

## BETWEEN COLD WAR AND WAR ON TERROR: GEORGE W. BUSH AND CUBA'S BIOWEAPONS, 2001-2004

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### Abstract

After the 9\11 terrorist attacks, U.S. foreign policy changed dramatically due to the "War on Terror" campaign and the "Bush doctrine." In this new framework, the invasion of Iraq became the most striking application of this new paradigm. On the contrary, however, U.S. relations with Cuba remained focused on a Cold War approach, mainly based on isolation and external pressure for regime change. Moreover, U.S. accusation over Cuban bioweapons was similar to the premises for the invasion of Iraq, the "Bush doctrine" never completely entered relations with the Caribbean island, which were characterized by a prosecution of a long dated policy without any consistent evolution. U.S. policy towards Cuba never adhered to the "Iraqi scenario."

### Resumen

A partir de los ataques terroristas del 11/9, La política de Estados Unidos cambio dramáticamente debido a la campaña denominada "Guerra contra el terrorismo" y a la "Doctrina Bush." La invasión a Iraq fue la aplicación más evidente de este Nuevo paradigma en este nuevo marco. Por el contrario las relaciones Estados Unidos Cubase mantuvieron con un enfoque de Guerra Fría que se basó en el aislamiento y la presión externa para lograr un cambio de régimen en la Isla. Además, la acusación de que Cuba poseía armas biológicas a la premisa de la invasión a Iraq, la "Doctrina Bush" nunca se aplicó completamente a las relaciones con la isla caribeña, la política hacia Cuba prosiguió sobre las bases iniciales sin ninguna evolución consistente. Esta política nunc siguió el "escenario Iraquí."

In the 1990s, US-Cuba bilateral relations had not experienced any kind of normalization or appeasement. In fact, during the George H. W. Bush and Clinton years, U.S. strategy was based mainly on a Cold War-style policy, which meant the total isolation of Cuba from the rest of the world\hemisphere through economic sanctions, which would have helped the demise of Castrism.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the regime change became the most important element of U.S. strategy toward the island: ousting Fidel Castro and the Revolution had remained in place since the early 1990s. In other words, especially after the Helms-Burton Act of 1996 (which became the major codification of the embargo), U.S. relations with the island maintained this Cold War approach.<sup>2</sup> When George W. Bush won the presidency in 2000, he contributed to transmit this legacy even during the "War on Terror." This paper analyzes the relations between this Cold War-style policy toward Cuba and U.S. foreign policy after the 9\11 terrorist attacks. In particular, it focuses on the accusations made by Undersecretary of State John Bolton to Cuba about the possibility that the Cuban government possessed or had been trading bioweapons and their relative technology (May 2002). Despite those accusations (framed up on rough guess) leading commentators to draw analogies between Cuba and Iraq, they contributed more to the preservation of a Cold War policy rather than preparing the United States for a potential invasion of the island, while reflecting the internal division within the American administration.

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<sup>1</sup> David Seaman, *U.S. Democracy Promotion – The Case of Cuba* (Opladen & Farmington Hills: Budrich UniPress, 2010): 33-38; Donna R. Kaplowitz, *Anatomy of a Failed Embargo: U.S. Sanctions against Cuba* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998): 3-9.

<sup>2</sup> Jorge I. Domínguez, "U.S.-Cuban Relations: From the Cold War to the Colder War," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 39, No. 3 (July 1997): 49-75; Morris Morley and Chris McGillion, *Unfinished Business: America and Cuba After the Cold War, 1989–2001* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 185-199.

## Cold War Ghosts

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, relations between Cuba and the United States were far from being appeased. The incoming President inherited the difficult legacy of Clinton's years, which saw the codification of the embargo through the Helms-Burton Act in 1996 (which would become the cornerstone of U.S. policy toward Castro's government), a massive migration crisis in 1994-95 (known as the *balseros* crisis) and a potential conflict after the shoot-down of two Cessna aircraft belonging to an anti-Castrist group based in South Florida.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Castro's unwillingness to cooperate and the difficult path toward democratization irritated and frustrated the U.S. administration. In 1999, Clinton confessed the following: "Every time we do something, Castro shoots planes down and kills people illegally, or puts people in jail because they say something he doesn't like. And I almost think he doesn't want us to lift the embargo."<sup>4</sup> In fact, Clinton tried to "do something" with Cuba and some form of appeasement took place during the period 1993-1995 and after the Pope's visit to Cuba in 1998, but, as Petras and Morley pointed out, it remained a "two steps backward, one step forward" relation.<sup>5</sup> At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Cuba and the U.S. were once again ideologically and materially distant and isolated: in October 2000, the Cuban Council of State approved the *Decreto-Ley 212*, which obliged American corporations to pay the Cuban government compensation for direct phone calls between the two countries. As the telecommunication companies had no authorization to do so from the American government, Castro decided to cut off these direct services.<sup>6</sup>

President Bush, unlike Clinton, never considered any form of dialogue with Cuba. On the contrary, his administration opted for resurrecting Cold War "ghosts" and strategies. The first of these was the economic and diplomatic isolation of Cuba. Secretary of State Colin Powell, in the Congressional hearing for his appointment, anticipated some future moves of the administration, that, according to Powell, had no intentions to ease the embargo and was determined to resist the pressure of some economic sectors which wanted to explore new commercial opportunities with Cuba.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, President Bush never sponsored the Agriculture, Conservation, and Rural Enhancement Act of 2001 (S.1731) that contained some provisions (sec. 335) to eliminate the limitations on private investments for agricultural sales to Cuba.<sup>8</sup> The administration refused to support the S.1731, which died after the approval in the Senate, and other bills, because Bush considered the systematic violation of human rights on the island as a central issue in his policy toward Cuba.<sup>9</sup> With the U.S. starting to eliminate economic sanctions over China since the Clinton years (without any real concession in terms of democracy and human rights from the Chinese government), the administration was looking

<sup>3</sup> Lars Schoultz, *That little infernal Cuban republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press: 2009): 453-514; James Petras and Morris Morley, "Clinton's Cuba Policy: Two Steps Backward, One Step Forward," *Third World Quarterly* 17, no. 2 (Jun., 1996): 269-287; Morris Morley and Chris McGillion, *Unfinished Business: America and Cuba After the Cold War, 1989-2001* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 52-175; Marifeli Pérez-Stable, *The United States and Cuba : intimate enemies* (New York: Taylor & Francis , 2011): 24-83; Walt Vanderbush and Patrick J. Haney, "Policy Toward Cuba in the Clinton Administration," *Political Science Quarterly* 114, No. 3 (Autumn, 1999): 387-408; Soraya M. Castro Mariño, "U.S.-Cuban Relations during the Clinton Administration," *Latin American Perspectives* 29, No. 4, The Cuban Revolution Confronts the Future, Part 2 (Jul., 2002): 47-76.

<sup>4</sup> William J. Clinton, "Remarks in a Teleconference on Agricultural Issues With Rural Radio Stations in Hermitage," *American Presidency Project*, November 5, 1999, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=56880>.

<sup>5</sup> James Petras and Morris Morley, "Clinton's Cuba Policy: Two Steps Backward, One Step Forward": 269-287.

<sup>6</sup> *Granma*, November 9, 2000: 1.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Overview of Foreign Policy Issues and Budget*, 107th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2001), March 8: 39.

<sup>8</sup> "S.1731 (107th): Agriculture, Conservation, and Rural Enhancement Act of 2001," November 27, 2001, <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/107/s1731>.

<sup>9</sup> George W. Bush, "Statement of Administration Policy: S. 1731 - Agriculture, Conservation, and Rural Enhancement Act of 2001," *American Presidency Project*, December 5, 2001, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25632>; George W. Bush, "Statement of Administration Policy: H.R. 2590 - Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Appropriations Bill, FY 2002," *American Presidency Project*, July 24, 2001, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25595>.

at Cuba under a different light: according to Grant Aldonas, Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade, with Cuba “there is simply less there to engage with than there is with China.”<sup>10</sup> Few months before, Trade Representative Robert Zoellick had used similar words to justify the different standard applied to Cuba.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, when President Bush exercised for the first time his authority to waive the Title III of the Helms-Burton Act<sup>12</sup> (July 11, 2001), he did so claiming the necessity to “internationalize” the embargo against Cuba (with the help of Canada and other European countries) and defending the effective sanctions.<sup>13</sup> For this reason, only a few days before the waiver, Bush decided to enforce control over the violations to the embargo and the Office of Foreign Assets Control’s rules: the administration provided the OFAC with three single presiding judges in order to reactivate statute barred cases, and implemented airport inspections for American tourists and Cuban-Americans arriving from Cuba.<sup>14</sup> According to a spokesman of the Office, between May and July 2001, the OFAC notified more than 400 violations to American citizens, compared to 188 violations in 2000.<sup>15</sup>

Since the early 1960s, the U.S. has been fostering a regime change in Cuba through economic sanctions and external pressure.<sup>16</sup> George W. Bush’s approach to the “Cuban problem” was nothing new and confirmed the same old patten. A few days before the celebration for Cuban Independence Day (May 20),<sup>17</sup> Bush declared: “My administration will oppose any attempt to weaken sanctions against Cuba’s government until the regime—and I will fight such attempts until this regime frees its political prisoners, holds democratic, free elections, and allows for free speech.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, Bush confirmed his loyalty to the main framework created by the codifications of the embargo in the 1990s: a reversal of U.S. sanctions in exchange for a complete regime change and transition to a liberal-democracy. In fact, the 2004 report of the Commission for the Assistance to a Free Cuba (CAFC), which included members of the presidential Cabinet, focused on the tightening of the

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<sup>10</sup> U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, *International Trade Administration: The Commerce Department’s Trade Policy Agenda*, 107th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2001). June 21: 80.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Ways and Means, *President Bush’s Trade Agenda*, 107th Cong., 1st Sess (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2001), March 7: 29.

<sup>12</sup> Morris Morley and Chris McGillion, *Unfinished Business: America and Cuba After the Cold War, 1989–2001*: Ch. 3 (98-130); Andreas F. Lowenfeld, “Congress and Cuba: The Helms-Burton Act,” *The American Journal of International Law* 90, No. 3 (Jul., 1996): 419-434; Joaquín Roy, “Las dos leyes Helms-Burton: contraste de la actitud de los Estados Unidos ante la Unión Europea y ante Cuba,” *Foro Internacional* 43, No. 3 (173) (Jul. - Sep., 2003): 719-743; Natalie Maniaci, “The Helms-Burton Act: Is the U.S. Shooting Itself in the Foot?,” *San Diego Law Review* 35 (1998); Susan Kaufman Purcell e Lorena Murillo S., “La Ley Helms-Burton y el embargo estadounidense contra Cuba,” *Foro Internacional* 43, No. 3, (Jul.-Sep. 2003): 704-718; Ernesto F. Betancourt, “Potential Impact of the Helms-Burton Act on Castro’s Regime,” in ASCE, *Cuba in Transition: Volume 5*, (Miami: Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy, 1995): 410-428.

<sup>13</sup> George W. Bush, “Statement on the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, Title III,” *American Presidency Project*, July 16, 2001, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=64776>.

<sup>14</sup> Lars Schoultz, *That little infernal Cuban republic*: 525.

<sup>15</sup> Frank Bruni, “Bush Administration Showing Willingness to Enforce Law on Visiting Cuba,” *New York Times*, August 5, 2001: 9.

<sup>16</sup> “Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Mallory) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rubottom),” April 6, 1960, *FRUS* (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office).

<sup>17</sup> In May 20, 1902 the Cuban National Assembly declared the Cuban independence after the fight against Spain and almost five years of U.S. occupation. The first Cuban independence was marked by the Platt Amendment, approved by U.S. Senate, and incorporated in Cuban first constitution, which gave the U.S. the power to intervene militarily in Cuba if American proprieties or lives were in peril. See José Clemente Vivanco (ed.), *Constitución de la República de Cuba* (La Habana: Imprenta San Ignacio, 1902): 139-140. After the revolution, the *República plattista* became the manifesto of U.S. ingerence toward Cuba and Castro’s regime never celebrated the festivity of May 20, which would became a central issue of the Cubano-American “exile ideology” in the US.

<sup>18</sup> George W. Bush, “Remarks on the Observance of the Cuban Independence Day,” *American Presidency Project*, May 18, 2001, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=45622>.

embargo as leverage to foster a transition on the island.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, in May 2004, accepting CAFC's recommendations, Bush tightened travel and remittance rules in order to deny the Cuban government access to external revenues.<sup>20</sup>

Even after the relaxation of agricultural sales from U.S. to Cuba, the administration showed no signs of appeasement. In November 2001, after the devastating hurricane "Michelle," Bush offered humanitarian assistance to the island, which was rejected by the Cuban government.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the White House decided to reform some provisions of the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act (TSRA) of 2000, in order to ease the restrictions on sales of U.S. agricultural products to Cuba.<sup>22</sup> This was probably the first and the last concession offered to Cuba during George W. Bush's two presidential terms. However, when the first cargo of U.S. products arrived in Havana's harbor (in December 2001), the first shipment since 1963, a spokesman for the White House clarified that this event would not represent any change in U.S. policy toward the Cuban government.<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, the U.S. tried to diplomatically isolate Cuba from the rest of the continent. As Erisman noted, "in the early twenty-first century, this hostility was driven at its most elemental level by Cuba-centric concerns related to the Bush administration's desire to isolate and marginalize Castro's government—especially within the hemispheric community."<sup>24</sup> In spring 2002, diplomatic tensions rose between Cuba, the U.S. and Mexico. The Mexican president Fox organized the United Nations Development Summit in Monterrey (March 2002) and, as revealed by a tape leaked by the Cuban authorities in April 2002, he received strong pressure from U.S. government in order to avoid a contact between the American delegation and president Fidel Castro.<sup>25</sup> The Cuban government, at that time, also denounced pressure put on Latin American countries to take a stance against Cuba within the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR).<sup>26</sup> In April 2002, the UNCHR "condemned" Cuba and several Latin American countries voted in favor of a motion presented by the Uruguayan government.<sup>27</sup> Despite this strategy of "containment" or isolation of Cuba, as Erikson pointed out, the island was far from being isolated by the Latin American governments, especially those who had embraced an anti-neoliberal economic model.<sup>28</sup>

There were also different forms of symbolic events that contributed to foster this Cold War-style policy. Firstly, in October 2001, the government of the Russian Federation decided to close the intelligence unit in Lourdes (Cuba), and Bush saluted the Russian move as the "end of the Cold War"

<sup>19</sup> Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba, *Report to the President*, May 2004.

<sup>20</sup> George W. Bush, "Remarks Following a Meeting With the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba," *The American Presidency Project*, May 6, 2004, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=64664>; George W. Bush, "Statement on the Anniversary of the Birth of the Republic of Cuba," *The American Presidency Project*, May 20, 2004, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=62835>. For the complete list of the new regulations on travel and remittances to Cuba and on the educational exchanges, see U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Economic Sanctions: Agencies Face Competing Priorities in Enforcing the U.S. Embargo on Cuba," Report to Congressional Requesters, GAO-08-80, November 2007: 24-26.

<sup>21</sup> "Información del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores," *Granma*, November 9, 2001: 8.

<sup>22</sup> Christopher Marquis, "U.S. Is Reportedly Prepared To Allow Food Sales to Cuba," *New York Times*, November 15 2001: A5.

<sup>23</sup> George W. Bush, "Press Briefing by Ari Fleisher," *American Presidency Project*, December 17, 2001, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=47618>.

<sup>24</sup> H. Michael Erisman, "Cuba, Venezuela, and ALBA: The Neo-Bolívarian Challenge," in Gary Prevost and Carlos Oliva Campos (eds.) *Cuban-Latin American Relations in the Context of a Changing Hemisphere* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2011): 123.

<sup>25</sup> "Declaración política del Presidente del Consejo de Estado de la República de Cuba," *Granma*, April 23, 2002: 1-5; José de Cordoba, "Release of Tape Could Backfire On Cuba's Castro," *Wall Street Journal*, April 24, 2002: A20.

<sup>26</sup> Elson Concepción Pérez, "Cuba no va a dejar de luchar con toda la energía necesaria," *Granma*, January 31, 2002: 5; "Delacración del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de la República de Cuba," *Granma*, March 8, 2002: 8; "Gobierno argentino votará otra vez junto a Washington en Ginebra," *Granma*, March 20, 2002: 4; "Debate sobre presiones yankis contra Cuba en la CDH," *Granma*, April 3, 2002: 4.

<sup>27</sup> "U.N. Rights Commission Criticizes Cuba," *New York Times*, April 20, 2002: A6.

<sup>28</sup> Daniel P. Erikson, "Castro and Latin America: A Second Wind?," *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Spring 2004): 32-40.

between the two countries.<sup>29</sup> On the contrary, the U.S. president made no reference to any potential change in U.S. relations with Cuba: mutual distrust and isolation would continue. Moreover, Bush's administration had to deal with two main issues closely linked to the former Cold War antagonism between the two countries. The appointment of Otto Reich, who would serve as *pro tempore* Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, was evidence that the Bush administration was seeking to preserve a Cold War policy toward Cuba. In fact, Reich was a man of the Cold War who contributed to destabilize relations with Central and Latin American countries during the Reagan years and, as U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela, was accused by local authorities of having helped Venezuelan drug traffickers and protected international terrorists such as Orlando Bosch, a Cuban-born man accused of the bombing of a passenger flight over Barbados in 1976.<sup>30</sup> In the Senate, the Democrats decided to stop Reich's nomination and Senator Christopher Dodd, who had fiercely opposed Reagan's policy towards Latin America, in a letter to the *Wall Street Journal*, confessed the reasons for his opposition: "Mr. Reich's record on issues such as terrorism and narco-trafficking, important regional concerns, raise questions about his judgment."<sup>31</sup> Bush overtook the Congressional "veto" over Reich using a recess appointment in March 2002.<sup>32</sup> While Reich's appointment was considered "an offense for Latin America," Cuba interpreted this move as the proof of a potential menace to his security and a sign of U.S. hostility.<sup>33</sup>

Even the "Posada Carriles case" is another example of the enduring wake of the Cold War. In November 2000, Panamanian police arrested Luis Posada Carriles for plotting a terrorist attack on Fidel Castro during the 10<sup>th</sup> Ibero-American Summit in Panama City. The Cuban government requested his repatriation as Carriles was accused of being the executor of the 1976 bombings of a passenger flight over Barbados and linked to the 1997 attacks on several Cuban tourist resorts.<sup>34</sup> Then, in January 2003, the President of the Cuban National Assembly Ricardo Alarcón revealed the documents that Cuba sent to Washington in 1998 which showed the implication of Miami-based anti-Castrist groups in terrorist attacks against Cuba.<sup>35</sup> After being pardoned in Panama, Carriles was able to reach U.S. soil, thanks to the help of Cuban-American congresspeople, while the U.S. administration resisted Cuban requests to extradite Carriles and other terrorists.<sup>36</sup> In fact, Cuba requested the extradition of Orlando Bosch, pardoned by George H.W. Bush thanks to the lobbying of Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and other Cuban-American congresspeople.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> George W. Bush, "Statement on Russia's Decision To Close a Military Intelligence Facility in Lourdes, Cuba," *American Presidency Project*, October 17, 2001, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=73435>.

<sup>30</sup> Will Conkling e Sam Goble, "Otto Reich: A Career in Disservice," Council on Hemispheric Affairs, Working Paper, July 13, 2004, <http://www.coha.org/otto-reich-a-career-in-disservice/>; "Dodd's Accusation," *Wall Street Journal*, October 11, 2001: A22.

<sup>31</sup> Christopher Dodd, "Letters to the Editor: Why I Oppose Reich Nomination," *Wall Street Journal*, October 11, 2001: A23.

<sup>32</sup> Christopher Marquis, "Bush Hires Hard-Liners To Handle Cuba Policy," *New York Times*, February 3, 2002: p. 1, 5.

<sup>33</sup> "Otto Reich: una ofensa para América Latina," *Granma*, March 16, 2002: 5; Mario Jorge Muñoz Lozano, "El terrorista Reich amenaza el continente," *Granma*, March 18, 2002: 8.

<sup>34</sup> "Estados Unidos tiene la paternidad del terrorismo contra Cuba," *Granma*, November 23, 2000: 4-5; "La cooperación en la lucha contra estos actos es un deber internacional," *Granma*, November 25, 2000: 5;

"Presentó Cuba formalmente a Panamá pedido de extradición de terroristas," *Granma*, November 30, 2000: 1;

"Declaración del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Cuba," *Granma*, March 12, 2002: 1-2; Arsenio Rodríguez, "Preparativos de una fuga anunciada," *Granma*, March 13, 2002: 5.

<sup>35</sup> Maylín Legaña Peña e Deisy Francis Mexidor, "Pruebas contra la mentira," *Juventud Rebelde*, January 18, 2003: 8.

<sup>36</sup> For a complete reconstruction of the "Posada Carriles case," see Mike Lettieri, "Posada Carriles, Child of Scorn," Council on Hemispheric Affairs, Working Paper, May 16, 2007, <http://www.coha.org/posada-carriles-child-of-scorn-yet-another-example-of-the-white-house%E2%80%99s-denigration-of-its-war-on-terrorism-which-woefully-lacks-integrity-coherence-or-consistency/>; Wayne Smith, Shauna Harrison e Sheree Adams, "Sanctuary for Terrorists?," Center for International Policy, International Policy Report, October 2005, <http://www.ciponline.org/images/uploads/publications/SanctuaryForTerrorists.pdf>.

<sup>37</sup> "The Bosch Case Does Violence to Justice," *New York Times*, July 20, 1990: A26; Mark Lacey, "Resurrecting Ghosts of Pardon Past," March 4, 2001: 1, 26.

The first reason for the maintenance of a strong posture over Cuba was essentially related to the fact that the administration, as his father a decade before, and other officials, believed that the Cuban regime would implode very soon.<sup>38</sup> At the beginning of the new millennium the Cuban economy was experiencing a phase of stagnation and, even if it was not as bad as the *período especial ed tiempo de paz* of the early 1990s, U.S. administration believed that a strong stance over Cuba could accelerate a regime change on the island.<sup>39</sup> A few years later, in 2004, the report of the Commission for the Assistance to a Free Cuba was aimed to plan post-Castro Cuba, with few references to the transition process with which the U.S. and the internal dissidence could eliminate the Revolution and Castrist rule, as the triumph of democracy would be a “natural,” pacific and sudden option.<sup>40</sup> Assistant Secretary for the Western Hemisphere, Roger Noriega, in October 2003, shared this optimism:

The climate for Mr. Castro is changing dramatically [...]. President Bush is committed to a rapid, peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba. This administration has extended more material support and more moral support to the opposition than ever before. We have encouraged our European allies to step up their contact with dissidents. [...] The President announced several new initiatives which we will describe in some detail to encourage a free and democratic Cuba. The President has dashed Castro’s hopes for an accommodation. The President has unambiguously pledged to veto any embargo busting bills. Castro’s escape route, using U.S. tourist dollars or direct U.S. financing to prop up his police state, has been cut off. There is no escape route for Mr. Castro [...].<sup>41</sup>

The second main reason regarded the electoral policy at national and state level. As William LeoGrande pointed out, the US-Cuba policy has represented a “two level game,” as U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba has had an internal backlash on internal policy and politics.<sup>42</sup> These biunivocal relations between the internal and the international spheres were particularly evident during Bush's first presidency. George W. Bush in the neck-and-neck presidential election of 2000 obtained the decisive support of the Cuban-American community. According to the FIU Cuba Poll of 2000, over 63% of Floridian Cuban-Americans decided to vote for Bush, who won in Florida with 500 votes over

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Al Gore, and they were supporting the prosecution of the embargo and a strong response to Castro . Moreover, the Cuban-American congresspeople, such as Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Lincoln Díaz-Balart rallied (through newspapers and radio stations in Spanish) mass protests against the vote recounting

<sup>38</sup> “CUBA/US: Policy Set to Harden Under Bush,” *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief Service*, 5 aprile 2001;

“CUBA: Limited Scope for Sudden Change Post-Fidel,” *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief Service*, June 4, 2001;

<sup>39</sup> Jorge F. Pérez-López, “The Cuban Economy in an Unending Special Period,” in ASCE, *Cuba in Transition: Volume 12* (Miami: Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy, 2002): 507-521; Jorge F. Pérez-López, “The Cuban Economy in 2002-2003,” in ASCE, *Cuba in Transition: Volume 13*, (Miami: Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy, 2003): 1-11; Carmelo Mesa-Lago, “Social and Economic Problems in Cuba During the Crisis and Subsequent Recovery,” *CEPAL Review* 86, (Aug. 2005): 177-199. On the possibile sudden collapse of the Cuban economy and government in the early 1990s see Susan Kaufman Purcell, “Cuba's Cloudy Future,” *Foreign Affairs* 69, No. 3 (Summer, 1990): 113-130; Andres Oppenheimer, *Castro's Final Hour: The Secret Story behind the Coming Downfall of Communist Cuba* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992); Samuel Farber, “Castro Under Siege,” *World Policy Journal* 9, No. 2 (Spring, 1992): 329-348 ; Susan Kaufman Purcell , “Collapsing Cuba,” *Foreign Affairs* 71, No. 1, America and the World 1991/92 (1991/1992): 130- 145; George H.W. Bush, “Castro's Days Numbered, Keep the Pressure On,” *Huston Chronicle*, March 1, 1992: 1.

<sup>40</sup> Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba, *Report to the President*, May 2004.

<sup>41</sup> U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on Human Rights and Wellness, *Castro's Cuba: What Is the Proper U.S. Response to Ongoing Human Rights Violations in Our Hemisphere*, 108th Cong., 1st. Sess. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office: 2003), October 16, 2003: 19-20.

<sup>42</sup> William M. LeoGrande, “From Havana to Miami: U.S. Cuba Policy as a Two-Level Game,” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 40, no. 1 (Spring, 1998): 67-86.

<sup>43</sup> Florida International University, *2000 Cuba Poll*, (Miami, Cuban Research Institute, 2000).

approved by Florida Federal Court, and they succeeded in stopping it.<sup>44</sup> For this reason, Castro depicted Bush's victory as the triumph of the "Cuban-American terrorist *mafia*."<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, in 2002 Jeb Bush, George W. Bush's brother, was seeking for reelection as Governor of Florida.<sup>46</sup> In order to secure his confirmation in Florida, the president had to "do something" with Cuba, and Bush used some Cold War-style policies toward the island, such as the tightening of sanctions on travel and remittances (May 2004), which were a part of the "exile ideology" in Miami.<sup>47</sup> In fact, the first report of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba and the resulting sanctions of 2004 represented a contract with hard-liner groups in Miami, which favored new sanctions on Cuba and would play a decisive role in a Bush re-election in 2004.<sup>48</sup> The new OFAC regulations of 2004 virtually united some groups of the dissidence and the Cuban government in criticisms toward Bush's policy,<sup>49</sup> but Bush was forced to implement the embargo in order to secure the Cuban-American vote in 2004 elections.

In the 1990s, Cuban-American hardliners were able to defy Clinton's policy of engagement toward Cuba, while after the 2000 elections they entered the Cabinet and became highly influential in Bush's Cuba policy. Lino Gutiérrez was appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs; Emilio González, Adolfo Franco, and Mauricio Tamargo were given important posts at the National Security Council, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission, respectively. Moreover, Mel Martínez, who was appointed Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, became the first Cuban-American to enter a presidential Cabinet. In Cuba, commentators were aware that those nominations were not a good start for expanding a dialogue between the two countries.<sup>50</sup> In other words, the Bush administration had a great debt of gratitude toward the Cuban community (especially toward the hardline faction), and his policy was primarily affected by this connection between Washington and Little Havana.

Lastly, the embargo codification provided by the Helms-Burton Act, practically prevented U.S. presidents from changing U.S. Cuba policy, as it provided strong linkages between the elimination of the economic sanctions and the democratic transition on the island.<sup>51</sup> For all these reasons, in 2000 the Cuba policy of the future president was predetermined: as Schoultz recalled, "less certain is whether a few hundred more votes for the Democrats would have led to a different policy toward Cuba."<sup>52</sup>

### **9\11 and the (Failed) Prospects for Cooperation**

The 9\11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon created an opportunity to improve U.S. relations with Cuba and the rest of the world. As some commentators noted, after September 2001, President Bush gained strong popular support and international consensus which

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<sup>44</sup> Dexter Filkins and Dana Canedy, "Protest Influenced Miami-Dade's Decision to Stop Recount," *New York Times*, November 24, 2000: A41. For further reading about the 2000 election in Florida, see Mark Whitman, *Florida 2000: A Sourcebook on the Contested Presidential Election* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003).

<sup>45</sup> Fidel Castro Ruz, "Discurso pronunciado en la Tribuna Abierta de la Revolución," January 27, 2001, <http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/2001/esp/f270101e.html>.

<sup>46</sup> Marifeli Pérez-Stable, *The United States and Cuba: Intimate Enemies* (New York: Routledge, 2011): 87.

<sup>47</sup> Guillermo J. Grenier, "The Creation and Maintenance of the Cuban American 'Exile Ideology': Evidence from the FIU Cuba Poll 2004," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 25, No. 2/3 (Winter-Spring 2006): 209-224.

<sup>48</sup> Florida International University, *2004 Cuba Poll*, (Miami: Cuban Research Institute, 2004).

<sup>49</sup> Lars Schoultz, *That little infernal Cuban republic*: 550; "Cuba: Dissidents Reject Bush Plan," *New York Times*, May 11, 2004: A6.

<sup>50</sup> "Amistades peligrosas," *Granma*, December 12, 2000: 4; "La continuidad de una política anacrónica," *Granma*, January 23, 2001: 4.

<sup>51</sup> Luis A. Pérez Jr., "The Personal Is Political: Animus and Malice in the U.S. Policy toward Cuba, 1959–2009" in Soraya M. Castro Mariño and Ronald W. Pruessen (eds.) *Fifty Years of Revolution: Perspectives on Cuba, the United States, and the World* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012): 161; Andreas F. Lowenfeld, "Congress and Cuba: The Helms-Burton Act," *The American Journal of International Law* 90, No.3 (1996): 419-434.

<sup>52</sup> Lars Schoultz, *That little infernal Cuban republic*: 515.

could have been used to create a world coalition against international terrorism.<sup>53</sup>

Moreover, in fall of 2001, Cuba showed some sign of collaboration in fighting international terrorism. In a public speech given on September 11, Fidel Castro expressed the solidarity of the Cuban people to the people of the United States, and the Cuban government said it wanted to help by sending blood donations and doctors in case of need.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, the Cuban government assured that it would do anything in its power to avoid that Cuban soil would be used for terrorist purposes toward ('towards' is okay but 'toward' is used previously) the US.<sup>55</sup> In late 2001, Cuba ratified 12 international treaties against terrorism and, through the letter that Castro had sent to Kofi Annan, supported any UN multilateral initiative to topple down the terrorist menace.<sup>56</sup> By the end of September, a group of U.S. think-tanks unsuccessfully asked the President to remove Cuba from the State Department list of state sponsoring terrorism.<sup>57</sup>

Moreover, when, in December 2001, Donald Rumsfeld announced the use of Guantánamo naval base (which belongs to the United States) as a prison for terrorist and Taliban fighters taken in Afghanistan, Cuba had probably offered the U.S. the greater help and assistance for appeasing the relations between the two countries. According to Rumsfeld, the Cuban government would not oppose the American decision to detain terrorists on the island.<sup>58</sup> In fact, Cuba refrained from protesting, while showing the willingness to cooperate actively with logistic and medical assistance.<sup>59</sup> On 2 January 2002, on the front page of the *Granma*, the Cuban government published a "declaration to the national and international public opinion" its position on Guantánamo:

As we were informed about these operations, and we are aware of the great bustle of personnel and aircrafts, Cuban authorities will get through to the personnel of the base in order to adopt security measures to avoid the risk of accidents [...]. Even though the remarkable increase of military staff the operation requires, we do not consider it a form of security threat for our country [...]. Despite not knowing the exact number of prisoners of war detained there [...], we are ready to cooperate through medical services [...] or in any other way [...].<sup>60</sup>

A few days later, Raúl Castro was very pleased with this phase of mutual reciprocity and respect.<sup>61</sup> The Guantánamo naval base could have been a good issue to implement the cooperation on issues of common interest through bilateral talks on security and counter-terrorism initiatives in the

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<sup>53</sup> Stephen M. Walt, "Beyond Bin Laden," *International Security* 2, (2001): 56-78; G. John Ikenberry, "American Grand Strategy in the Age of Terror," *Survival* 43, No. 4 (Winter 2001-2002): 19-34; Michael Hirsh, "Bush and the World," *Foreign Affairs* 81, No. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 2002): 18-43.

<sup>54</sup> Fidel Castro Ruz, "Discurso pronunciado el día de los trágicos hechos ocurridos en Estados Unidos," September 11, 2001, <http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/2001/esp/f110901e.html>; Declaración del Gobierno de la República de Cuba, *Granma*, September 12, 2001: 1.

<sup>55</sup> "Declaración del Gobierno de la República de Cuba," *Granma*, September 12, 2001: 1.

<sup>56</sup> "Formaliza Cuba su adhesión a convenios internacionales contra el terrorismo," *Granma*, November 16, 2001: 3; "Concluyó Cuba proceso de adhesión a Convenios Internacionales sobre terrorismo," *Granma*, December 3, 2001: 6; "Considerará la Asamblea Nacional proyecto de ley sobre terrorismo," *Granma*, December 5, 2001: 1; "Aprueban Ley cubana contra Actos de Terrorismo," *Granma*, December 21, 2001: 1, 4-5; Soraya M. Castro Mariño, "Like Sisyphus's Stone. U.S.-Cuban Relations in the Aftermath of September 11, 2001," in Philip Brenner, Marguerite, Rose Jiménez, John M. Kirk e William M. LeoGrande (eds.), *A Contemporary Cuba Reader. Reinventing the Revolution* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007): 219.

<sup>57</sup> Kevin Sullivan, "U.S. Is Urged to Remove Cuba From List of Terror Sponsors," *Washington Post*, September 29, 2001: A20.

<sup>58</sup> Tim Collie, "U.S. To Hold Fighters in Cuba," *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, December 28, 2001: 1A.

<sup>59</sup> "In Cuba, Muted Acceptance Greets Presence of Prisoners," *New York Times*, January 16, 2002: A8; Ginger Thompson, "Cuba, Too, Felt the Sept. 11 Shock Waves, With a More Genial Castro Offering Help," *New York Times*, February 7, 2002: A18.

<sup>60</sup> "Declaración del Gobierno de Cuba a la opinión pública nacional e internacional," *Granma*, January 12, 2002: 1.

<sup>61</sup> Pablo Soroa e Reinaldo Santana, "Ambiente de respeto mutuo," *Granma*, January 21, 2002: 1.

Caribbean Basin.<sup>62</sup> However, despite these good premises, the relations between Cuba and the U.S. did not improve significantly and would soon be at the lowest point during the Bush years. Cuban attitudes towards Bush's anti-terrorism strategy represented one of the main concerns in Washington and Miami. In fact, it seemed clear that Cuba wanted to help to fight terrorism but didn't approve of U.S. methods and strategies. Fidel Castro condemned the invasion of Afghanistan as a "fascist and terrorist aggression" which would cause "infinite deaths of innocent people."<sup>63</sup> Raúl Castro perfectly summed up the position of Cuba: "We don't have any divergence with the U.S. on the fight against terrorism, but on the methods and they are saying 'you're either with us, or with the terrorists': that's unacceptable."<sup>64</sup>

Moreover, after the 9\11 attacks, U.S. foreign policy experienced a systematic growth of its hypersensitivity to the terrorist menaces and the gradual abandoning of other issues and regions not primarily affected by the threat of terrorism.<sup>65</sup> This was particularly evident in U.S. relations with Latin America: the United States reinterpreted its relations with Latin America: the United States reinterpreted the hemispheric relations exclusively focusing on the global fight against terrorism, showing less interest in expanding other issues.<sup>66</sup> As LeoGrande noted, "[the] relations with key Latin [American] allies such as Mexico and Chile blew hot and cold depending upon their willingness to back Washington's efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. With few Muslim extremists, Latin America constituted a minor front in the new war."<sup>67</sup> Regarding Cuba, the Cold War-style confrontation blended with the post-9/11 U.S. foreign policy and its strategy to cope with international terrorism. In other words, the implementation of the strong stance over Cuba was realized through the fight against international terrorism, as a new "tool" to crush the Cuban revolution. In the fall of 2001, some events contributed to link these two phases of U.S. policy towards the island. On September 20, Ana Belen Montes, senior analyst of the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), was arrested and charged with spying on behalf of the Cuban government (in 2002, Montes was sentenced to 25 years prison).<sup>68</sup> Moreover, in June 2001, five Cuban citizens, known as *Los Cinco*, were sentenced for monitoring the Miami-based terrorist activities against the island for the Cuban government, revealing U.S. double standards in fighting terrorism worldwide.<sup>69</sup>

These events, which were happening on a regular basis in the Cold War-style relations between Cuba and the US, had a different meaning after the September 11 attack. In fact, several Cuban-American hard-liner congresspeople easily linked Montes' arrest with potential security leaks to "rough states." In October 2001, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen speculated that, through Ana Belen Montes, the Cuban government could have passed some intelligence secrets to states sponsoring international

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<sup>62</sup> Hal Klepak, "Cuba-U.S. Cooperation in the Defense and Security Fields. Where Are We? Where Might We Be Able To Go?," in Jorge I. Domínguez, Rafael Hernández and Lorena Barberia (eds.) *Debating U.S.-Cuban Relations : Shall We Play Ball?* (New York: Routledge, 2012): 77.

<sup>63</sup> Kevin Sullivan, "Castro Warns About U.S. Military Plans," *Washington Post*, September 23, 2001: A38.

<sup>64</sup> "Nuestra discrepancia no es la lucha contra el terrorismo, sino en los métodos de luchar contra el terrorismo," *Granma*, January 22, 2002: 4-5.

<sup>65</sup> Melvyn P. Leffler, "9/11 and the Past and Future of American Foreign Policy," *International Affairs* 79, No. 5, (October 2003): 1045-1063; Wojtek Mackiewicz Wolfe, *Winning the War of Words: Selling the War on Terror from Afghanistan to Iraq* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2008).

<sup>66</sup> Peter Hakim, "Is Washington Losing Latin America?," *Foreign Affairs* 85, No. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 2006): 50.

<sup>67</sup> William M. LeoGrande, "A Poverty of Imagination: George W. Bush's Policy in Latin America," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 39, No. 2 (May 2007): 358.

<sup>68</sup> Bill Miller and Walter Pincus, "Defense Analyst Accused of Spying for Cuba," *Washington Post*, September 22, 2001: A1; Cfristopher Marquis, "Spy Betrayed Agents to Cuba, Officials Say," *New York Times*, September 23, 2001: 1, 32; Michael J. Sulick, *American Spies: Espionage against the United States from the Cold War to the Present* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013): 267-273.

<sup>69</sup> "5 Cubans Convicted in Plot to Spy on U.S.," *New York Times*, June 9, 2001: A12; Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular, *La tormenta perfecta. El caso de los Cinco*, (La Habana: Editora Política, 2005); Salim Lamrani, *Cuba face à l'empire* (Geneva: Éditions Timéli, 2006): 59-67; Leonard Weinglass, "The Cuban Five and the U.S. War against Terror," in Philip Brenner, Marguerite Rose Jimenez, John M. Kirk, and William M. LeoGrande (eds.) *A Contemporary Cuba Reader: Reinventing the Revolution* (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008): 249-253.

terrorism, even if the FBI did not know the entity of the leaks to Cuba.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen suspected that Cuba was financing international terrorism by selling chemical weapons to state sponsors of terrorism, such as Iran and Libya.<sup>71</sup> Robert Menéndez argued that Cuba was involved in international Islamist terrorism, as Cuba represented a safe haven for terrorists.<sup>72</sup> Menéndez, a few weeks later, urged Secretary Powell to investigate the connections between Havana and Iran in financing and supporting international terrorism.<sup>73</sup> Then, in December 2001, a paper prepared by the Department of State was presented to the Congress. The study listed Cuba as one of the “key backers” of international terrorism (along with Iran, Iraq, Libya and North Korea). While for the other listed countries, the Department of State provided wide information about their funding or support to extremist Islamic groups (but not to Al-Qaeda) in Palestine and the Middle East, there was no evidence for Cuba, which was simply listed because since 1982 the U.S. had been considering it a state sponsor of terrorism.<sup>74</sup>

Even if those accusations toward Cuba were not confirmed and had no substantial evidence, they contributed to influence the administration's policy toward the island. As Powell and other officials stated, there was no evidence of any particular link between Cuba and any international terrorist nets or organizations,<sup>75</sup> but Powell considered that Cuba *could* be implicated in international terrorism and in the 11 September attacks: “I have no illusion about the nature of that regime as well. It means us no good. (...) I don't know that we have seen any linkages that would cause us to believe that the events of 11 September in any way trace back to Havana, but I am sure our intelligence agencies are keeping their antennae up.”<sup>76</sup>

Moreover, the President, in the midst Cuba's criticism of U.S. projects to invade Afghanistan, refused to sponsor any relaxation on sanctions toward Cuba because Castro's government was resisting to adhere to the international coalition against global terrorism.<sup>77</sup> In addition to that, Cuba was accused of not firmly condemning the attack against the US.<sup>78</sup>

### **Entering the War on Terror: John Bolton and the Cuban Biochemical Weapons**

After the invasion of Afghanistan, the U.S. foreign policy debate focused on the global war on terrorism and the strategy to cope with “rough states.” After the 9\11 attacks, the realist component of the Bush administration started to be eroded by the unilateralist faction and neo-con ideology.<sup>79</sup> The result was a new paradigm in U.S. foreign policy, known as “Bush doctrine,” which would have become a patten with which the Bush's administration sought to cope with the international terrorist menace. According to Robert Jervis, “the [Bush] doctrine has four elements: a strong belief in the

<sup>70</sup> U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, *Al-Qaeda and the Global Reach of Terrorism*, 107th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), October 3, 2001: 58, 60.

<sup>71</sup> U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, *The Western Hemisphere's Response to the September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attack on the United States*, 107th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), October 10, 2001: 25.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibidem*: 24.

<sup>73</sup> Cfr. U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, *U.S. Diplomatic Efforts in the War Against Terrorism*, 107th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), October, 24 2001: 28-29.

<sup>74</sup> Cfr. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on International Operations and Terrorism, *The Global Reach of Al-Qaeda*, 107th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), December 18, 2001: 19.

<sup>75</sup> U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, *Al-Qaeda and the Global Reach of Terrorism*: 60; U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, *U.S. Diplomatic Efforts in the War Against Terrorism*:29.

<sup>76</sup> U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, *U.S. Diplomatic Efforts in the War Against Terrorism*:29.

<sup>77</sup> George W. Bush, “Statement of Administration Policy: S. 1731 - Agriculture, Conservation, and Rural Enhancement Act of 2001,” *American Presidency Project*, December 5, 2001.

<sup>78</sup> U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, *The Western Hemisphere's Response to the September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attack on the United States*: 5.

<sup>79</sup> Robert Kagan, “The September 12 Paradigm: America, the World, and George W. Bush,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, No. 5 (Sept-Oct 2008): 25-39.

importance of a state's domestic regime in determining its foreign policy and the related judgment that this is an opportune time to transform international politics; the perception of great threats that can be defeated only by new and vigorous policies, most notably preventive war; a willingness to act unilaterally when necessary; and, as both a cause and a summary of these beliefs, an overriding sense that peace and stability require the United States to assert its primacy in world politics.”<sup>80</sup>

In US-Cuba relations, the War on Terror implied a sudden growth in U.S. perception of Cuba as a potential “rough state.” After the 9\11 attacks, the terrorist threat represented the best way the U.S. had to present Cuba as a potential menace to their national security. In the 1990s, Cuba was mainly considered a potential (indirect) menace: in the text of the Helms-Burton Act of 1996, the Congress considered that a mass migration from Cuba (as the *balseros* crisis of 1994), and the Cuban support for hemispheric revolutionary groups and the Spanish ETA could have endangered (indirectly) U.S. national security.<sup>81</sup> However, in 2002, this indirect threat changed dramatically as Cuba became associated with international biochemical terrorism. Undersecretary of State John Bolton, during a lecture at the Heritage Foundation in May 2002, focused on Cuba:

Havana has long provided safe haven for terrorists, earning it a place on the State Department's list of terrorist-sponsoring states. The country is known to be harboring terrorists from Colombia, Spain, and fugitives from the United States. We know that Cuba is collaborating with other state sponsors of terror. Castro has repeatedly denounced the U.S. war on terrorism. [...] Cuba's threat to our security often has been underplayed. [...] A major reason is Cuba's aggressive intelligence operations against the United States, which included recruiting the Defense Intelligence Agency's senior Cuba analyst, Ana Belen Montes, to spy for Cuba. Montes not only had a hand in drafting the 1998 Cuba report, but also passed some of our most sensitive information about Cuba back to Havana. Montes was arrested last fall and pleaded guilty to espionage on March 19. For four decades, Cuba has maintained a well-developed and sophisticated biomedical industry, supported until 1990 by the Soviet Union. This industry is one of the most advanced in Latin America and leads in the production of pharmaceuticals and vaccines that are sold worldwide. Analysts and Cuban defectors have long cast suspicion on the activities conducted in these biomedical facilities. Here is what we now know: the United States believes that Cuba has at least a limited offensive biological warfare research and development effort. Cuba has provided dual-use biotechnology to other rogue states. We are concerned that such technology could support BW programs in those states.<sup>82</sup>

Since this time, in the framework of the War on Terror, Cuba was considered a sponsor of terrorism simply because it didn't join the U.S. in the war on terror and criticized its methods and the invasion of Afghanistan. After this public speech by Bolton, it was clear that Cuba could represent a direct threat to the U.S. for its “limited offensive biological warfare research.” Bolton's accusations were not new, even if for the first time a U.S. State Department official presented them to the public opinion. In October 2001, Ken Alibek, president of the *Advanced Biosystem Inc.*, during a Congressional hearing accused Castro's government of planning the construction of chemical and biochemical weapons.<sup>83</sup> Therefore, Bolton's speech at the Heritage Foundation was the transposition of the testimony of Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence Carl W. Ford at the Senate Committee

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<sup>80</sup> Robert Jervis, “Understanding the Bush Doctrine,” *Political Science Quarterly* 118, No. 3 (Autumn 2003): 365.

<sup>81</sup> Cuban Liberty and Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act (1996) Pub.L. 104–114, 110 Stat. 785, 22 U.S.C. ch. 69, §§6021, 6031.

<sup>82</sup> John R. Bolton, “Beyond the Axis of Evil: Additional Threats from Weapons of Mass Destruction,” The Heritage Foundation, Lecture #743, May 6, 2002, <http://www.heritage.org/research/lecture/beyond-the-axis-of-evil>.

<sup>83</sup> U.S. Congress, House, International Relations of the Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on National Security, Veterans Affairs, *Combating Terrorism: Assessing the Threat of a Biological Weapons Attack*, 107th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), October 12, 2001: 55.

on Foreign Relations (April 14, 2002). Ford stated, without citing any study, that Cuba had the capability to develop chemical weapons and Bolton used entire sentences of Ford's report to the Committee.<sup>84</sup> Fidel Castro argued that in Cuba there was no evidence of those weapons, simply because "they do not exist in Cuba," while the MINREX (Cuban Foreign Ministry) accused the U.S. of spreading false and mendacious information in order to discredit Cuba and its government.<sup>85</sup> Fidel Castro, in a public speech, assured the American people that Cuba had no intentions to produce or use biochemical weapons against the US.<sup>86</sup>

However, Bolton's accusations seemed to be downplayed by the Department of State. Secretary Powell, a few days after Bolton's speech at the Heritage Foundation, intervened in the question by speaking about a "capacity of biochemical research" casting some doubts about the real threat posed by Cuba.<sup>87</sup> For this reason, the Congress convened Carl W. Ford in June 2002 to focus on the issue of the Cuban "bioweapons." Even Ford's testimony to the Congress was not convincing: the U.S. had only a little information about the Cuban laboratories from defectors who had worked in the Cuban chemical sector, but had had no direct contact with any potential "secret projects" for the development of chemical weapons. Moreover, the difference between producing vaccines and chemical weapons were minimal and Ford acknowledged that the U.S. had no information about a possible connection between these two activities in Cuba.<sup>88</sup> In other words, Cuba *could* be a terrorist state, just because its vaccine production *could* be used for terrorist purposes. Professor Mark M. Rasenick explained the fallacy of this approach in these terms: "I cannot state, categorically, that the Cubans are not making weapons, but the administration has no data that they are. (...) I am saying that just growing a lot of bugs does not make one a purveyor of bioweapons."<sup>89</sup>

Cuba was producing vaccines, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and several Cuban products were generally purchased by UN agencies.<sup>90</sup> On the contrary there was no direct evidence of the use of such vaccines for the production of weapons. For example, in April 2003, the U.S. Department of State published the report "Patterns of Global Terrorism" for the fiscal year 2002: the report didn't contain any references to the threat of chemical weapons from Cuba. The island was listed for connections with some regional and European terrorist groups, such as the Colombian FARC and the Basque ETA, while in Cuba some members of the Irish IRA were sheltered for a period.<sup>91</sup> The Congress was perfectly aware of those linkages.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, the Colombian general Fernando Tapias, in April 2002, declared to the Congress that "there is no information, to my knowledge, that (...) Cuba is in any way linked to terrorist activities in Colombia today. I have no evidence to that effect and no information to that effect. Indeed, Cuban authorities are buttressing the movements towards peace that are trying to be made, and this is the information that I have from the

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<sup>84</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Reducing the Threat of Chemical and Biological Weapons*, 107th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office), April 16, 2002: 14.

<sup>85</sup> Orlando Oramas León, "La mentira de Washington se desmora ante la demoledora verdad de Cuba," *Granma*, May 11, 2002: 1.

<sup>86</sup> Fidel Castro Ruz, "Viva el pueblo patriótico, unido y culto que ningún poder sobre la Tierra podrá jamás doblegar," *Granma*, May 27, 2002: 5.

<sup>87</sup> David González, "Carter and Powell Cast Doubt on Bioarms in Cuba," *New York Times*, May 14, 2002: A3.

<sup>88</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps and Narcotics Affairs, *Cuba's Pursuit of Biological Weapons: Fact or Fiction?*: 12, 15; 35-37.

<sup>89</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Peace Corps and Narcotics Affairs, *Bridges to the Cuban People Act of 2001, S.1017*, 107th Cong., 2nd Sess. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2002), June 19, 2002: 42.

<sup>90</sup> Cfr. Amina Aitsiselme, "Despite U.S. Embargo, Cuban Biotech Booms," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 35, No. 5 (March-April 2002): 38.

<sup>91</sup> U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Patterns of Global Terrorism – 2002*, April 2003: 76.

<sup>92</sup> U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, *International Global Terrorism: Its Links with Illicit Drugs as Illustrated by the IRA and Other Groups in Colombia*, 107th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2002), April 24, 2002.

President and from the commissioners who are involved in that regard.”<sup>93</sup> Moreover, the ETA fighters were hosted on Cuban soil under an agreement with the González's government and Cuba was cooperating with the United States to facilitate the return of fugitive convicted U.S. nationals.<sup>94</sup>

In the midst of the political debate over the Cuban (potential) biochemical weapons, former U.S. president Carter, as chief of the Carter Foundation, visited the island and this contributed in dismantling Bolton's accusation over Cuba. In fact, Carter reported that the Department of State assured him that there was no evidence about Cuban sales of bioweapon technology to “rough states”: “I asked them specifically, on more than one occasion, 'Is there any evidence that Cuba has been involved in sharing any information to any other country on Earth that could be used for terrorist purposes?'- Carter said - "And the answer from our experts on intelligence was no.”<sup>95</sup> Anya Landau and Wayne Smith argued that the case for Cuban bioweapons was mounted to downplay former President Carter's visit to Cuba in May 2002.<sup>96</sup> Senator Dodd seemingly agreed with this explanation: the fear of Cuban chemical weapons was an answer to Mr. Carter's trip to the island and to his policy of dialogue toward Havana.<sup>97</sup> The White House authorized the trip but showed no enthusiasm: Bush declared that Carter's visit to Cuba could not influence the U.S. stance over Cuba and Bush was far from using this occasion to create appeasement with Castro.<sup>98</sup> In fact, Carter advocated: “The challenge now is to find common ground in dealing with Cuba on which Congress, private groups and the administration can cooperate.”<sup>99</sup> On the contrary, the Bush administration would launch the “Initiative for a Free Cuba” (May 20, 2002), which seemed to march in the opposite direction. The “Initiative” was nothing more than a declaration with which Bush called for free and fair election for 2003 General Assembly round of voting, in exchange for some relaxation on direct postal services from Cuba and the implementation of cultural and academic exchanges. On the contrary, if Cuba had ignored the U.S. “proposal,” the president would have worked with the Congress to tighten the embargo legislation.<sup>100</sup>

By September 2002, it was clear that the U.S. did not have any evidence regarding Cuban help to terrorist groups and the presence of bioweapons on the island. However, the U.S. started to accuse Cuba of “negligence” in fighting international terrorism: according to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere Dan Fisk, Cuba didn't present any information about the secret plans of “rough states” (such as Iran, Libya and Syria), even if it had good relations with those countries.<sup>101</sup> This accusation seemed to be aimed at keeping Cuba within the “rough states,” even if the Cuban Foreign Minister Pérez Roque revealed that Cuba, few months before, had offered twelve proposals of collaboration on issues such as the fight against terrorism and drug smuggling but the U.S. refused to cooperate.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, *International Global Terrorism: Its Links with Illicit Drugs as Illustrated by the IRA and Other Groups in Colombia*: 86-87.

<sup>94</sup> Anya K. Landau and Wayne S. Smith, “Cuba on the Terror List: In Defence of the Nation or Domestic Political Calculation?,” *International Policy Report* (November 2002): 7-8.

<sup>95</sup> Kevin Sullivan, “Carter Says He Was Told U.S. Had No Proof Cuba Shared Bioweapons Data,” *Washington Post*, May 14, 2002: A14.

<sup>96</sup> Anya K. Landau and Wayne S. Smith, “Cuba on the Terrorist List: In Defence of the Nation or Domestic Political Calculation?”: 10.

<sup>97</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps and Narcotics Affairs, *Cuba's Pursuit of Biological Weapons: Fact or Fiction?*: 35.

<sup>98</sup> Christopher Marquis, “Carter to Go to Communist Cuba In First Visit by Ex-U.S. President,” *New York Times*, April 10, 2002: A4; George W. Bush, “Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad of Malaysia and an Exchange With Reporters,” *American Presidency Project*, May 14, 2002, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=73011>.

<sup>99</sup> James Carter, “Openings to Cuba; We Must Find a Common Ground,” *Washington Post*, May 24, 2002: A35.

<sup>100</sup> George W. Bush, “Remarks Announcing the Initiative for a New Cuba,” *American Presidency Project*, 20 maggio 2002, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=64006>.

<sup>101</sup> Christopher Marquis, “U.S. Accuses Cuba of Trying to Disrupt Antiterrorism Effort,” *New York Times*, September 18, 2002: A21.

<sup>102</sup> Christopher Marquis, “Cuba Says U.S. Lied on Terror,” *New York Times*, September 19, 2002: A22.

### Cuba like Iraq?

The ambiguous and manufactured accusation toward Cuba about its chemical weapons suggested several questions about the timing and U.S. strategy, especially at the time of the invasion of Iraq. As Castro Mariño noted, “the invasion of Iraq established a clear warning to Cuba that the United States has moved to the ultimate extreme in its range of options against any government it unilaterally defines as an ‘enemy.’”<sup>103</sup> Even former Chief of the U.S. Section of Interest in Havana under Carter, Wayne Smith, drew some analogies between the invasion (and “reconstruction”) in Iraq and Bush’s strategy in Cuba.<sup>104</sup> Did Bolton’s accusation represent a piece of a puzzle that would have led the U.S. to the military intervention in Cuba as they were doing with Iraq?

According to the Cuban government and to some commentators, it was highly probably that the U.S. was fabricating evidence about Cuban chemical weapons as justification for a future invasion of the island: Cuba perceived a potential threat from the US, especially in 2003, when the U.S. invaded Iraq. Fidel Castro confessed to the Spanish journalist Ignacio Ramonet that the crackdown was just an answer to U.S. aggressive policy toward the island and to the invasion of Iraq.<sup>105</sup> Even according to Senator Dodd, the U.S. started to treat Cuba as a potential menace to its security even if the CIA and the anti-terrorism reports were minimizing Cuba’s role in international terrorism.<sup>106</sup> Cuban officials thought that the U.S. was pursuing an “Iraqi strategy” toward Cuba: the fabrication of evidence could lead to the invasion of the island: Orlando Requejo, Cuban ambassador at the UN Assembly, argued that “any kind of accident (...) could be manipulated by an irresponsible president like George W. Bush in order to create a crisis and promote an aggression against the island.”<sup>107</sup> The Cuban government feared that the “birth of the century of the unilateralism,” as Pérez Roque defined the U.S. invasion of Iraq, could menace its sovereignty.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, Cuba believed that the hijacking of planes and boats (seven episodes in seven months, from November 2002 to April 2003),<sup>109</sup> which the Cuban government considered something associated with terrorism,<sup>110</sup> and the connections between the U.S. Interest Section in Havana (or SINA) and the Cuban dissidence were the premises for a U.S. intervention on the island.<sup>111</sup> In fact, in his usual 1 May speech, Fidel Castro argued that Cuba “would defend the Fatherland and the Revolution with thoughts and arms, till its last drop of blood,”<sup>112</sup> and on several occasions Cuban officials stressed this concept.<sup>113</sup> Raúl Castro, in December 2003, presented a

<sup>103</sup> Soraya M. Castro Mariño, “Lilke Sisyphus’s Stone. U.S.–Cuban Relations in the Aftermath of September 11, 2001,” in Philip Brenner, Marguerite Rose Jimenez, John M. Kirk, and William M. LeoGrande (eds.) *Contemporary Cuba Reader: Reinventing the Revolution* (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008): 223.

<sup>104</sup> Wayne Smith, “Cuba Shaping Up as Iraq II,” Center for International Policy, Commentary, May 26, 2004, <http://www.ciponline.org/research/entry/cuba-shaping-up-as-iraq-ii>.

<sup>105</sup> Ignacio Ramonet, *Fidel Castro. My Life* (London: Ellen Lane, 2007): 432-433.

<sup>106</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Challenges for U.S. Policy Toward Cuba*, 108th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2003), October 2, 2003: 39.

<sup>107</sup> “Denuncia Embajador cubano peligrosidad de medidas de Washington,” *Granma*, May 14, 2004: 4.

<sup>108</sup> Felipe Pérez Roque, “Cuba proclama aquí que se opone a una nueva acción militar contra Iraq,” *Granma*, September 16, 2002: 5.

<sup>109</sup> MINREX, “Declaración del MINREX,” *Granma*, November 12, 2002: 1; Félix López, “Burdas mentiras para amparar a piratas,” *Granma*, November 14, 2002: 3; Manuel Roig-Franzia, “Hijacked Cuban Plane Forced to Land in Fla.,” *Washington Post*, March 20, 2003: A8; “Secuestrado avión de pasajeros cubano y conducido a Estados Unidos,” *Juventud Rebelde*, March 21, 2003: 8; “Nueva información sobre el DC-3 secuestrado,” *Juventud Rebelde*, March 22, 2003: 8; “Nuevo secuestro de un avión de pasajeros,” *Juventud Rebelde*, April 1, 2003: 1; Canedy Dana, “Second Plane From Cuba Is Hijacked To Key West,” *New York Times*, April 2, 2003: A11; “Nota informativa,” *Juventud Rebelde*, April 3, 2003: 1; Dana Canedy, “Cuba Hijackings,” *New York Times*, April 6, 2003: 2; “Nota informativa,” *Juventud Rebelde*, April 11, 2003: 1.

<sup>110</sup> Marina Menéndez e René Tamayo, “Un hecho que inspira indignación y horror,” *Juventud Rebelde*, March 23, 2003: 8-9.

<sup>111</sup> Roberto Hernández Solano, “EE.UU. busca fabricar pretexto para agredir a Cuba,” *Juventud Rebelde*, April 29, 2003: 2.

<sup>112</sup> Margarita Barrio, “Las ideas pueden más que las armas,” *Juventud Rebelde*, May 2, 2003: 4-5.

<sup>113</sup> “Guerra contra Cuba duraría cien años,” *Juventud Rebelde*, May 7, 2003: 1; “Gracias, Führer,” *Granma*, May 21, 2003: 1; Arsenio Rodríguez, “Pretexto para la agresión,” *Granma*, June 10, 2003: 8; “No podrán derrotar a la Revolución cubana,” *Juventud Rebelde*, June 12, 2003: 1-8; Arsenio Rodríguez, “Se incrementa escalada

detailed plan to defend the island from potential U.S. aggression, while the Council of State decided to increase military expenditures for 2004.<sup>114</sup> This sense of “siege” led also to the mass arrests of the “Black Spring” of 2003, when the Cuban police arrested more than 70 journalists and intellectuals related to the U.S. Interest Section in Havana.

There is some evidence that suggests that, at the time of Bolton's accusation, there was a potential similitude with the Iraqi scenario. First of all, the so called “Bush doctrine,” which was similar to the Soviet strategy toward Eastern Europe during the Cold War,<sup>115</sup> would have had a potential unlimited application.<sup>116</sup> In fact, as Bush recalled in a speech at West Point in June 2002, the United States would have faced known and unknown menaces.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld pointed out in February 2002, the mere fact that there was no evidence for weapons of mass destruction (WMD) it did not imply that a “rough state” did not have them.<sup>118</sup> Within this framework, Cuba's situation was particularly precarious, because, as Iraq would prove, the U.S. could “fabricate” evidence in order to extend the application of the “Bush doctrine” worldwide. Furthermore, as in the Iraqi case, the accusation of hosting WMD was framed up on exiles' information, while Cuban-American pro-embargo and anti-Castrist congresspeople supported the invasion of Iraq.<sup>119</sup> In other words, the Iraqi case created an unprecedented pattern in U.S. foreign policy which could have affected relations with Cuba too. Moreover, the first report of Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba (May 2004), a huge 500 page document with several omissions, contained some elements of analogy with Iraqi “reconstruction”: a “Transition Coordinator” was to be appointed, as the U.S. did in Iraq after the demise of Saddam Hussein.<sup>120</sup>

On the contrary, there are several other elements that suggest that Bolton's accusation served other purposes rather than directly planning the invasion of Cuba or providing the U.S. justification for doing that in the future. Firstly, there was no direct blackmail of invasion against Cuba after Bolton's accusations. The “Cuban question” was handled by second-level U.S. officials and Cuban-American congresspeople: Bolton, Ros-Lehtinen and the chief of the Interest Section in Havana James Cason represented the hard-liner faction which tried to expand the debate over Cuban bioweapons. On the contrary, the President and even Secretary Powell were more cautious in considering military action over the island. In September 2003, Powell assured the Cuban government that the U.S. had no intention to invade the island.<sup>121</sup> U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld noted that, so long as Cuba did not acquire weapons of mass destruction, the island would not be a target for military action.<sup>122</sup> Moreover, the first report of the Commission, which was formed with members of the Cabinet, did not contain any reference to Cuba's terrorist activities or any biochemical threat to the US.<sup>123</sup> Like his father George Bush and William Clinton, President George W. Bush seemed to resist any military

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agresiva contra Cuba,” *Granma*, July 1, 2003: 5; “Delcaración del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores,” *Granma*, October 6, 2003: 1; René Tamayo León, “El Jardín de la injuria,” *Juventud Rebelde*, October 14, 2003: 1.

<sup>114</sup> “Jamás podrán tomar este país,” *Juventud Rebelde*, December 9, 2003: 1, 8; Marc Frank, “Cuba Arms Against Shrill U.S. Voices,” *Financial Times*, February 11, 2004: 11.

<sup>115</sup> Karl E. Meyer, “America Unlimited: The Radical Sources of the Bush Doctrine,” *World Policy Journal* 21, No. 1 (spring 2004): 1-13.

<sup>116</sup> Melvyn P. Leffler, “Bush's Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Policy* 144 (Sept-Oct 2004): 22-24+26-28.

<sup>117</sup> George W. Bush, “Commencement Address at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York,” *The American Presidency Project*, June 1, 2002, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=62730>.

<sup>118</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, DoD News Briefing-Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Myers, February 12, 2002, <http://www.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2636>.

<sup>119</sup> Nick Ritchie and Paul Rogers, *The Political Road to War With Iraq: Bush, 9/11 and the Drive to Overthrow Saddam* (London: Routledge, 2007): 115, 125-134.

<sup>120</sup> Wayne Smith, “Cuba Shaping Up as Iraq II,” Center for International Policy, Commentary, May 26, 2004, <http://www.ciponline.org/research/entry/cuba-shaping-up-as-iraq-ii>.

<sup>121</sup> Jorge Ramon Avalos, “No habrá invasión a Cuba,” *La Prensa*, September 14, 2003: 2A.

<sup>122</sup> “CUBA/US: Iraq victory heightens tensions in Havana,” *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief Service*, April 23, 2003.

<sup>123</sup> Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba, *Report to the President*, May 2004.

response to the deteriorating situation in bilateral relations.<sup>124</sup>

Secondly, after the Iraqi invasion, President Bush succeeded in limiting congressional authority over the military intervention and the War on Terror,<sup>125</sup> but, on the contrary, nothing similar happened with Cuba. In fact, the U.S. seemed to be more interested in managing the invasion of Iraq rather than expanding the front of the “Bush doctrine” and its preventive strikes. For example, after Bolton's accusations, Bush never recalled the question of Cuban WMD or bioweapons in his public speeches and the timing of the “Black Spring” arrests was connected to the fact that U.S. foreign policy was concentrating elsewhere and not toward Cuba.<sup>126</sup> Moreover, in 2003 the Cuban-American congresspeople and Jeb Bush accused the president of not doing enough and being silent on the “Cuba issue.”<sup>127</sup>

This probably meant that Cuba was not on top of the U.S. list of priorities despite Bolton's accusations. While, after September 11, Iraq became a priority, Cuba was placed “beyond the axis of evil,” and President Bush never spoke about a Cuban direct threat to the U.S. and he refrained from commenting on Bolton's accusations in May 2002. Moreover, unlike Iraq, the Cuban biochemical threat was never discussed in a multilateral *forum* and Bush never menaced directly an invasion of the island: it was clear that the “Cuba question” was not a central issue, or at least it was less relevant than the Iraqi invasion. Bush primarily lamented Cuba's bad score on human rights and the lack of democracy and a multi-party system rather than Cuban support to international terrorist groups, while the U.S. defied Cuba in front of the UN Council on Human Rights rather than in the UN Security Council. In other words, after Bolton's accusations, the “Cuba issue” never experienced such an escalation the U.S. had with Saddam Hussein.

Moreover, the internal division of U.S. administration and some personal attitudes of John Bolton may be suitable to explain his accusations over Cuba, which were far from creating the basis for an Iraq-like scenario for Cuba. Since the beginning, the Bush administration experienced contrasts between different foreign policy views: Secretary of State Powell, a multilateralist and inventor of the “Powell doctrine” after the Cold War,<sup>128</sup> faced the growing power of the unilateralist Cheney-Rumsfeld axis (which succeeded in persuading the president to invade Iraq),<sup>129</sup> while neo-con elements were present, too.<sup>130</sup> In this perspective, Bolton, who was a neo-con unilateralist, was appointed as Undersecretary of State to balance Powell's foreign policy visions.<sup>131</sup> While on the “Iraqi issue,” the unilateral faction prevailed, on Cuba Powell was able to resist the pressures from Bolton.

Furthermore, Bolton was highly criticized for his “bully” attitude towards U.S. Department of State employees and analysts. In particular, after his speech at the Heritage Foundation, Bolton received some criticism from Christian Westermann, the chief bioweapon analyst at the State Department's bureau for intelligence and research, who refused to approve the language and

<sup>124</sup> Jorge I. Domínguez, “The George H.W. Bush- Clinton-Castro Years: From the Cold War to the Colder War (1989-2001),” in Soraya M. Castro Mariño and Ronald W. Pruessen (eds.), *Fifty Years of Revolution: Perspectives on Cuba, the United States, and the World*. (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida): 279-301.

<sup>125</sup> Nick Ritchie and Paul Rogers, *The Political Road to War With Iraq: Bush, 9/11 and the Drive to Overthrow Saddam*: 114-124.

<sup>126</sup> Theresa Bond, “Crackdown in Cuba,” *Foreign Affairs* 82, No. 5, (Sept-Oct 2003): 121.

<sup>127</sup> Christopher Marquis, “On Cuban Independence Day, Bush Is Silent on New Penalties,” *New York Times*, May 21, 2003: A3; Karen DeYoung, “President Criticized Over Past Pledges About Cuba,” *Washington Post*, May 21, 2003: A30; Abby Goodnough, “G.O.P. Legislators in Florida Criticize Bush on Cuba,” *New York Times*, August 13, 2003: A16; Manuel Roig-Franzia, “Jeb Bush Criticizes Brother On Cuba,” *Washington Post*, August 2, 2003: A10.

<sup>128</sup> Colin Powell, “U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead,” *Foreign Affairs* 71, No. 5 (Winter 1992): 32-45; Walter LaFeber, “Colin Powell: The Rise and Fall of the Powell Doctrine,” in Anna Kasten Nelson (ed.) *The Policy Makers. Shaping American Foreign Policy from 1947 to the Present* (New York, Rowman & Littlefield, 2009): 153-177.

<sup>129</sup> Paul Kengor, “Cheney and Vice Presidential Power,” in Gary L. Gregg II e Mark J. Rozell (eds.) *Considering the Bush Presidency* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004): 160-176.

<sup>130</sup> Michael Hirsh, “Bush and the World,” *Foreign Affairs* 81, No. 5 (Sept-Oct 2002): 18-43.

<sup>131</sup> Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: the Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 2003): 60-61.

recommended changes. After that, according to Carl Ford's testimony in Congress, Bolton "menaced" to fire Westermann. And this was not an isolated case, as Bolton was accused of "manipulating" State Department research and findings.<sup>132</sup> In several cases, Bolton seemed to run an abusive power and role inside the State Department, and left the department's top diplomat uninformed. Regarding the "Cuba issue," it seemed that Bolton's strong ego prevailed on effective evidence on Cuban bioweapons, which were never unambiguously found by U.S. intelligence agencies.<sup>133</sup>

### **Conclusion: Old Strategies for Old Goals**

Despite the fact that evidence for Cuban bioweapons was never found or confirmed and that a U.S. invasion in Cuba was highly inconceivable, Bolton's accusations became remarkably relevant in maintaining the U.S. stance over Cuba. According to Castro Mariño, "the Iraq invasion illustrates how the Bush administration has camouflaged the core doctrine of 'regime change' within the global war on terrorism."<sup>134</sup> On the contrary, I argue that the 2002 debate over Cuba's BW was not conceived as an anticipation for a Iraq-style regime change (through invasion and occupation) but it was functional to foster internal support for opposition forces and the external isolation of Cuba, continuing the Cold War confrontation policy which has been marking US-Cuba relations since the 1960s. It is certainly true that, even in the frame of the War on Terror, the regime change and the democracy promotion worldwide had been interpreted as a way to increase U.S. national security and promote American interests abroad.<sup>135</sup> After the 9\11 attacks, the connection between national security and democracy promotion, which had been conceived during Clinton's first term,<sup>136</sup> experienced a strong revival. In fact, the "Bush doctrine," codified by the National Security Strategy of 2002, linked the fight against terrorism to the fight against dictatorship, as the U.S. "will defend the peace by fighting terrorists and tyrants."<sup>137</sup> However, as Kaufman noted, the "Bush doctrine" was never applied as an instrument of a mere "regime change" without regard for international security concerns: the invasion of Iraq was conceived as a strategy to deal primarily with a "rough state," and only as a secondary aim to "export" democracy to the Middle East.<sup>138</sup> In the Cuban case, U.S. concerns over the Cuban threat were merely limited to Bolton's assertions about BW and found no confirmation in Bush's further moves. On the contrary, several U.S. officials "denounced" Bolton's attitude in dealing with the "Cuba issue".

As described above, U.S. accusations toward Cuba were probably linked to Bolton's personal behavior within the State Department (and reflected the deep division between different U.S. agencies) rather than a conscious attempt to "fabricate" evidence to invade the island. This is to say that Bolton's accusations played only a marginal role in shaping aggressive U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba. Probably, even without Bolton's exaggeration on Cuba, the administration would have moved towards strengthening the embargo (as Bush did in 2004, enforcing travel and remittances regulations) as well. President Bush announced new sanctions only in May 2004, 14 months after the "Black Spring" and two years after Bolton's accusations. Moreover, the U.S. still has been using uncertain evidence to keep Cuba on the State Department list of states sponsoring international terrorism, despite Bolton's accusations never being confirmed.<sup>139</sup> The lack of evidence for Cuban bioweapons or connections with international terrorism, but also the lack of U.S. plans for a military response to

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<sup>132</sup> "Former Colleague Says Bolton Abused Power at State Dept.," *Washington Post*, April 13, 2005: A4.

<sup>133</sup> Dafna Linzer, "Bolton Often Blocked Information, Officials Say," *Washington Post*, April 18, 2005: A4.

<sup>134</sup> Soraya M. Castro Mariño, "Lilke Sisyphus's Stone. U.S.-Cuban Relations in the Aftermath of September 11, 2001": 223.

<sup>135</sup> Jennifer L. Windsor, "Promoting Democratization Can Combat Terrorism," *Washington Quarterly* 26, Vol. 3 (Summer 2003): 43-58; Bruce M. Russett, "Bushwhacking the Democratic Peace," *International Studies Perspectives* 6 (November 2005): 395-408.

<sup>136</sup> William J. Clinton, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union," *Public Papers of the President of the United States*, January 25, 1994, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=50409>.

<sup>137</sup> Department of State, "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America," September, 2002, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf>: iii.

<sup>138</sup> Robert G. Kaufman, *In Defense of the Bush Doctrine* (Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, 2007): 87-124.

<sup>139</sup> U.S. Department of State, "2013 Country Reports on Terrorism," April, 2014, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/225050.pdf>: 19.

Cuba are confirmed by cables revealed by *Wikileaks*. In February 2009, a cable from the Interest Section in Havana (USINT) confirmed that there was no evidence for a potential direct threat from Cuba: according to the USINT, the Cuban government had had contacts with some groups (such as the Spanish ETA and the Colombia FARC) but there was no information about its support for their terrorist actions.<sup>140</sup>

Unlike Iraq, U.S. strategy within the framework of the War on Terror kept its faith in promoting a “peaceful change” inside Cuba, funding the internal opposition forces in order to foster a transition toward a democratic regime. The above mentioned connection between “exporting” democracy and strengthening U.S. national security certainly helped to maintain a Cold War-style policy mainly based on the isolation of Cuba and external pressure for regime change. After the 9\11 attacks, the USINT in Havana worked on expanding contacts with the Cuban people and dissidence and the arrests of the “Black Spring” were justified by the Cuban government as an effort to crush the network of contacts between the U.S. Interests Section and some sectors of Cuban society.<sup>141</sup> During the George W. Bush era, dialogue over US-Cuba relations never changed dramatically and the premises for an “Iraqi scenario” never materialized. On the contrary, the United States have been using some Cold War-style instruments to crush the Revolution. It seemed the U.S. alliance with Cuba against the War on Terror (which would have presented some possibilities for cooperation too) never happened. While the U.S. approach toward Hussein's Iraq changed dramatically, even if the Iraqi WMD were never confirmed, this was not the case of Cuba.

In other words, the War on Terror and the “Bush doctrine” never changed U.S. policy and U.S. tools and objectives. The U.S. had never wanted a high-level cooperation with Castro and they had worked to foster a regime change on the island and the “quarantine” of the island since the early 1960s, and the War on Terror did not change those main goals: after the 9\11 attacks, the U.S. resisted expanding counter-terrorism bilateral relations with Cuba. Moreover, U.S. officials never changed their minds about the tools with which to bring about regime change in Cuba: as mentioned above, senior officials scaled down the direct menace of a potential intervention in Cuba, while supporting the isolation of Cuba and granting more funding to the counterrevolutionary/democratic forces on the island. Even if regime change in “rough states” was a key component of the “Bush doctrine,” there was nothing new in U.S. relations with Cuba.

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<sup>140</sup> “USINT Havana Response To Spring 2009 Sepq,” February 27, 2009, [https://search.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09HAVANA132\\_a.html](https://search.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09HAVANA132_a.html).

<sup>141</sup> Juana Carrasco Martín, “Desmascarado el estado mayor de la subversión,” *Juventud Rebelde*, April 10, 2003: 4-5.