

WILLIAM P. STODDEN

John A. Logan College

AND

ARI WEISS

Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

INTRODUCTION

In early 1959, relations between the United States and the revolutionary government of Cuba were at a high point: Fidel Castro had just seized the reins of power following the successful conclusion of an armed insurgency from his predecessor, Fulgencio Batista. The US believed that the transition of power would follow in a customary pattern: A strongman comes to power offering social change, and then holds elections which he would predictably win. Meanwhile, US interests in Cuba would remain untouched by a friendly, though possibly reformist, government. However, within a year and a half of Castro's victory, the CIA was training and arming Cuban exiles for an invasion of Cuba, intending to ignite a rebellion against Castro's revolutionary government. This represented a dramatic and rapid shift in US foreign policy. US policy toward Cuba during this formative period is a topic which has been widely discussed since the early 1960s-- The complete reversal of US policy from accommodation and patience to destabilization in just over a year is an ideal case study to analyze the dynamics of foreign policy decision-making.

This article analyses the decision to destabilize another government, and offers US relations with Cuba as a crucial case. We link crises of interest with the adoption of destabilization, which is defined as a high-risk foreign policy designed to alter the balance of power between a target government and its domestic opponents, with the aim of causing that target government to fall to its opponents. Our argument is that deep and serious conflicts of security, economic *and* ideological interests perceived by policymakers in a status quo state increase the likelihood of the adoption of the policy of destabilization. This *crisis of interest*, when taken together, will be enough to overcome a risk aversion, and will lead rational policymakers to accept more risk in policy-making.

¹ An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Midwest Conference of the International Studies Association, at St. Louis on November 3, 2012. The authors would like to acknowledge Dr. Stephen Shulman at Southern Illinois University, for his longstanding interest and critical support for this project. His input and willingness to point out ways to clarify and strengthen our arguments has been greatly valued and appreciated. We also would like to thank the anonymous reviewer, whose excellent comments and critiques helped us immensely. A final draft of this paper appears in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, published online 15 August, 2014, doi: 10.1111/fpa.12067.

To test this theory, we consider US policy toward Cuba between January 1959 and March 1960. We develop a hypothesis about the relationship between crises of interests and the adoption of extremely risky policy, like destabilization. The story of US destabilization of Castro's government represents an important test of this theory: the case itself is well-documented, though there is no agreement as to why US policy switched so rapidly from a cautious policy of accommodation and diplomatic pressure to a risky one of destabilization in such a short period of time. And yet, there is little disagreement about the fact that the US set about, from late-1959 on, to weaken and destabilize the Government of Cuba through the use of proxy-invasion, economic embargo and support for opposition groups both in Cuba and in the US. If the hypothetical argument is not supported in one of the most obvious cases like Cuba, it will have difficulty holding up elsewhere.

CONCEPTUALIZING DESTABILIZATION

We define destabilization as an instrumentalist foreign policy adopted by one government against another, for the purposes of removing the political leadership of the target government from power. Destabilization is accomplished by changing the balance of power *within* a target state in favor of the opposition of the target government, using overt and/or covert psychological, cultural, economic, political and/or military tactics.² All four elements must be present to conceptually separate destabilization from some other form of intervention against a target.

There has been some work done previously on destabilization as a policy (see, e.g., Manley 1982; Merom 1990; Mars 1998; Marinov 2005; Hufbauer, Schott, Elliot, and Oegg 2009). The extant work on destabilization is incomplete, however, because there has not been a deliberate and rigorous attempt to fully conceptualize "destabilization." Under-conceptualization leads to disagreement over definition and causes conceptual problems for those who seek to determine whether a particular event is "destabilization" or some other form of intervention, or what is destabilization and what is not.

The case of US-Jamaica policy in the 1970s provides a good example of this disagreement. Michael Manley, former leftist Prime Minister of Jamaica, described US policy directed against his government when he defined destabilization as the use of foreign and domestic actors to create "panic by design" (Manley 1982, 138). Henry Kissinger, for his part, never called US policy toward Jamaica "destabilization," but instead, described US policy as an effort to get Manley to alter several of his policies which conflicted with US interests in the region and around the globe. This debate is typical of much of the existing literature covering destabilization, and is usually centered on tactics, but not the goals of the policy itself.

Under-conceptualization also poses several problems for scholars who seek to build theories of foreign policy-making. Several larger-N studies have been conducted on the *causes* of destabilization (e.g. Merom 1990; Marinov 2005; Hufbauer, et al. 2009), but since these and other authors never fully agreed upon just what counted as destabilization, the results of these findings are far from conclusive. Most of these authors describe destabilization as an *effect* of some policy, like economic sanctions, rather than the goal of the policy itself.³ Mars (1998)

² Destabilization, for example, can be an effective way to counter revolutionary governments which are ideologically opposed by the status quo state without resorting to invasion (Bisley 2004, 52-53).

³ Hufbauer, et. al., describes removal of the political leadership as one particular goal of economic sanctions, and therefore, suggests that alteration of the government in a target state is at least deliberate. Marinov (2005) and Pape (1997), however, counter by arguing that economic sanctions do not actually work as often as proponents of economic sanctions argue. But their work is still primarily one about the effects of economic sanctions, and focuses on pressure.

discussed destabilization as a political phenomenon, of which economic destabilization was a part, and therefore moved the discussion forward toward a more complete understanding of the concept. But of the above authors, only Merom has actually attempted a systematic conceptualization of destabilization, as a policy, by itself. We therefore aim to continue that work below.

Destabilization is conceptually separate, though related to other forms of coercive foreign policy. The most important characteristic which makes destabilization conceptually unique is the use of actors *within* the target country to ultimately overthrow the targeted government. The sender focuses on altering the balance of power within the target state by creating a "coup climate" (quoted in Kornbluh 2004, 114) so that the target state's domestic opposition can overthrow its government. This overthrow-by-proxy often allows policy makers in the "sending state"-- the state who launches to distance themselves from events and claim that they had no role in the outcome.⁴

Some forms of coercive diplomacy aim specifically at changing policy, rather than seeing the members of the targeted government replaced.⁵ Alexander George (1991) called coercive diplomacy "forceful persuasion." In George's words, "[Threats] are sometimes employed as an instrument of peaceful diplomacy" (George 1991, xi); in other words, "... coercive diplomacy emphasizes the use of threats to punish the adversary if he does not comply with what is demanded of him" (George, 5). This definition focuses on defensive measures: The goal is to get the target to *alter policy* which has already been adopted, but the focus, for George, is ultimately on policy. Foreign imposed regime change (FIRC) is another type of coercive diplomacy (Art and Cronin, 2003; Downes 2008).⁶ FIRC, by definition alters the *regime*, of a target state through force. If the content of the government changes, that change is the result of the regime being changed. A good example of FIRC is the case of Iraq after the 2003 US invasion. Destabilization, on the other hand, targets specifically the *political leadership*, rather than the constitutional order of a target state, and does so without the direct use of force from the sender.⁷ Given its differences, it is important to both study destabilization as a separate form of interventionary foreign policy, as well as theorize about what causes *status quo* states to adopt it as policy.

The most serious limitation of the existing literature on destabilization, and one that our hypothetical test will address, is that authors tend to focus on one type of conflict of interest when considering the cause of destabilization, while discounting the others. It is generally

⁴ See, for example, John Dulles' efforts to hide US involvement in the Guatemalan Coup in 1954, outlined in Immerman (1982, 180-186) or Kissinger's insistence that the overthrow of the Allende government in 1973 had no help from the US. (Kissinger 1979, 683 Kornbluh 2004, 114-15). Occasionally, the effort to keep the policy secret is unsuccessful, as happened after the 1973 Chilean coup and the Church Committee's leaked report, and occasionally policy makers are forced to or actually want to take credit for the effort, as in the case of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion and the Contra War respectively.

⁵ George (1991), Schultz (2001) and Art (2003) are the most widely-cited authors on the subject of "coercive diplomacy." Much of their work focuses on the use of force to achieve diplomatic goals.

⁶ Art (2003) included force or threat of force to produce the alteration of the political leadership under his brief definition of "coercive diplomacy." Downes (2008) discusses FIRC explicitly as the threat of or the use of force by the sender state to produce changes in the political leadership of the target state. In Cuba, the US was careful that its role in the *actual* Bay of Pigs invasion was limited to transportation. More importantly, this was merely a small part of a larger overall program to destabilize the Castro Government. That the invasion itself failed ultimately only caused the US to adopt other measures to weaken Castro relative to his domestic opponents.

⁷ Though the constitution may change following a change in political leadership, as occurred in Chile following the 1973 coup there, this is a consequence of destabilization, not a goal of it.

accepted that destabilization is the result of conflicts of interest: Most, if not all, authors who write about this sort of intervention assert that a *particular conflict of interest*, rather than a broad-based crisis of interest leads to destabilization.⁸

This disagreement is seen in literature about US foreign policy toward Latin America during the Cold War. Historical accounts of US foreign policy toward Latin America form a significant segment of the body of literature on this subject. Some authors (e.g. Dulles 1970; Blaiser 1985) focus on security conflicts; others (e.g. Cox 1994; Schlessinger and Kinzer 2005) tend to focus on economic reasons; still others (e.g., Immerman 1982; Rabe 2005) tend to focus on ideological conflicts to describe reasons why the US adopted policy toward Latin American nations, with each group either downplaying or entirely ignoring the conclusions of the other two groups in the process.

Those who adopt the less-nuanced, but more traditional understanding of conflict-based foreign policymaking often argue that policymakers are incapable of understanding the difference between ideological support for nationalism, on one hand, expressed as nationalization of foreign assets and expansion of social welfare programs, and diplomatic support, on the other, for the Soviet Union in the Cold War during this period of time. We argue that policymakers were intelligent enough to make the crucial distinction between conflicts of interest: They knew the difference between ideological nationalism and strategic alignment with the Soviets in the Cold War. This distinction plays out in our case: The world was not so rigidly bipolar in 1959-1960 that policymakers automatically confused ideological, economic and security conflicts of interests. They clearly made those distinctions in their own internal documents, even if they did not care to do so in public statements, and though there was some conceptual overlap in the conflicts, as we discuss below, it is clear that policy makers often put their conflicts with other nations into different categories, as they deemed appropriate.

The narrow focus of the existing narrative not only underestimates the frequency of destabilization as a foreign policy, but discounts cases of destabilization which do not fit analysts' particular ideological predisposition. Our argument, *contra* this more narrow focus, is that a broad crisis of interest is necessary to produce risky foreign policy behavior like destabilization. One or even two particular types of conflict of interest is not enough. When conflicts of economic, ideology *and* security are perceived by the political leadership of the status quo state, it will accept the risks of the policy and will seek to weaken the target government to the point that it can be overturned by domestic actors.

THEORY AND METHODS

To test our argument, we hypothesize a relationship between conflicts of interest and the adoption of destabilization as a policy.

Hypothesis: *A state that perceives a crisis of interests between its own preferences and another state's policies will become much more risk acceptant in its foreign policy, and will adopt risky policy options, like destabilization, against the target state's government, in order to restore the status quo ex ante relationship.*

A "crisis of interests" refers to serious perceived conflicts of economic, security *and* ideological interests. We argue that the perception of this crisis is enough to overcome risk-

⁸ Streeter (2000) provides an excellent framework for understanding the debates of scholars over the causes of US destabilization in Guatemala. His tri-partite framework greatly influenced the theoretical model presented in this article.

aversion in policymakers and clear the way for the adoption of a risky and potentially costly policy, such as destabilization. We assert a clear causal chain of events and a threshold: Two types of conflicts of interest, whatever they happen to be, will not be a serious enough deviation from the preferred state of relations between the *status quo* and the target states. But when a third conflict of interest is perceived-- and it could be any of the three-- this deviation will be serious enough that the *status quo* state will switch from risk-aversion to risk-acceptance and will begin to adopt risky policy strategies, like destabilization.⁹

Our hypothesis is based primarily on balance-of-risk theory proposed by Taliaferro (2004) which is itself an application of prospect theory of Kahneman and Tversky (1979) to foreign-policy decision-making. Prospect theory holds that senior decision makers (Taliaferro, 14) rationally establish a preferred reference point with regard to utility. When they perceive that they are "winning" relative to their reference point, they become risk-averse, unwilling to take on more uncertainty; if they believe themselves to be "losing" relative to their preferred reference point, they will become risk-acceptant, eventually sinking more and more of their resources into attempts to restore the situation to their preferred reference point. Taliaferro applies prospect theory by arguing that risky policy is actually the rational response to a perceived unacceptable loss relative to their reference point (Taliaferro, 51). Balance-of-risk theory also explains why states continue to dump resources into a policy long after it has clearly failed, even after some of the conflicts of interest have been mitigated or taken off the table.

Previous work has utilized this hypothetical model. Stodden (2012) performed several controlled case studies which looked at whether all three types of conflict were necessary to produce destabilization. Stodden's results are summarized in Table 1 below. Stodden demonstrated that it was the *crisis of interest* which led to the adoption of destabilization: cases without all three conflicts were not destabilized. Additionally, a host of other competing explanations for policy variation (relative proximity, relative power, various cultural and geographic features, whether or not the status quo state was a main actor in the Cold War and etc.) were ruled out as causes for destabilization. Our test then is an extension of Stodden's model to an in-case comparison, one which provides even more control than the case comparisons that Stodden examined.

TABLE 1. Summary of Findings of Stodden (2012)

<i>Status Quo State</i>	<i>Status Quo Administration</i>	<i>Target Government</i>	<i>Conflicts of Interest</i>			<i>Destab? (E*I*S=D)</i>
			<i>Econ?</i>	<i>Ideol?</i>	<i>Secur?</i>	
USA	Kennedy/Johnson (1961-1965)	Argentina	1	1	0	0
		Brazil	1	1	1	1
	Nixon (1969-1973)	Peru	1	0	1	0
		Bolivia	1	1	1	1
	Reagan (1981-1985)	El Salvador	0	1	1	0
South Africa	PW Botha (1978-1984)	Nicaragua	1	1	1	1
		Botswana	1	1	0	0
		Mozambique	1	1	1	1

⁹ We must admit, of course that there are a host of policy options available to policy makers in any given situation, and the causal relationship between crises of interests and destabilization is not deterministic, but when looking for causes of destabilization, our theory offers a more complete answer than existing ones.

To test our hypothesis we examine the case of US policy toward Cuba. Cuba is a well-documented case of US destabilization. The US has never made much of a secret about its policy, even into the 21st century.¹⁰ There is no major disagreement about the target of US policy toward Cuba: Relieving Cuba of its political leadership has been at least one of the explicitly stated goals of US policy since 1960. If this hypothesis is not supported in the case of Cuba, of all places, the explanatory power of this model is weakened in other, less certain cases.

To test the hypothesis, we use a quasi-experimental design, which compares “pre-treatment” US-Cuba relations to “post-treatment” US-Cuba relations. In this case, before December 1959, at the latest, we detect only two perceived conflicts of interest in relations between the two countries. To use the language of the quasi-experiment, we refer to the pre-December period in US-Cuba, where US-Cuban relations were not at crisis, and the US still maintained risk-averse policy toward Cuba as “pre-treatment.” The “treatment” is the addition of a third conflict of interest, which in this case happens to be a major perceived security threat, creating a crisis of interests that finally caused the Eisenhower Administration to adopt the significantly more risk-acceptant policy of destabilization of Castro’s Government.

This quasi-experiment is commensurate with a “most similar” case design discussed by Gerring (2007). All relevant variables remain as they were before the “treatment,” except the addition of the third conflict of interest. Both sets of actors are the same. The structural and historical context is not altered. All other objective characteristics of the cases themselves (language, proximity, geography and so forth) remain constant. The addition of the third conflict created a crisis among US policy makers, which put them in the realm of expected losses and produced a major change in the willingness to accept risk within the Eisenhower Administration. The adoption of the risky policy of destabilization was the result.

To demonstrate our hypothesis, we evaluate mentions of conflict of interest in the period preceding the crisis of interest in December 1959. These traces of perception, found expressed in the internal documents of the US government as well as secondary sources, are part of a continuous series of events. The story told in the following section demonstrates a swiftly mounting crisis in relations between the two states. As balance of risk theory predicts, this crisis produced a dramatic shift in the willingness to accept risk by the US-- After the beginning of the crisis, the US adopted a very risky policy toward Cuba. In this case, that risky policy was destabilization.

For this article, we adopt Taliaferro's definition of “risk.” Taliaferro defines risk as a situation where policymakers perceive that one choice has several and more divergent outcomes than its alternative, that the possibility for significant loss is as likely as the possibility for significant gain, and that probability estimates concerning the likelihood of achieving either positive or negative outcomes may be incorrect (Taliaferro, 26). Destabilization is one of these very risky options with a high potential of backfiring and producing negative unanticipated outcomes, loss of international prestige for violation of sovereignty and wastes of significant sums of money and resources. We look for evidence of destabilization primarily in *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS), and secondary sources which use this and other primary documentation that is widely available to the public.

FRUS documents give us a fairly complete picture of the decision making happening at the time. While we acknowledge that it would be preferable to include archival sources which

¹⁰ US justifications for destabilization of the Cuban government have changed over the years, but US policies toward Cuba are remarkably consistent. As late as 2006, the Bush Administration was still following the policy recommendations of groups like the Committee for Assistance to a Free Cuba. (CAFC 2006.)

FRUS and the secondary sources themselves draw from, we argue that the Cuba case is sufficiently well-documented in literature, and the conclusions we arrive at based on these sources are fairly uncontroversial interpretations, supported by several sources.¹¹ We relied on the secondary sources primarily for historical fact. Nor do we assert that ours is the only possible interpretation of the data. We merely argue that none of the historical data presented below is widely disputed.

To measure the causal variables, we rely on similar historical and qualitative sources, with the same caveats. While "perception of a conflict of interest" is difficult to measure, we feel that the commentary in the internal documents of the government which suggests displeasure with the policies of the Government of Cuba constitutes a statement on a significant conflict of interest and is therefore a suitable proxy for "perception." Policymakers often leave indications of their perceptions in contemporary documentary evidence, such as that which exists in archives and sources such as *FRUS*. We assert that if the conflict is worth mentioning in some official memorandum, especially those which make it into *FRUS*, it is significant enough to produce a policy response. After all, *FRUS* is explicitly the record of important policy moments in US history. So those mentions of conflicts by policymakers which produce a response in policy, whatever that happens to be, are marked as "conflicts of interest" for the purposes of this qualitative analysis.

The conflicts of interests described here are also summarized in Table 2 below. It is important that we point out that these conflicts often overlap. What can be seen as an economic conflict may also have ideological roots. For example, the nationalization of United Fruit lands during the 1952 Agrarian Reform in Guatemala could be seen as either an attack on US business interests or a commitment to radical nationalism. That case demonstrates the difficulty in conceptually separating these conflicts of interest, which precludes Large-N quantitative study of this question. Furthermore, this is why it is crucial to consider these conflicts as part of a broader story-- conflicts of interest do not exist in a vacuum, nor are they without antecedents. But with a general understanding of the case, it is possible for researchers to make rigorous measurement of even variables like this, which regularly conceptually overlap.

A conflict of economic interest is the perceived adoption of policy by the target state which directly and negatively impacts the financial, trade, or investment interests of the status-quo state.¹² Economic conflicts involve the nationalization of property, establishing tariffs which deny the ability of the status quo state to conduct business, or freezing assets or finances of the status quo state. In the US-Cuba case, Cuba nationalized most US property and denied the ability of US investors to buy and run their long-held economic operations the way they had in the past.

A conflict of ideological interest is the perceived adoption or toleration within a target state of an unacceptable viewpoint concerning who runs what and how, both at home and

¹¹ *FRUS* is not without controversy: Edel (1991) discusses *FRUS*' shortcomings in great detail. *FRUS* is often rather limited, not in the details of their coverage, but in the quantity-- important documents are often missing, even 50 years after the fact, in some cases, due to classification.

¹² This definition differs somewhat from the traditional Marxist argument which puts the interest of economic actors at the center of foreign policy decision making. States look to material interests as a matter of course, first of all because loss of overseas investment and trade represents an existential concern for economically insecure nations, but also because material interests are often the most tangible and easily identifiable interests which can be threatened by the political policy of a foreign state. A state will respond whether or not that objection is based on calls for redress by private capitalist actors. See Krasner (1978, 339-340).

abroad.¹³ In our case, as Castro tolerated communists initially, and later moved them into positions of high power within the Cuban Government, the US found his actions unacceptable. Additionally, Castro sought to assist in destabilizing various governments in the Western Hemisphere, greatly disrupting the US-dominated hemispheric arrangement which had been in place since the 1940s.

A conflict of security interests is the perceived adoption of a policy by the target state which either alters or threatens to alter the balance of power between a sender state and its *chief strategic rival or rivals*.¹⁴ This conflict differs from ideological conflicts in that it directly seeks to reduce the power of the status quo state relative to its main rival(s), rather than simply asserting a different power arrangement or worldview. When it became clear that Cuba was aligning with the Soviets on security issues, providing the Soviet Union geo-political influence in the region, US policymakers began to perceive a serious security conflict.

TABLE 2. Examples of Perceived Conflicts of Interest in US-Cuba Relations

<i>Type</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Main Event</i>	<i>Date</i>
Economic	Adoption of policy by the target state which directly and negatively impacts the financial, trade, or investment interests of the status-quo state	Nationalization of Cuban Telephone Company	March 1959
		Agrarian reform law passed; US property expropriated	May 1959
		United Fruit Company expropriated	January 1960
Ideology	Adoption or toleration within a target state of an unacceptable viewpoint concerning the correct organization or function of government at home and abroad	Destabilization of neighboring countries, challenge to inter-American system	June 1959
		Removal of moderate leaders, abandonment of democracy	July 1959
		Rising Communist influence, fears of "demonstration effect"	October 1959
Security	Adoption of policy by the target state which either alters or threatens to alter the balance of power between a status-quo state and its chief geopolitical rival(s)	Association with Soviets detected, raising concerns about security of base at Guantanamo Bay and Cuba becoming a Soviet satellite	December 1959
		Mikoyan's visit establishes trade and military relations	February 1960

¹³ This definition is based on Krasner (1978) who described ideology as "a vision of how the world should be ordered on a global basis" (Krasner, 334). Krasner's ideology is synthesized with the concept of "order" described by English School author David Armstrong (1993), who talked about order as the mechanism which people in a given system agree upon that sets limits and rules for the process of change within the system (Armstrong 1993, 6).

¹⁴ This definition is based in defensive realism. According to Waltz (1979), "The first concern of states is not to maximize power but to maintain their position in the system" (Waltz 1979, 126). The move of a state like Cuba from the US sphere of influence to the Soviet sphere would represent a significant alteration of the relative power balance between the US and the Soviet Union.

For the US, any of these conflicts were serious by themselves, but all three taken together produced a crisis for US policy makers. After December 1959, the risk of working to remove the political leadership of a sovereign nation was suddenly acceptable, given the alternatives. Though Castro nationalized significant parts of the economy and promoted various communists to high offices in the Cuban government, the US focused on pressuring him to change course, not destabilizing his government. The conflict in Cuba at this point was not a significant enough deviation from the preferred status quo to justify the acceptance of the risk involved with violation of Cuba's sovereignty.

By mid-December 1959, almost all major US policy makers had come to the conclusion that Castro was rapidly aligning with the Soviets. This third major conflict, added to those which already existed in late-1959, turned the conflict into a crisis, and forced US policymakers into a realm of "expected losses" where balance-of-risk theory predicts they will begin to accept risk. History supports our hypothetical expectations: after December 1959, the US began drawing up plans to destabilize Castro's government. In February 1960, Soviet Foreign Minister Anastas Mikoyan publicly announced that the Soviet Union would sell weapons to Cuba, and if necessary, defend Castro's revolution from North American aggression. By early-March 1960, "The [Joint Chiefs of Staff] approved plans for action necessary for the support or re-establishment of a Cuban Government friendly to the United States and to protect US citizens where necessary" (FRUS 1960, 842). On March 17th, the President approved the plan to destabilize Castro's Government drafted by his 5412 Committee (FRUS, 862).

In the following section, we present the causal mechanism by which US policymakers eventually overcame risk-aversion, expressed as a cautious policy aimed at pressuring Castro's government to moderate, and accepted the risks of destabilization, as Eisenhower's 5412 Committee put it, "to bring about the replacement of the Castro government with one more devoted to the true interests of the Cuban people and more acceptable to the U.S. in such a manner as to avoid any appearance of U.S. intervention" (FRUS, 850).

THE US AND CASTRO: CRISIS OF INTEREST

US Interests and the Prelude to Conflict

Cuba has long held a special place in US foreign policy. US investment in Cuba was greater than any other Latin American country besides Venezuela, and on a per capita basis, was three times larger than anywhere else in the region (Thomas 1971, 1057). US companies held a virtual monopoly over the Cuban utilities and its sugar industry, the lifeblood of Cuba's monoculture economy (Rabe 1988, 119-120).¹⁵ The US maintained a base at Guantanamo Bay and from there, exerted influence across the Caribbean basin (Thomas, 1058).¹⁶ Ideologically, US interests in Cuba centered on maintaining the long-standing hemispheric order: political instability was always concerning to US policymakers.¹⁷ As long as the Government of Cuba did not dramatically alter this arrangement, the US was happy to let Cuba do as it wished (Rabe, 100-116).

¹⁵ For further information on US influence and control over the Cuban economy, see Rabe (119-121) and Morley (1987, 46-55).

¹⁶ The United States, which had traditionally seen Latin America as its own backyard, viewed Soviet Influence in the region as a direct threat to its own security. Military cooperation and basing rights with Latin American governments formed the centerpiece of its Latin American policy (Rabe, 88-92).

¹⁷ Following Nixon's ill-fated visit, stabilizing the Latin American subsystem and maintaining American hegemony became a priority (Rabe, 100-116).

When Fidel Castro's 26th of July Movement (M26) seized power from Batista in January, 1959, Washington responded with nervous apprehension (Morley 1987, 61-62). During the revolution, the Eisenhower administration had deeply mistrusted Castro and his movement, concerned about Communists and other anti-capitalist elements with its ranks.¹⁸ US apprehension was not so much based on distrust for Castro or the M-26: The US was primarily concerned that Castro's victory would upset the status quo in Cuba and in the region (Rabe 1988, 121).¹⁹ There was some concern about the ideological outlook of the new Government: Allan Dulles, head of the CIA, assured senators that Castro himself was no Communist, but he confided to Eisenhower that Communists, particularly Castro's top lieutenants, Ernesto "Che" Guevara and Fidel's brother, Raul could be expected to participate in the new government (Rabe, 122).

When it became clear that Batista would lose the revolution, and a third, "non-Castro" alternative proved unviable, the US reluctantly agreed to work with Castro. From the outset, Castro appeared similar to other strongmen who had come to power in Cuba. Like others before him, Castro was expected to promise and make some halting efforts at reform and then settle into the corrupt, but ultimately pro-US authoritarian state which had characterized most Cuban governments since Independence (Gott 2005, 134).²⁰ The Eisenhower administration recognized the revolutionary government and attempted to ensure the status quo for US business. The US was heartened when Castro stocked the government with moderates, included the well-known liberal Manuel Urrutia as President, alleviating fears that Cuba would represent a danger to US interests (FRUS, 370-72). While Castro did promise agrarian reform, he reassured investors that Cuba would move toward a mixed economy, and that US aid and investment would continue to be welcome.

Conflicts Intensify: Mar. 1959-Dec. 1959

It did not take long for ideological fault lines to form, however. US media soon began covering "revolutionary justice" visited upon some 550 members of the former Batista regime, who had been arrested, summarily tried in mock trials, and then publically executed (Gott, 168; Rabe, 123). Americans were troubled by what they saw as a contravention of due process and human rights abuses; criticism from both the US Congress and media were rampant.²¹ Despite this, many high-ranking administration officials seemed unconcerned, for the moment, by the excesses. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Roy Rubottom believed that Cuba would ultimately overcome its violence, and that US interests would prevail, while Dulles noted, "When you have a revolution, you kill your enemies" (quoted in Rabe, 123).²²

A more serious ideological conflict for the US was the rapidly-rising communist influence in the fledgling government and the abandonment of early promises about elections. In

¹⁸ U.S. officials were aware of Batista's corruption and brutality, and expressed the need for his removal, but were concerned about Communist and other "undesirable" factions within the M26's ranks, and appear to have preferred a, "devil they know" to one they didn't (Morley 1987, 61-2; Rabe 1988, 121).

¹⁹ Most foreign policy officials were clear on this point (Grow 2008, 33-34; Rabe, 122; Morley, 61-62).

²⁰ For example, when he first came to power in 1940 Fulgencio Batista had been widely considered to be a democrat and reformer. Only seizing office in a coup in 1952 did the once popular Batista gain a reputation as a dictator (Gott, 144).

²¹ U.S. editorials from the time express both outrage and support for the executions, though the narratives suggest that the dominate perception was one of outrage and brutality. An example of one such editorial may be found in Phillips (1959, 1). Senator Wayne Morris openly castigated Castro for human rights abuses, and Senator William J. Springer called for an investigation by the U.N. (Morris 1959).

²² The charge of human rights abuses, which originated during this period, would later become one of the core US critiques of the Cuban government.

the six weeks following his victory, Castro legalized the Cuban Communist Party (PSP), removed many of the moderates he had put into power, and named himself Premier of Cuba (Dominguez 1989, 16; Rabe, 123). Two weeks later, the promised elections were suspended for an additional two years (Thomas, 1985; Rabe, 123).

Castro further strained relations through a series of anti-US speeches in which he framed the revolution as a challenge to the established hemispheric order. The Cuban revolution, Castro argued, was only the first step in a hemisphere-wide campaign of liberation from US domination. Castro began accusing the US of attempting to subvert the revolution (Grow 2008, 32). He denounced the OAS, calling it a “useless organization” and in February, rejected membership in the Inter-American Development Bank. In March, he publicly repudiated the Rio Treaty.

Responding to Castro’s ideological tweaks, the US chose a “wait and see” approach. According to Eisenhower, despite US skepticism, “the great popularity that Castro enjoyed... gave us no alternative but to give him his chance” (FRUS, 1000-01). The Administration believed that the new government could-- and ultimately would-- moderate itself, and Castro was to be given every opportunity to do so. As Assistant Secretary Rubottom stated, they believed that there was “potential greatness in the Cuban Revolution” (quoted in Rabe, 123). The US tried to be as accommodating as possible, hoping to keep Castro within its good graces. For example, when Castro requested an end to US military missions in the country in early 1959, the United States complied, and also worked to move Batista to a suitable exile location outside of the Americas (FRUS, 391).²³

Despite the rapidly deepening ideological conflict, US economic interests in Cuba remained undisturbed for much of the first part of 1959. Castro expressed the need for agrarian reform and economic independence, but he also made clear that the US would still have a role in the Cuban economy, and that an agreement on developmental aid could be reached, albeit on Cuban terms (Erisman 1985, 16).²⁴ The US remained optimistic that its interests would be protected, and relations between US policy-makers and Castro remained cordial (FRUS, 420).

But economic cooperation would not last. On March 5, 1959, the Cuban Telephone Company, a subsidiary of the US-owned International Telephone and Telegraph Company was nationalized because of its close ties to the Batista Government,²⁵ and price controls on telephones and electricity were implemented (Gott, 170). Less than a week later, the Urban Reform Law reduced the price of medicine and lowered urban rents by 30 to 50 percent (Franklin 1997, 20). Alluding to the transformations the revolution would eventually undergo, Castro declared that “onerous concessions” that Batista had granted to “foreign monopolies” would be “reviewed or cancelled” (quoted in Grow, 32).

The growing ideological and economic divide between Cuba and the United States was noted at an NSC meeting on March 26th, 1959, where Allan Dulles echoed increasing concern from the Cuban business community over apparent departure from the *status quo*. At this meeting, Dulles warned of open participation of communists in Castro’s Government, the

²³ Batista was ultimately denied entry into the US and eventually resettled in Portuguese Madeira.

²⁴ In February, Castro sent officials to the United States to ask for credits and assistance in peso stabilization (FRUS, 450-451). The US, as of April 7th, appeared completely willing to discuss economic assistance and financial stabilization (FRUS, 272, 281). When the issue was broached initially at an April meeting (FRUS, 283) The US suggested that private capital and finance would form the bulk of any assistance the US offered. Cuba wanted more control over how the funds were to be used (FRUS, 287).

²⁵ In 1957, Batista granted ITT the rights to raise rates by 20%. In appreciation, the company presented the strongman with a golden telephone, as well as allegedly contributing to a media slush fund that Batista use for propaganda purposes (Rabe, 120).

alienation of moderate leftists in Cuba, and Castro's involvement in the destabilization of other Latin American Governments (FRUS, 440-42).

Castro's visit to the United States in April did little to ease US fears over the ideological and economic direction his government was taking. Castro, like his predecessors, had been expected to formally request US aid to signal acknowledgement of the traditional relationship between the US and Cuba,²⁶ but because terms acceptable to Cuba could not be reached earlier, Castro did not even mention it (Dominguez 1989, 18). This was a blow to US-Cuban relations: The United States had hoped to use economic aid to redirect the revolution.²⁷ Concerns about communist influence in Castro's regime only worsened: Vice President Richard Nixon's meeting with Castro left him convinced that, "[Castro] is either incredibly naïve about communism or under Communist discipline" (FRUS, 476-77). Following the visit, both the State Department and CIA began to contemplate what a post-Castro state might look like (Perez-Stable 1999, 79).

Upon returning to Cuba, Castro embarked on a series of economic reforms that would deepen the economic conflict with the US. On May 17th, Castro announced his long-awaited agrarian reform, and after June 3rd, expropriated all farmland over 1,000 acres, offering compensation in long-term government bonds based upon the reported 1958 value of the property (Gott, 170; Thomas, 1215-1217).²⁸ To administer the agrarian law, Castro created the National Institute for Agrarian Reform (INRA), headed by Marxist Antonio Nunez Jimenez. Che Guevara ran the INRA's department of Industry, while Raul Castro headed the organization's 100,000 man militia (Gott 2005, 171).

Agrarian reform proved to be a turning point in US-Cuban relations. Immediately after the reforms went into effect, the United States wrote an official note of complaint to Castro, demanding, "... prompt, adequate, and immediate compensation" (Thomas, 1223). While the Administration respected the right of agrarian reform, including Cuba's right to expropriate foreign-owned property, they argued that the compensation was inadequate (Franklin 1997, 21; Thomas, 1223).²⁹ As Cuba based compensation on the values inaccurately reported by US firms, compensation became a sticking point in negotiations.

Meanwhile, the ideological conflict deepened as Castro began acting on his long-standing theme concerning "hemispheric liberation." Throughout 1959, Cuba embarked on a series of campaigns designed to spread revolution throughout the hemisphere. In April, Cuba sponsored an armed expedition against the Panamanian Government (FRUS, 492-497). In June, Cuban-backed insurgents invaded the Dominican Republic. In August, a small Cuban invasion force attempted to overthrow the Duvalier government in Haiti (Grow, 33). While the United States shared Castro's dislike of many of these authoritarian regimes-- particularly Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, whom the United States was attempting to destabilize at the same time--

²⁶ Most US foreign policy officials took a paternalistic view of the revolution, seeing it as in need of constant guidance in order to reach its "proper" end-state. In February, Allan Dulles "... pointed out that the new Cuban officials had to be treated more or less like children. They had to be led rather than rebuffed. If they were rebuffed, like children, they were capable of doing almost anything" (FRUS, 398).

²⁷ Analysts argued that US should continue to encourage Castro to moderate and isolate the radical elements of the J26 Movement. The US could, in turn, provide Castro financial and monetary supports, while being sure to not endorse Castro's anti-American rhetoric (FRUS, 404-406)

²⁸ For a good treatment on the Agrarian Reform, see Thomas (1215-1219). Predictably, property values had been underreported by their owners, as was typical of all foreign owners of property throughout the region (Rabe, 125). INRA also precluded foreigners from all future land purchases, and ruled disproportionately against US firms in labor disputes (Thomas, 1216; Bethell 1993, 98).

²⁹ US compensation claims remain unresolved (Franklin, 21).

Castro's effort to decide the fates of various authoritarians in the region threatened the established order (Rabe, 155). If there was going to be change in the inter-American system, the US wanted to ensure that US-interests were promoted. The US would not tolerate radical change that rejected US authority (Rabe, 155-57).

Between June and July, Castro consolidated his rule. Five moderate cabinet ministers were ousted and replaced by radicals, culminating in July with Urritia's forced resignation for public expression of anti-communist views (Gott, 171). He was replaced by Osvaldo Dorticos, a long-standing member of the Cuban Communist Party (PSP) (Gott, 35). Meanwhile, Pedro Diaz Lanz, the head of the Cuban Air Force, fled to the US at the end of June. He then testified before the Congress about the rise of communism in the Cuban Government, and soon began leading raids against the Cuba's increasingly leftist government (Bethell, 98).³⁰

At this point, the US began to seriously consider Castro a threat to the stability of the inter-American system. Between June 25th and July 5, a series of NSC hearings weighed the possibility of overthrowing Castro, but ultimately concluded that overthrow was unlikely to produce a favorable outcome (FRUS, 546). However, the US had not passed into the realm of losses: Reconciliation was still within grasp. Despite the acute economic and ideological conflicts of interest between the United States and Cuba, Ambassador Bonsal advised, "for present we [must] continue policy of friendliness toward Castro and GOC, using our influence in every way to guide him towards sounder economic ground, and that we give no encouragement of any kind to movements aimed at overthrowing Castro." (quoted in FRUS, 554). The administration believed that growing disillusionment with Castro's policies within Cuba and Latin America would eventually force him to moderate, and any US involvement would only prolong Castro's tenure by allowing him to deflect blame for his policy failures onto the United States (FRUS, 599-601; 616-20).

On October 17, Raul Castro became Minister of the Armed Forces. Four days later, Major Huber Matos, a revolutionary hero, was jailed after criticizing communist influence in the Government (FRUS, 629; Thomas, 1245). Ambassador Bonsal expressed concern over what he saw as the Communist takeover of the armed forces (FRUS, 628). Later that month, Assistant Secretary Rubottom outlined ideological and economic conflicts of interest present in US-Cuba relations, and advocated *pressure* on Castro's government to convince him to alter the policies which led to these conflicts. Rubottom recommended that the US should encourage opposition to Castro's "extremist, anti-American course" (FRUS, 656), but stopped short of calling for Castro's overthrow, advising against action which would adversely affect the viability of "[either] a reformed Castro regime or a successor to it" (FRUS, 639).

Despite its frustrations with the Castro regime, the many important US policy makers did not yet feel US-Cuban relations had deteriorated to the point of crisis of interest. It is telling that at this time, Rubottom did not argue that Castro's government was a threat to US security, and the hesitation to actually countenance a destabilization of Castro therefore remains consistent with our model. The reluctance to destabilize was illustrated by the Diaz Lanz affair that month, when the exiled revolutionary general launched a raid from Florida and dropped anti-Castro leaflets over Havana. 3 people were killed in the ensuing gunfire, allowing Castro to accuse the United States of aiding exiles in efforts to overthrow his government (Thomas, 1243; FRUS,

³⁰ These raids were not supported by the US government, and proved a major frustration for US policymakers in dealing with Castro (FRUS, 544-45).

633-35). The US offered a conciliatory response and made greater attempts to curb exile activity.³¹

In the meantime, Cuban policy continued to deviate from US preferences. In November, the last three non-communists in Castro's cabinet were forced to resign. On November 25, Guevara was appointed President of the Central Bank. By the end of the year, moderates had been completely purged, and the PSP was completely integrated into the state structure (Grow, 35). *Habeas corpus* was suspended, and new laws targeting foreign firms were implemented (Thomas, 1253).³²

In response, defense and intelligence officials began to see Castro as a potential Soviet pawn: On December 1st, Dulles expressed concerns that the USSR might be influencing events in Cuba (FRUS, 684). But Cuba policy remained under control of the State Department, and though State officials had long given up on reforming Castro, they still advised against destabilization as late as December 9th (FRUS, 731-32).³³ Importantly, Castro's policy was still not viewed as a security threat because there was little evidence of Soviet involvement in Cuba (FRUS, 686-88; 697-98).

Crisis in US-Cuban Relations: December 1959

Throughout most of 1959, Cuba had worse relations with the Soviets than it did with the US. During the Revolution, Castro had routinely equated the Soviet and US imperialism (Grow, 35). Although the Soviets were encouraged by Castro's anti-US rhetoric, the M26's refusal to proclaim themselves "Marxist-Leninist" made them ideologically suspect. Relations between the M26 and PSP were hostile due to the latter's lukewarm support during the revolution, and an unwillingness to support confrontational policies with the US (Erisman, 16-7).³⁴ The feelings seemed mutual; Cuba had refused to acknowledge Soviet recognition of the new government in January, 1959 (Dominguez, 21).

Foreseeing the collision course with the United States after the Revolution, many of the Cuban Government's more radical members attempted to build ties with the Soviets. The first major contact was made by Guevara during a trip to Cairo in June 1959, where he met with Soviet and other eastern Bloc diplomats (Grow, 36). The contact led to a trade deal in which the Soviets bought sugar at below-market prices. While aware of the trip, the United States was unconcerned: Batista had made a similar deal in 1955 (Dominguez, 22). The US also noted that Egyptian President Nasser had strongly advised Guevara against associating with the Soviets (FRUS, 543).

³¹ On October 27th, exile attacks from US soil were made a criminal offense (Thomas, 1248).

³² The new laws decreed that 60% of all oil concession profits must accrue to the government, and firms which the government decreed to be failing or not producing enough could now be seized. Following the laws implementation, the lands of Bethlehem Steel and International Harvester, along with acres of cattle land, were also seized (Thomas, 1253).

³³ Ironically, it was the US business community which was pressing State to continue to work with Castro. Even at this late point, the treasurer of Standard Oil expressed a typical position among the US businesses to the Secretary of State that there was little the US could do to prevent the economic situation from getting worse in Cuba, but that Cuban radicalism would eventually "run its course in two or three years" and then a *modus vivendi* would be established. That Eisenhower accepted this argument indicates that the Administration still felt that getting rid of Castro was unnecessary (FRUS, 710-11).

³⁴ The tension was due to the difference of tactics employed by the PSP in the Cities, which Guevara described as "adventurist" and "putschist" (Guevara, 1963 [1996], 317) and the tactics of the guerrillas in the mountains. After the revolution, under guidance from Moscow, the PSP resisted supporting many of Castro's revolutionary policies in order to avoid tension with the United States (Erisman, 17).

Relations between Cuba and the USSR changed in October 1959, when KGB agent Alexandr Alekseev secretly arrived in Havana, met with Castro and agreed to move the upcoming Soviet Technical and Agricultural Exposition from Mexico City to Cuba (Grow, 36). The US remained unaware of this shift, noting in early-December that Soviet-Cuban relations were still relatively cool (FRUS, 408). The Soviet Union remained conspicuously absent from US policy decisions regarding Cuba until December 16th, when Dulles acknowledged the relocation of the Soviet Exposition to Havana, along with Cuba's growing ties to the Sino-Soviet bloc: Cuba was suddenly at risk of entering the Soviet orbit (FRUS, 703-06).³⁵

Change in US policy was immediate. While Secretary Herter wanted to keep Cuba policy within the purview of the State Department, Eisenhower accepted the advice of NSC advisor Gordon Grey that pure diplomacy had failed and other agencies, namely Defense and the CIA, needed to be brought in to deal with the "Cuba problem" (FRUS, 704-05; Rabe, 128). When it became clear that Castro was aligning with the Soviets in mid-December, 1959, the third and final conflict was acknowledged and US-Cuban relations were in crisis.

Our hypothetical expectation is that policy makers will move from risk-averse to risk-acceptant strategy like destabilization in response to the shift from conflict to crisis of interest. Historical evidence supports this expectation. When all major policy makers, now including President Eisenhower perceived the shift to the realm of losses, the tone of US policy documents changed. Castro was no longer seen as an annoyance, but a threat. By the end of the month, Rubottom described the situation in Cuba as intolerable and a "Plan of Action" involving a tax on all Cuban imports and a propaganda campaign to counter "anti-American" statements by the Cuban government was approved; it went into effect in early January (FRUS, 717-720). A memorandum between Grey and Rubottom on December 31st makes clear that that, while the leftward shift in Cuban policy in late October played a major role in changing US policy toward Cuba, after December 16, "Cuba was no longer just a diplomatic problem for the United States. The problems of business, finance, and defense were now impinging on all of the Government" (FRUS, 723-724).

We must underscore that it was not *just* the final appearance of a security conflict that convinced US policymakers to adopt a strategy of destabilization: it was a combination of all three to form a crisis of interests. While Soviet influence in the region was of grave concern of the United States, documents make it clear that the security conflict, only when considered *within the context* of the pre-existing ideological and economic conflicts, finally tipped the scales toward destabilization. A February 1960 memorandum by Rubottom noted that the Soviet-Cuban relationship was likely to have reverberations for US economic, ideological and security interests across the region: Given the recent Mikoyan visit, the concluded trade and economic deals, and the Soviet promise of aircraft to Cuba in exchange for cooperation in the UN, Rubottom cautioned the Administration from engaging in acts which are "... likely to be interpreted in Cuba and elsewhere in Latin America as U.S. acquiescence in this new Soviet-Cuban relationship" (FRUS, 805). Secretary Herter affirmed these concerns in a letter to the British foreign secretary Selwyn Lloyd the next day, in which he declared "Mikoyan's recent visit was a long step toward the breaking of the remaining links between the Government of Cuba and the American family of nations and presages the establishment of close working relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union." (FRUS, 805).

³⁵ At the same meeting, Dulles raised the issue of using Cuban exiles for a potential invasion.

The US position was concisely summed up by President Eisenhower in a letter to British Prime Minister Harold MacMillian in June 1960, just six months after the US became aware of the Mikoyan visit. Eisenhower wrote:

“... Khrushchev and the Soviet leadership did not commit themselves openly to Castro until Mikoyan’s visit last January, a year after Castro came to power. The trade and credit agreements reached then exposed fully the intent of Castro, despite Cuba’s formal commitments under the Rio Treaty and the Charter of the Organization of American States, to orient himself toward the Soviet Union” (FRUS, 1002).

The Decision to Destabilize: Dec. 1959- Mar. 1960

Statements such as this underscore our argument that the decision to destabilize Castro was ultimately the result of a long series of perceived provocations, the last of which was the security conflict presented by the Mikoyan visit. After a year full of economic and ideological conflict between the US and Cuba, when the remaining holdouts, including Eisenhower himself, finally became convinced that Castro intended to align with the Soviets, the time for risk-averse pressuring Castro to change his ways was over. The US began to adopt highly-risky policy toward Castro, and destabilization began.

It is possible that the lack of an acceptable alternative may have prevented the US from adopting the policy before this point. A policy paper drafted for Rubottom, dated December 4, 1959 laid out US options and evaluated possible opposition elements with which the US could work. The paper lists six possible domestic sources of opposition to Castro, but notes, for each one, problems with and limitations of each group. In the end, the paper recommends that the US avoid association with any group which would appear to be attempting to "undo" the revolution (FRUS, 689-692).

The lack of a suitable alternative may explain why the US did not decide to destabilize Castro earlier, but it is still commensurate with balance-of-risk theory: In early December, the risk associated with destabilization was higher than policy makers were willing to accept, given the absence, at that point of the widely perceived crisis of interest. The objective situation for opposition groups within Cuba was not fundamentally better a month later-- in fact, it was probably worse. And yet, at that time, because of the addition of the third conflict of interest, the US became willing to accept the risks in late-December where they were unwilling to in the early-December.

By the end of December, the administration had completely given up on diplomacy with Castro: After learning of Mikoyan's visit, Dulles presented a preliminary plan for destabilization. Eisenhower did not believe the plan was ambitious enough to ensure Castro's successful removal, and asked Dulles to redraft it (Gott, 183; Rabe, 128). From then on, Castro's government was increasingly linked to Soviet influence in the area, a significant difference from the language used before learning of Mikoyan's visit. On January 8th, State officials suggested that Castro was probably in the "employ of the Soviets" and hinted at the possibility that Cuba was rapidly becoming a Soviet satellite. Others noted the threat Cuba posed to the US base at Guantanamo (FRUS, 731). In a January 11th memorandum, Soviet economic interests were discussed alongside military intervention (FRUS, 736-739).

While the destabilization policy was being crafted, a policy of harassment was implemented to sabotage and weaken the Cuban economy (FRUS, 828-32). Starting in late January 1960, small planes piloted by Cuban exiles and armed by the CIA firebombed sugar fields on the Island (Gott, 183). Within a few days of the Mikoyan visit, Eisenhower ended

efforts to prevent the subversive activities by exiles in Cuba (FRUS, 454; Thomas, 1264). In February, an American pilot was shot down and killed during a bombing run. Privately, the Administration hoped to line up support in the OAS for action against Cuba. (FRUS, 763-65). The effort led to nothing.

Mikoyan arrived in Havana for the trade fair on February 4, 1960. After meeting with Castro on February 13, a trade deal between the two countries was announced, where the Soviets would supply Cuba with credit to buy much-needed raw materials, particularly oil, in exchange for a significant portion of Cuba's sugar harvest at a reduced price. This deal relieved pressure caused by any cuts to the Sugar Quota and eliminated the last bit of leverage that the US had over the course of the Cuban Revolution.

More troubling for the US than Soviet trade was a new security agreement struck during the exposition. Mikoyan offered Cuba the possibility of purchasing military aircraft and arms the US had pressured Britain not to sell them the previous November. US officials saw this as the *fait accompli*, and perceived that the visit meant that Cuba had firmly joined the Soviet camp (FRUS, 791; Thomas, 1265-1266). According to US officials, Cuba by itself represented no security threat to the US, but "acquisition of arms from the [Soviet] Bloc, in conjunction with other evidence of ties with international Communism, could form a basis for inter-American action in accordance with the Caracas Resolution." Furthermore, the Soviet agreement to provide military aircraft and armament to Cuba was an "affront to efforts of all American Republics to maintain peace." (FRUS, 801).

Through February and into March, relations worsened further, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, working on Eisenhower's directive proposed a draft policy for "...action necessary for the support or re-establishment of a Cuban Government friendly to the United States..." (FRUS, 842). On March 17th, a paper prepared by Eisenhower's covert action group known as the 5412 Committee and which included many of the proposals made by the JCS, recommended the destabilization of Castro's government. Eisenhower quickly approved (FRUS, 856-59). The plan detailed the creation of a paramilitary force which would invade the island. At the same time, a propaganda campaign would be launched that raised opposition against the Castro government.³⁶ Several other measures designed to weaken Castro's hold on power in Cuba and damage the Cuban economy were also included in the plan, with hopes that the program would weaken Castro and allow his opposition to overthrow him.

Destabilization of Castro's Government was now the policy of the Government of the United States of America. Castro learned of the policy within days (Rabe, 132), and immediately turned to the Soviets for help (Grow, 50).³⁷ From April until October of 1960, the two countries engaged in a diplomatic tit-for-tat that would irrevocably damage their relationship. Meanwhile, the US planned and prepared the operation which would eventually be known as the Bay of Pigs Invasion, laid the foundation for the embargo, and formulated the long-standing efforts at undermining Castro's Government which continue to this date.

IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY AND CONCLUSION

In this article, we set out to accomplish two goals. First, we sought to test a hypothesis derived from the expectations of Taliaferro's balance-of-risk theory. In this, the historical

³⁶ Over \$13 million were earmarked for the anti-Castro propaganda campaign (Rabe, 162).

³⁷ On April 4, the *Coubre*, a French ship carrying armaments from Belgium, was blown up in Havana (Thomas, 1269). While it is unclear if the *Coubre's* explosion was caused by the United States or not, Castro quickly blamed the incident on American sabotage (Thomas, 1269-1270).

evidence we present above demonstrates our hypothesis. We were able to show that before mid-December, 1959, US policy makers were not fully convinced that relations between US and Cuba were in crisis. It is true that some of them perceived a crisis earlier than others, given the Castro's economic and ideological policies which conflicted directly with US policy preferences during 1959.

However, after it became apparent that the Soviet Foreign Minister had scheduled a very public visit to Cuba, adding the third and final conflict to the crisis, the Administration became united in the perception that the risk-averse policy had failed, and the US was on the verge of losing Cuba to the Soviets. With this set of expectations now guiding policy, the US adopted the risky policy of destabilization, a policy which continues to this day. This timely acceptance conforms to the theoretical expectations of balance-of-risk theory and confirms our hypothesis.

The strength of balance-of-risk theory for foreign policy analysis is two-fold. It allows us to understand why policy makers undertake risky foreign policy like destabilization. But it also helps us understand why policy makers persist in that risk-acceptance, even after the causes themselves have long been mitigated or forgotten. Taliaferro talks about "entrapment" as an effort to recoup "sunken costs" like material resources or prestige. In his work, he found that the longer a country pursues a losing risk-acceptant strategy, the less likely it will be to revise expectations, thus allowing it to return to a realm of expected gains and then disengage. Instead, it aims for higher-risk goals to attempt to recoup losses (Taliaferro, 50-52).

In US-Cuban relations, we see this play out. As time went on, and US policy objectives for destabilization were frustrated repeatedly, the US escalated their programs, even to the point of near-nuclear war. Decades after the Soviet threat vanished, and the US moved on to other parts of the world, it still maintains the embargo and other programs designed to encourage opposition elements in Cuba to remove the Castro Government, even though that Castro is now Raul. And it is unlikely to revise its program because that would signal an immediate loss of 50 plus years of material resources and the prestige that the US has tied to the policy.

Secondarily, but perhaps more importantly, we sought to offer a rigorous conceptualization of the term "destabilization." This article provides a jumping-off point for more thorough and systematic research into the concept. Our conceptualization here will help policy analysts understand a wide range of policy decisions, even into the modern, post-Cold War era. US policy in the Middle East after September 11th, 2001 offers a particularly interesting opportunity for future research along these lines. For example, the Obama Administration's statements on the situation in Syria mirrors, in many ways US Cold War policy toward various Latin America (White House 2011). It is possible that in the future, analysts will be able to detect a much larger role for the US than is currently being represented publicly, in many theaters.

Cuba is an excellent case to illustrate this concept: Properly conceptualized, we can identify destabilization there, and track down, empirically, the date when the decision to carry out that policy was made. Our hypothetical test furthermore illuminates the causal mechanism which *led* the US and Cuba to the events which have ever after characterized their relationship, at that particular point in history, and makes the US continue to follow that same policy even fifty two years later. This fills in an important piece of the puzzle in both balance-of-risk theory and the analysis of foreign policy as a whole.

Works Cited

- Armstrong, David. 1993. *Revolution and World Order*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Art, Robert J. and Patrick M. Cronin, Ed. 2003. *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace.
- Bethell, Leslie. 1993. *Cuba: a Short History*. Cambridge MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Bisley, Nick. 2004. "Counter-Revolution, Order and International Politics." *Review of International Studies* 30: 49-69.
- Blaiser, Cole. 1985. *The Hovering Giant: US Responses to Revolutionary Change in Latin America 1910-1986*, 2nd ed. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press.
- Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba. 2006. Report to the President, July 2006. <www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/68166.pdf> (Dec. 26, 2012.)
- Cox, Ronald W. 1994. *Power and Profits: US Policy in Central America*. Lexington KY: The University Press of Kentucky.
- Dominguez, Jorge I. 1989. *To Make the World Safe for Revolution: Cuban Foreign Policy*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Downes, Alexander B. 2008. The Causes of Foreign Imposed Regime Change in Interstate Wars. <http://www.duke.edu/~downes/DOWNES_APSA_FIRC_2008.pdf> (Feb. 1, 2011).
- Dulles, John W. F. 1970. *Unrest in Brazil: Political-Military Crises 1955-1964*. Austin TX: University of Texas Press.
- Edel, Wilbur. 1991. "Diplomatic History: State Department Style." *Political Science Quarterly* 106: 695-712.
- Erisman, H. Michael. 1985. *Cuba's International Relations: The Anatomy of a Nationalistic Foreign Policy*. Boulder CO: Westview Press.
- Franklin, Jane. 1997. *Cuba and the United States: A Chronological History*. Melbourne: Ocean Press.
- George, Alexander L. 1991. *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy as an Alternative to War*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace.
- Gerring, John. 2007. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. Cambridge MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Gott, Richard. 2005. *Cuba: A New History*. New Haven CT: Yale University Press.

- Grow, Michael. 2008. *US Presidents and Latin American Interventions: Pursuing Regime Change in the Cold War*. Lawrence KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Guevara, Ernesto. (1963 [1996]) *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956-58*. Ed., Mary-Alice Waters. New York: Pathfinder Press.
- Hufbauer, Gary Clyde, Jeffrey J Schott, Kimberly Ann Elliot, and Barbara Oegg. 2009. *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered*, 3rd ed. Washington DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics.
- Immerman, Richard H. 1982. *The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention*. Austin TX: University of Texas Press.
- Kahneman, Daniel and Amos Tversky. 1979. "Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision Under Risk." *Econometrica* 47: 263-292.
- Kissinger, Henry. 1979. *White House Years*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Kornbluh, Peter. 2004. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*. New York: The New Press.
- Krasner, Stephen D. 1978. *Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials Investment and US Foreign Policy*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Manley, Michael. 1982. *Jamaica: Struggle in the Periphery*. London: Third World Media Limited.
- Marinov, Nikolay. 2005. "Do Economic Sanctions Destabilize Country Leaders?" *American Journal of Political Science* 49: 564-576.
- Mars, Percy. 1998. *Ideology and Change: The Transformation of the Caribbean Left*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Merom, Gil. 1990. "Democracy, Dependency and Destabilization: The Shaking of Allende's Regime." *Political Science Quarterly* 105: 75-95.
- Morley, Morris H. 1987. *Imperial State and Revolution: The United States and Cuba 1952-1986*. Cambridge UK: The Cambridge University Press.
- Morris, John D. January 15, 1959. "US Will Speed Envoy to Havana." *New York Times*.
- Pape, Robert. 1997. "Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work." *International Security* 22: 90-136.

- Perez-Stable, Marifelli. 1999. *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course and Legacy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Phillips, R. Hart. January 15, 1959. "100 Face Death in Trials about to Begin in Havana." *New York Times*.
- Rabe, Stephen G. 1988. *Eisenhower and Latin America: The Foreign Policy of Anticommunism*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Rabe, Stephen G. 2005. *US Intervention in British Guiana: A Cold War Story*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Schlesinger, Stephen and Stephen Kinzer. 2005 (1982). *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*, 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Schultz, Kenneth A. 2001. *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy*. Cambridge, UK: The Cambridge University Press.
- Stodden, William P. 2012. *Destabilization as Foreign Policy: The USA in Latin America, 1947-1989*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Political Science, Southern Illinois University.
- Streeter, Stephen M. 2000. "Interpreting the 1954 US Intervention in Guatemala: Realist, Revisionist and Post-revisionist Perspectives." *The History Teacher*, 34: 61-74.
- Taliaferro, Jeffery. 2004. *Balancing Risk: Great Power Interventions in the Periphery*. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press.
- Thomas, Hugh. 1971. *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.
- US. Department of State. (n.d.) Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960. Vol. 6, Cuba. Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office.
<<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v06>> (Oct 26, 2012).
- Waltz, Kenneth N. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. New York: McGraw- Hill.
- White House, Office of the Press Secretary. 2011. Statement by President Obama on the Situation in Syria. <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/18/statement-president-obama-situation-syria>>. (Dec 28, 2012).