and new system can provide them. How much is Raúl Castro or whoever going to be able to meet the needs particularly of Cuba's youth?

If this is the case, then what's the equation for change? People's expectations (inaudible) limited to the reform equals regime survival? Possibly. Possibly.

Or if people's expectations and the continuity of regime practice? Maybe not. And this I think what we need to think about.

Or are we seeing -- and we continue to see -- is this. How much is that 2.2 million Cubans going to allow or be patient to Raúl or to whomever to bring change to meet their basic needs before beginning to migrate at greater numbers?

And we're seeing this already. We're seeing this already. Just alone the 9012 figures from Homeland Security. In the last three years, 27,393 Cubans have come ashore to the United States through Mexico alone. The smuggling operations have intensified. Ten thousand dollars on the average per person. The operation throughout all of Central America is tremendous, tremendous.

One issue that I need to make you aware of in our own research, the majority up to now, and I'm generalizing, but the majority up to now that are leaving the island are those first mostly of Caucasian; second, those that have friends and relatives in South Florida or other parts of the United States.

Today, the level of coordination between the federal government, the State of Florida, and the local agencies is better than ever. As you see in this particular map, if there is a migration, what the Coast Guard calls the "push or pull" factor, if there is a large migration, we are prepared to put a 33-ship armada in the Gulf Straits with the idea of intercepting about 95 to 100 percent of boats that come north.

So we pick them up. We take them back to Havana, which, by the way, is one of the few ports which all of these ships can actually go in because of the shallow waters; assume that these Cubans are going to get off the boat -- assume that these Cubans are going to get off the boat.

We also need to take into consideration, as someone mentioned today, the Cuban-American community in South Florida has been going through our own transformation, and a very healthy transformation.

For the first time in a presidential election -- for the first time, there was no clear Republican candidate in South Florida's Cuban-American community. And I dare to say we actually had Cuban-Americans line up on the other side, on the Democratic side. This is all, in my opinion, a way of how we

have begun to assimilate into the American society, not denying the fact that there can be reconciliation, but the fact is that two Cuban-American professors, one from the University of Texas and California a year and a half ago that (inaudible) the Cuban-American community. And when they were asked what are your top five priorities when you think of the presidential election in 2008. First, the Iraq War. Second, the economy. Third, health. Fourth, education; and fifth, Cuba.

We remain very passionate about Cuba, and we will continue to, but we also recognize the fact that South Florida could not assume or take given the current infrastructure another Mariel, which was about 125,000 or half a million Cubans coming into the United States, particularly when the issue, as someone mentioned, of illegal immigration to the United States will continue to be pressing the United States Congress.

So if this is the case, what are some of the things that we need to think about?

Systems in transition are typically characterized by what? The old and the new structure values and attitudes. The old and the new.

Since change was introduced in the Czech Republic and Hungary, their parliaments and the number of seats from the Communist Party has increased, particularly from that older generation. It's that they have not embraced change.

Why? Because most of the change has been basically being the political system, and they have not seen them personally.

Second, the emergence of the new state has few common elements with the old older. The greater the disparity I dare to say between the old and the new, the more difficult the transitions will be for its citizens, the more difficult the transition will be for its citizens.

And last, as the old state begins to transform, the human needs of its citizens, such as the basic needs that I talked about, many of these could remain unmet depending on what generation you actually represent -- 2.2 million Cubans waiting and hoping for things to change as quickly as possible.

Just alone the infrastructure of Cuba has crumbled tremendously. The water supply in Cuba, the water system in greater Havana was built in 1916. It has not been repaired since. Cuba loses 50 percent of the water to leaks. Only Haiti, only Haiti in the Western Hemisphere, its social classes are under worse impoverished conditions than those of Cuba.

And last, and I think this one is very important, the dissident and opposition motives no matter how good they are, for pursuing change it may be other than creating a democratic state. It's could very well lead to a democratic state, but the initial stages might not look like it.

For instance, I'll conclude. One of the times I was in Cuba, I had a meeting with a large group of students at the University of Havana. And I asked them if you had a chance to vote tomorrow, what kind of government would you pick. And they thought about it and we argued about -- an advanced socialist state. And I said explain that to me. They really had no idea. What they wanted was change, change for the betterment in their own personal needs and satisfactions. Thank you.

(Applause)

MS. HUDDLESTON: Thanks, Andy, for getting us up off our chairs.

MS. HUDDLESTON: Okay. I just wanted to mention that it seemed to me that Marifeli was pointing us in a certain direction that certain things are happening. And then what Andy did was sort of say okay this is the steam you can put them into. So perhaps when we get to the end of this panel, we can find out how close Cuba is dipping into that steam or not. Phil?

MR. PETERS: Well, thank you, Vicky, for having me. I hope I can (inaudible) in that direction.

It's nice to be with you all. It's a pleasant surprise to see --

MR. PETERS: Okay. It seems that the Board of Directors of the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy is here on the forum --

SPEAKER: Yes, it is.

MR. PETERS: -- so that's a pleasant surprise, and I'm going to reach into my wallet and pay my dues so I can go to their August conference in Miami, and I recommend that the rest of you do, too.

So that's the first part. I'm going to plug my blog, Vicky, in due course.

But the second point I want to make is to a book that -- a project that Marifeli did some years ago that resulted in a book that is a terrific piece of work, and with change in Cuba on all our minds now I think is of even greater importance. It's a book about reconciliation in Cuba, national reconciliation in Cuba. It was published in both English and Spanish, and it's a terrific treatment of the question of reconciliation within Cuban families, within Miami between Miami and the island and inside Cuba itself.

I'd like to talk about all these questions that have been put up here. It's kind of nice to go third, because a lot of very sophisticated things have been said that I don't have to try to attempt to say with less sophistication.

I'd like to talk about these same issues in the context of the United States, and the first thing that comes to mind is that we are in the 50th year of tropical socialism in Cuba, and we have not knocked off Fidel Castro. And I agree with the working assumption here that in a few weeks he won't be the President anymore.

And the whole of history of American efforts to get rid of him

through a whole variety of means -- and I don't have to rehearse them all -- have failed. And things seem set for him to just leave and for a constitutional process to follow its course, and he'll go into some other role.

What has happened in Cuba since he got sick and left the picture, and he has not been seen in public for at least 18 months, is there has been stability. There has -- we've not seen any demonstrations of note. There hasn't been any turbulence inside the system. It's been a stable situation. In fact, the U.S. intelligence community described it that way in some testimony yesterday.

But what has happened is the debate that Marifeli discussed a bit -- before Fidel got sick, he kicked off a debate in a way. But since he got sick and left the picture, I think the debate took a different course. But it's a debate where they decided to confront some of their strategic challenges.

He explicitly said in the -- Fidel did in his last major speech -- he talked about the fact that these old soldiers that fought the Revolution and triumphed in it, as they say, were leaving. And how are they going to hand things over to the next generation.

And they identified between him kicking off this debate and the debate continuing under Raúl Castro, they've identified some strategic challenges that they face, and I think with considerable frankness. The fact that the young generation in Cuba, and the youngest generation is only -- has only -- really only known sacrifice. They've grown up in a period of economic crisis -- that the young generation is not connected to the revolutionary process, period.

I didn't say disconnected. I said they're not connected. I don't think they've ever had a connection because they have known scarcity, and the system in many ways has been in dysfunction during the whole time they've grown up.

They recognize that they don't generate enough jobs. They

recognize that the earnings of workers are not enough. They recognize that the bifurcated economy that they've got, which is a result of efforts that got them out of those -- the post Soviet crisis, does not work, and, in fact, is not just.

And it's crazy to us and to any concept of economics anybody in this room has, but it also does not fit with any socialist concept of social justice to have an economy split in two; where there's two currencies, and people who are afraid, like doctors and teachers, as everyday heroes of the Revolution are not paid enough simply to get by. And they have to scrape on the side.

They recognize that food production is not enough, and they got big problems in agriculture, and on and on.

The debate that has taken place I say has been I think frank, and I think kind of brutal in some ways that they have laid out some of these very serious problems. If you look at the Cuban press, they've even broken some taboos. There was an article in a Cuban newspaper that documented the fact that the unemployment rate, which is the big lie in all communist systems, that they have a full employment or one or two percent unemployment, that the unemployment rate that they publish is a joke. I believe it was in the Province of (inaudible) they documented that the unemployment rate in reality is about 15 times higher than what they publish in the official statistics.

Another taboo that's been broken is -- involves health care. Before Fidel got sick, the only way to discuss health care was to say that it was fabulous from beginning to end. And everybody knows in Cuba that there's a strain on the delivery of health care services, and it's not just because of material scarcity. It's because a lot of doctors are deployed overseas. And a lot of people, their family doctor is gone. And there's somebody new or there's like a fifth year resident who's taken over, or maybe their territory got combined, so they got to go to another consultario. Everybody knows that this strain is there, but nobody has

said this. Well, they put that in the newspaper and acknowledged that the deployment of Cuban physicians overseas is causing a strain in delivery of health care services domestically.

So they've laid out what I think are real challenges. They've started to confront them. Again, it's important to point out what Marifeli said, it's not a free press, but the state media has started to break some taboos and address these things in a truthful way.

I'll mention one last thing. At this point, I'll plug my blog, which is called the Cuban Triangle, and it's easy to find. Yesterday, there was a report on the BBC, and it was the Spanish service of the BBC, which was fascinating. Somebody slipped to their correspondent in Havana a video of a meeting that Ricardo Alacon had at a university there. And as you look at -- my blog links to that story, and in the middle of the story there's the audio. It's like a four- or five-minute story. The video is not available unfortunately, but you can listen to it.

And it's pretty interesting. He is -- he goes to this university, and you hear the students questioning, you know, why is it that workers here are paid in pesos, but we have to buy basic necessities in hard currency. Why don't we have Internet access? Alacon, by the way, said I'm not really up on that issue.

(Laughter)

MR. PETERS: And they asked about -- yeah. And they asked him about travel. Why can't we travel overseas? He said well, you know, a minority of people in the world travel internationally, and so here in Cuba the people travel according to merit, and it's not like before when it used to depend on how much money you had. And he said, you know, he said ask yourself how many Bolivians do you think travel internationally. I really wonder how that set with Cubans to be -- to have that -- yeah. And on and on.

But another student said why don't -- one student said who are

these candidates that we vote for. You talk about those "voto unido" and all that. Who are these people? They don't come to the university. And another said that why doesn't the Council of Ministers communicate with us. Why don't they communicate with the public so we know what it is that they're doing? What are they planning to do to address problems, and so that we know what the plans are and so that we, in a more conscious manner, can participate in those solutions?

I don't know how Alacon is feeling today, but the bottom line is Raúl called for a debate. He specifically probably more than a year ago said to young people, I would want you to speak up, and they sent Alacon to see what that was all about.

As a politician, Raúl Castro has done one thing with utmost clarity. He has raised expectations of change through this debate, through -- and it's got broader dimensions than I've described right now. He's raised expectations of change to a very great degree. And so none of us knows quite what's going to happen in Cuba, but I think we can predict that this year he's going to deliver or he's going to disappoint.

Cuba is clearly on the cusp of change, definitely in the generational sense just because the clock marches on, and those old soldiers can't stay in their jobs forever. I think a lot of them don't want to stay in their jobs forever. I think they realize they got hand it over to their replacement, and I think what we're probably going to see is some -- as I say, some sort of advisory role on the part of those old soldiers to get the next generation going.

So generational change is coming just because the clock marches on. And I think unless Raúl Castro is the craziest politician in the world, who's going through this exercise of raising expectations we've never -- not seen in a long time in Cuba, and then he's going to just do nothing. Unless he's crazy politically, we're probably going to see some changes in domestic policy in Cuba

that are going to start to address some of those strategic challenges.

And then the question would be how fast does he go and to what extent do the changes that he makes in economic policy to address them. And will they go far enough -- for example, to unify their currency. Even Philippe Perez Roque has come out and said that they needed to get rid of the dual currency system. That's not a simple proposition to pull off in that economy and I don't believe that they can pull that off with some small reforms that deal with the issues marginally.

Now, where is the United States in all this? I'll start with an analogy. I mean let's say that I live in the same neighborhood as Donald Trump, and I hate Donald Trump, and I want to bring him down. And this is my purpose in life.

And I manage successfully every day to prevent $10 from reaching Donald Trump or I steal $10 out of his pocket. Now, I may feel pretty good about that, and I may think that advances me a great deal towards my strategy of bringing down Donald Trump. It certainly satisfies me, because I hate him. And I get the 10 bucks every day.

And I can construct around that a pretty good speech, and I can lace it with a lot of very macho rhetoric, and all of that. But I can do that absolutely forever, and Donald Trump probably won't even notice it.

I think you see where I'm getting. Where is the United States in all of this? We're with -- we have this assumption that money is the issue in Cuba; not only that money is the issue, but that we got a handle on it. We got a grip on it, and that our sanctions are going to make the difference.

Well, I don't think this is quite the case. I don't think that the chivatos in Cuba are forever suffering for lack of few pesos to pay them. I don't think they lack money for microphones or Ladas to drive people here or money to

pay the police or this or that.

We've seen over the last few years, with our sanctions in place, we've seen the Cuban economy recover. Our sanctions have gotten harder; the economy has continued to recover. They've built a tourism industry. The price of nickel has gone through the roof. They have a partnership with China. The president of Brazil, to everyone's surprise, just came and went in Cuba and left a billion line of credit on the table, and on and on and on.

Our-this assumption that money is the issue and that we got our hands around the neck of that issue is just as strong assumption as mine about Donald Trump.

What this assumption then leads us to is a policy and a set of theories that say American contact with Cuba is a bad thing, and something that sets us back as opposed to being an opportunity. And so we list this anomaly to say (inaudible) that the whole of the great tradition of American public diplomacy and the confidence that's in American foreign policy that animated presidents for all the way from Truman through a great Democratic like President Kennedy, who created the Peace Corps, to a great Republican like President Reagan, who said we need exchanges with the Soviet Union, and the best way to do it, but with an evil empire, the Soviet Union. And the best thing government can do is get out of the way.

This whole tradition is out the window. And Cuba policy is that's it's worthless; more than that it's as if it's threat, and it's just counterproductive that American confidence that Democrats and Republicans have been exponents of for generations. And then, incidentally, I think it's contributed to a few foreign policy successes for our country and for our values.

So in the end, this assumption about money, this distaste for contact with Cuba that derives from that -- high school students can't go. You

saw your mom last year. You can't go this year. You want to send money to your cousin or your aunt. Forget it. She's not your family. If you want to -- if your church wants to go, you need a license (inaudible). If you're part of the government, you need a license if you're not part of the government, and on and on. We treat contact as if it's a liability as opposed to an opportunity, and so we're in this situation now where we try to have influence in Cuba without having contact.

I mean, I should really be dragging out at this point some kind of sophisticated foreign policy theory. We have a Dean of American University here. But I speak for me, so I'm not going to impress anyone (inaudible). I don't have any theories from Max Webber or anybody else. This is simple human nature, my friends, that if it is a matter of having influence with your wife or your insurance adjuster or the loan officer or the board of directors of AFSCME or anybody in your life. You can't have influence without having contact.

So this evolution that's going on in Cuba I think is going to continue happily for some in Cuba without us interfering too much. We'll see how long that lasts, and we'll see how Cuba does.

MS. HUDDLESTON: Thank you very much, Phil. I love the Donald Trump. Raj.

DR. DESAI: Thank you, Vicky. I appreciate the opportunity to be here. I feel like a little bit of an outsider. To answer the fellow who asked when was the last time you were all in Havana, I have to confess I have never been physically in Cuba, ever, in my life.

I have been, however, quite a lot in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and China since 1990 all the way up until I guess my last trip was July of last year. And what I would like to do is put this idea of political, economic, social change in some context based on the variety I think of

experiences in other formerly socialist or currently socialist economies.

So we're talking about change. We -- everyone seems to be talking about change these days. And the question is what kind of political and not to intrude too much on the next panel economic transformation is possible given the kinds of factors that seem to be present in Cuba today based on the experiences of many countries over the last 15 years or 20 years, basically 25 years.

But so what I'd like to do is talk a little bit about what kind of reform is possible. What factors one should look for in order to anticipate these types of things, and then end with some quick words of caution.

Now, we've had some talk about the Chinese model, the Vietnamese model. Now, this may or may not exist. But the idea is pretty familiar to everyone, which is sort of some (inaudible) experiments in political (inaudible) political participation, but otherwise a fairly restrictive political franchise where there is some economic liberalization alongside a state-owned sector.

Now, in Cuba, of course, there's been a lot of expectations that Raúl Castro might actually follow the Chinese model. There have been lots of high level visits of Chinese Communist Party officials, and that he would somehow maintain a political monopoly while allowing price -- some price liberalization, trade liberalization, perhaps the establishment of currency, currency convertibility. Perhaps Cuba might join the Bretton Woods treaty. But there seem to have been some mixed messages about this coming from Havana lately from what I understand.

Then, of course, there is in contrast to the Chinese model what has been talked about as the Soviet model. Now, I want to tell you there is no Soviet model. There isn't even a Russia model. There is a Russia model for 1992 to about 1998. There is a Russian model after the financial crisis, and there is a

Russian model under Putin. And they're very different approaches to political transformation and economic reform, not to mention that there is a big difference between what Russia has done, what a country like Moldova has done, where a rapid series of reforms a couple years later in elections ended up returning something like 71 percent of the population voted for the Communists, and in free, fair elections returned the Communists to the parliament.

Compare that to what has happened in Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan, where some of the most colorful dictators have been around the last few years.

So the question is what factors should one look for in thinking about those kinds of trajectories, those kinds of paths?

Of course, the first thing, the first place we tend to look I think are economic conditions. There was a question this morning about whether democratization has to occur under deteriorating or improving or good economic conditions. Well, the evidence is very mixed on this. There are lots of examples. Obviously, all of Eastern Europe practically went through a kind of democratic transition under fairly adverse economic conditions.

China after Mao was also suffering some economic dislocation, and the reforms that were enacted were in response to that.

On the other hand, there are lots of examples of democratic transitions in East Asia, in Chile perhaps, where there were no crises. Economic conditions were not deteriorating and, in fact, were improving.

The point is that it is not enough -- the discontent -- the public discontent -- the fact that 80 percent of the population of -- you know, is unhappy with conditions, with the availability of public services, the public goods, whether unemployment is high or low, those things are not necessary and they're not sufficient.

There are other things that are required. Also, I would point out that in socialist states, it's sometimes very difficult to measure the true extent of economic hardship because of the role of the public sector, because central planning can obscure things like stagnant or declining real wages, price inflation, shortages, employment rates. Things that have been the source of lots of lots of instability historically in socialist and non-socialist states are very hard to gauge where you have central planning.

It's very good that we have opinion polls identifying some of these things. But as I said, there are other factors, one of which has been mentioned a couple of times, the role of external consequential external actors, Venezuela and China particularly, which are now some Cuba's biggest trading partners. Venezuela, of course, is subsidizing oil consumption, which is a big benefit, economic benefit, to China -- sorry, to Cuba.

China, on the other hand, is now a major source of investment, a provider of durable goods and so on.

Political economists refer to something called the authoritarian bargain on the assumption that citizens are willing to trade off more -- less economic -- less political participation for more public benefits, for more economic benefits -- welfare, social spending, and so on, and that if one-if you push down on one piston, you have to let go on the other.

If that is the case, if economic hardship increases demands for greater public participation in political life, then the role that these types of external actors in providing the sources of continued public spending on issues such as welfare, health care, public sector employment would be -- wouldn't matter.

Another one, of course, is some signal of weakness that the public perceives in the ruling elite.

Now, from what we've heard today, there does not seem to be any factionalism among the ruling elite in Havana. There does not seem to be any credible challenges or credible threat to the governance -- to the rule of the Communist Party, and that there is little evidence of any deep rivalry that is about to break, you know, about to explode among the government and military ranks.

Again, this is in contrast, sharp contrast, to most Eastern European post-Soviet countries and in China. China after Mao, of course, there was a very severe split between hardliners and reformers. Although there was some consensus that reforms should not endanger the Communist Party monopoly, there were significant differences in the scope and content of reforms advocated by hardliner versus liberals. In Russia, in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev, of course, there was another split between hardliners and reformers quite early on that sort of culminated in the coup, in the break up, in the coup that deposed Gorbachev temporarily and, of course, and the events that led to the break up and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

One question for Cuba, of course, is whether bottom up experiments would be possible in such a small country. These were a very big factor in China, of course, but so the question is whether that kind of thing is possible in Cuba.

And then finally, there are unpredictable events that no one can gauge in terms of how likely they are to precipitate something. In Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union, a lot of these things occurred around the anniversary or the death of prominent dissidents. The (inaudible) Revolution began only the anniversary of the death and burial of the person who immolated himself through during the Soviet invasion in 1968, who was himself was protesting on the anniversary of the execution of an anti-Nazi dissident in 1938.

So, you know, there's a sort of string of connections -- prominent

dissidents that led to students marching back from the burial ground and meeting the police and the events leading to these clashes that eventually the collapse of the communist government in Czechoslovakia.

All right. Finally, to conclude with just two notes of caution. We seem to think that some changes are coming. However, the experience in socialist and non-socialist states shows us that dictatorships can survive a very long time, when they're coupled with some financial support from outsiders, from external -- from partner nations, with some partial political liberalization, not completely bogus elections, but some elections with some limited competition that doesn't endanger the ruling party.

These things can contribute to very long lasting regimes, long lasting dictatorships. And the question is whether Raúl Castro or his successors have learned these lessons.

However, whether or not they figured out how to reform just enough without losing power, without -- I would point out that no political leader is completely free to the reform path without facing severe constraints. There are always internal power struggles that may or may not be seen. There's always a need to compromise to secure a minimum degree of public support, and that is going to limit those options.

Finally, the last thing, there are reformers, and there are opportunists. Now, often the public cannot tell them apart, so what this means in practice is that, look, everyone likes change, everyone likes reform. If you look at the world values surveys that gauge the opinions of I think 80 countries -- populations in 80 countries -- they all say, all publics say they want reform. What does that mean?

There is an incentive for politicians of all stripes to mimic reformers by engaging in certain minimal signals, but without actually giving up control of

anything, without giving up the control on the levers of power.

For example, in the elections, they don't threaten their (inaudible) or enacting economic reforms that enrich their allies, but don't actually reform the economy.

So there's a difference between those types of signals and signals of credible reform, and so that's something we need to better understand I think.

MS. HUDDLESTON: Thank you very much. Well, (inaudible) again, the rest of the world to Cuba. And I think sometimes we can take a look at the rest of the world.

The way I'd like to do the questions is I guess Santa Fe style, because I lived (inaudible) Santa Fe from time to time, but I prefer to just have people stand up, ask the question, and then have one or two people answer them and then move onto the next question. So, can we have the first question, please?

MR. McCULLOUGH: John McCullough from the Fund for Reconciliation and Development. I'd be interested if Marifeli agrees with the dissident economist Oscar Espinosa Chefe that one of the retarding factors in the change or the debate over change is the attitude of the United States, the sort of dismissive tone the moment Raúl took over, the threatening tone of the President's speech.

And then the other side of that, to Phil or anyone else, is whether the man who won the most popular vote yesterday, Barack Obama, has talked about a fundamental re-approach to U.S. policy in Cuba, including unrestricted remittances and travel for Cuban-Americans and un -- non-conditioned negotiations with Raúl Castro, separating himself from all the other candidates.

And I'm wondering what the impact may be of both that debate going on through the election period and then what happens if he wins the

election.

DR. PÉREZ–STABLE: I usually agree with Oscar Espinosa Chefe, who writes very insightfully about the Cuban economy. However, I think that it's -- I would simply modify it a bit.

What the U.S. does or doesn't do has always has a -- some effect in Cuba, Donald Trump notwithstanding. But I think that this -- what I tried to do -- say quickly was that the slowness of the change in Cuba since July 31st, 2006 due largely to the internal process of the Cuban government and the dismantling of the way that Fidel Castro made decisions, and also the fact that, although he really was dying, in the last semester of '06, he recovered, not enough to come out in public live, but he recovered, and, therefore, he is still a player, though, not the same player he was when he was healthy.

So that's my answer.

MS. VELLAS: Thank you. I'm Jo Vellas of USAID, State Department and Georgetown University, but actually I'm one of those Cubans who was American married to a Cuban -- Jo Vellas associated USAID, but I'm an American spouse of a Cuban.

I just have -- and we're a special breed. I have a question to Andy and Marifeli about how do we see what they call the dual morality affecting people's behavior, either in the process of change or the process of activism and whether or not they think the would be willing to trust another system.

DR. PÉREZ–STABLE: The dual morality is a typical not only of Cuba, but of all -- of anyone living in a dictatorship. I think it takes time in developing trust, not the kind of trust that you have in your family or you should have within your family, but the kind of trust that allows us to sit here and talk. That is only -- that will -- that mistrust will break down as the society opens up. But it's a long process. It is a long process. So it is a hindrance to change, but

at the same time, there are Cubans -- more and more Cubans, not the majority thus far, who are losing their fears. This doesn't mean that they will go out and wear a white band calling for change. But they have lost their fears and they are even if they are becoming more independent, not only materially perhaps, but especially psychologically and spiritually from the regime. But that is a long -- it's a long process.

And it is a reality, which, by the way, in 1991 the Cuban Communist Party recognized and, but, of course, the antidote to that is allowing freedom.

DR. GOMEZ: I completely agree. I think the issue is what do you replace it with to a great extent, and this is one of the things that we try to mention in 2002. We did a survey of recently arrived Cubans, 72 hours or less. And we found this to be very adamant. But the question is what do you replace it with, because, as Phil mentioned, even though particularly Cubans view -- they have been taught communist, Marxist, Leninist ideas, even though they are to some extent the more oldest generation Fidelistas. The transformation from Fidelismo to Raúlismo I think is going to be quite complicated, particularly of a younger generation to buy into to a great extent.

MR. FRONDEAU: Peter Frondeau from the National Security Archive. You know, when Fidel was turning 70, more than 10 years ago, the late William Rogers, who has been mentioned in an earlier panel, who many of us knew, wrote an op-ed piece in the New York Times called the "Morning After," where he basically argued the United States needed to be prepared for Castro's departure and what would there policy and should their policy be the morning after. Now, this -- obviously, he was more than a decade premature.

But it seems to me that given the title of this panel, the question is February 25th, the morning after. And what U.S. policy will be and what it should be, and I'd like to direct this question to anybody, Vicky Huddleston and Phil

Peters, but particularly Phil, who was in public diplomacy in the State Department. You know, what will the U.S. say on February 25th, and what should they say?

MR. PETERS: You're asking me what they say. Well, my guess is that they'll say it's the same system, and it's been a shuffle of people. I think that's what they'll say, and that, therefore, no -- there should be no change in anything that we do until there's a change in the nature of the system.

I think to answer John's question, it's -- I wouldn't think -- I wouldn't say that United States policy is going to determine the course of the -- of the actions of the Cuban Government with regard to their domestic policy. I think that it's a lot of what's going on in Cuba -- well, I think almost everything that's going on in Cuba these days is occurring without reference to the United States. It wouldn't hurt if we changed our policy and, in fact, it would help a lot of things in a lot of ways. But I wouldn't make the argument that it would make some kind of decisive difference in the debate that they have on their domestic policy. I think if at the level of diplomatic engagement, if we decide on the other kinds if we -- I think that if we would engage diplomatically with them, there's a lot of things we could do on a bilateral basis, probably do better in some of the things in the cooperation that we have between our Coast Guard and other law enforcement agencies and the Cuban side, when it comes to things like alien smuggling and drug trafficking and other bilateral issues like that.

But I think that there -- I think that the domestic policy debate is occurring without reference to the United States. In large part, I don't take it (inaudible).

DR. GOMEZ: I (inaudible) stop Peter or anything, but, John, as you mentioned about Senator Obama, I think we have to realize to some extent that U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba has been domestic rather than foreign. And the

intent is to try to appease a very large and influential Cuban-American community in South Florida. And for the first time, as I said earlier, that has changed, because candidates on both sides are coming into South Florida and recognizing that they cannot no longer scream "Viva Cuba Libre" and win the votes.

As a matter of fact, one candidate in one of his first speeches even quoted Fidel Castro at the end of his speech, thinking he was going to be smart to a great extent.

DR. GOMEZ: But I can't -- I don't think, in my opinion, personal opinion, I don't think any future Administration can deal with Cuba alone without looking at Cuba within the scope of the entire Latin America. I think you have to look at the greater piece with Cuba being part of it.

MS. HUDDLESTON: I'll take the moderator's advantage and just add -- what I'd like to add to that question that John asked is that okay, what happens if Fidel -- what happens in Cuba when Fidel dies? We keep the same policy. His regime hasn't changed. We don't send anybody to the funeral. People come from all over the world, major diplomats, major leaders, presidents of a good part of the developing world, and we're not there.

I think that's going to be one of the big questions right now is how does the United States look and how does its policy look when everybody's in Havana and we're home.

And I think the second part of the question is what is going to happen in the Cuban-American community because there's been this longing, this waiting for Fidel to die, and then he dies and nothing happens. What does that go down?

So I think, you know, Fidel's death is not going to be as his illness

has been. I think it will send out some (inaudible), and we're saying it won't. But I think it almost has to after 50 years of a dictatorship.

DR. GOMEZ: We can send Bill.

MR. FLETCHER: Hans Fletcher, (inaudible). I guess my question is to be addressed to professor Pérez-Stable or professor Desai.

You mentioned -- this is sort of a comparative sociology question -- transitions. Speaking of Eastern Europe, the way they occurred or what was the proximate cause, maybe not been long term, crowds went into the streets. And unlike in the '50s and '60s, there was no outside intervention, but an internally -- in military forces -- the armies were not willing to shoot at their own people. What would the Cuban Army do, not the secret police or the police, but the Cuban Army if such event occurred? I'm not saying it will happen.

DR. PÉREZ–STABLE: Well, first I -- I mean, it's a very good question. But the -- just to amend a little bit. What happened in Eastern Europe that is a crowd went out in the streets after Mikhail Gorbachev went to Eastern Europe earlier in 1989 and carnations were thrown at him. And he basically said to his counterparts this is your problem. We're not going to send troops in.

So that's important. But we don't have that in Cuba. There's no outside detonator of domestic change in Cuba.

The second is that the Cuban, you know, in 1989 and not only Eastern Europe, but we had Tiananmen Square, and supposedly Fidel Castro said it ain't going to happen here, because we're going to deal with it before they assemble in any plaza of Cuba or along the revolution -- the Plaza de la Revolucion.

I don't -- you know, this is all very subjective, and we don't know, but I think Fidel Castro would have been more willing to give the order. In

Eastern Europe, by the way, it had to be a civilian giving the order because there was, by and large, the military was under civilian control in the old communist world, and the military is not under civilian control in Cuba.

But Fidel I think would have been more ready to give the order to shoot. I don't think that -- I think that that is if Raúl Castro is named the successor is a nightmare scenario.

DR. GOMEZ: If I may be the one -- when the sinking of the tugboat, the order was given when people are started -- taking to the police under (inaudible) in Havana, the orders were given to the Havana Army, and we have the general and a colonel that defected since then that have told us there was a lot of apprehension as to whether they were going to arm themselves and take to the street and shoot on the Cuban people.

SPEAKER: How long did the (inaudible)?

DR. GOMEZ: High-ranking military.

SPEAKER: That they did not want to?

DR. GOMEZ: They did not want to. So that could be a problem if that happens.

MS. HUDDLESTON: Okay. Abe, and then I'll get (inaudible). Why don't we get Abe (inaudible), and (inaudible).

SPEAKER: Thank you very much. This is really more a brief comment than a question. I want to underline something that Dr. Gomez said with his chart on the PowerPoint, and that is when (inaudible) the thinking in terms of a generation for the kind of transition I think we're talking about.

I know it's very good to think about the time perspective, what we ought to have in mind as we're looking at these issues. We all necessarily think in terms of historical experience and analogies. That's' the way the mind works, and people have talked about Central and Eastern Europe in terms of analogies.

Because of my own particular experience, I think of the Dominican Republic, where a dictator ruled for 31 years. He was assassinated. That was in 1961.

It really took about 35 years of coups, civil war, intervention, manipulated elections, rule by a democratically elected president ruling in an authoritarian fashion, fraudulent elections, intervention of the church to have a new set of elections. It took an awful lot of ups and downs over a considerable period of time, and there was considerable U.S. influence and presence in that situation. But even with the U.S. influence and presence, the local situation was very complicated. The Cuban situation is certainly not less complicated, and it probably will not be (inaudible).

SPEAKER: I am Ernesto with (inaudible). I (inaudible) in Washington to (inaudible), and I work for the Cuban --

MS. HUDDLESTON: Wow, the --

SPEAKER: Okay. I think that the role of the (inaudible) in the present (inaudible), which I would like to ask about is that in Cuba there is a regime that is totally geared to one person, Fidel Castro. Fidel has changed the whole system of government to fit his needs and his ego. And I think that that is the reason for the (inaudible) in the past 18 months.

Now, I think that some changes have to take place in your (inaudible) of the Cuban Government because people don't realize that in Cuba, if you're working for a foreign company, you are suddenly being paid in dollars to the Cuban Government. And then the Cuban Government pays you the equivalent in pesos, which has a rate of 22 to one. That means that you get a tax of 95 percent on your salary. And that is one of the things that have to change.

There is a crime in the Cuban penal code that is called (inaudible)

de ciudad. Do any of you know what (inaudible) de ciudad means? It means that you can be sent to prison for four years for the mere fact that the policeman says that you have to dangerous inclinations. That's all you have to (inaudible). The policeman says that you have dangerous inclinations and then you get four years in prison.

I think that those things have to change, and I don't (inaudible). I think that that was a very tough policy. So living (inaudible), in fact, that's one thing unless those things are changed. And I think that that's the important thing, and it's going to go from the Cuban people from the day they first cut off pesos for that change (inaudible).

Now, they are all scared out of their wits by the depressing Havana regime. But if you consider an analogy to a revolutionary dynamic, you will see the increasingly repressive apparatus of (inaudible) from the state of apathy in the previous -- previously end of the youth.

If you know Raúl and Fidel personally, as I do, you realize that there is a tremendous difference between one and the other. Fidel is a very creative, imaginative person. And he cannot really play, like some others I know who have complete lack of charisma and (inaudible). And I think that that is one of the things that has to be taken into account, because there is going to be a period in which things are going to get out of whack. I don't know how it's going to come. I have (inaudible) places a (inaudible), because I hate the possibility of violence. I do realize that people will say that the Cuban Government has to be given a chance. They have to be given an opportunity because most of them have no (inaudible). So you have to take that into account as to what is going to take place because I have seen that the problem was that the elites of regime were (inaudible) to the (inaudible) they had, and the Soviets supported in there, and it was an action of the government. And these people they oppose change,

because they realized that they were forcing a national (inaudible), because (inaudible) and I'm afraid to say that.

But this is not the case here. If Cuba (inaudible) a national regime that gets (inaudible) by himself, the Soviet Union has nothing to do with Castro (inaudible) coming to power.

MS. HUDDLESTON: And that's the --

SPEAKER: And that's a very important thing to take into account.

MS. HUDDLESTON: You're absolutely right. It is this excellent reminder to put us, you know, back again that after Fidel, as good as this panel is, we still don't have any idea for sure at all.

Thank you all. You've been a great audience. Thank you to the panel. You've been a great panel.

(Recess)