Cuba: Implications of the Third Communist Party Congress

An Intelligence Assessment
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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by the Office of African and Latin American Analysis. It was coordinated with the Directorate of Operations.

Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Middle America–Caribbean Division, ALA.
Cuba:
Implications of the Third Communist Party Congress

Key Judgments
Information available as of 10 March 1986 was used in this report.

The recently concluded Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party made sweeping personnel changes in the party’s Politburo and Central Committee, critically evaluated the nation’s economic performance, and set forth domestic and foreign policy goals for the next five years. Our assessment of the party personnel shifts and policy pronouncements suggests that the regime perceives the next several years as a period of increased stress and hopes to buy time with limited changes while laying the basis for more extensive regimentation of the people.

In the foreign policy arena, Castro’s typically tough rhetoric suggests he has largely discounted the possibility or desirability of seeking improved relations with Washington any time soon. The Cuban leader may calculate that efforts to improve relations would only serve to undermine what will be a growing need to play up the US threat to justify the austerity and political regimentation programs he will be imposing on his people. Unlike past congresses, Castro had no real victories over “imperialism” to herald this year, and his tough words with regard to Angola and Nicaragua probably reflect his concern over US policy resolve in the Third World in general and, more specifically, the US domestic debate over assistance to insurgents in those countries.

The dramatic personnel changes, which included the removal of three members of Castro’s revolutionary elite from the Politburo, appear aimed at:
- Removing leaders whose political or administrative credentials had become tarnished.
- Moving more technocrats and qualified administrators into the upper reaches of the party hierarchy to implement the new policy directions and address Cuba’s economic ills.
- Creating a new party leadership at least superficially more representative of Cuban society in its age, sex, and racial composition.

Despite these changes, the leadership, at least for the next few years, will continue to be dominated by the Castro brothers and their ex-guerrilla colleagues who have controlled the government since they assumed power in January 1959. Indeed, Fidel named Raul as his successor at the congress and some influential “Raulistas” have been moved onto the Politburo. On balance, these changes are likely to strengthen the anti-US element in the Politburo.
The Central Committee also had about a one-third turnover, with many young and minority members added. Most of these changes seem primarily symbolic, however, and we expect the relatively lightweight new membership to function as a rubberstamp for Castro's policy decisions.

The five-year economic plan for 1986-90 and the economic sections of the party program reflect even more strongly the austerity and conservation measures implemented by Castro last year. The introduction of limited economic liberalization and a greater reliance on market mechanisms reflect, in our opinion, Soviet pressures on Havana to improve economic efficiency and the rising influence of more technically skilled advisers. These proposals include such concepts as profit-oriented enterprises, worker incentives, and reduced subsidies on a number of basic consumer goods.

Even if Castro actually implements these measures—hardliners in the leadership may hinder or block anything more than limited reform—the short-term outlook for the Cuban economy remains poor. Hard currency markets for Cuba’s primary exports—nickel, sugar, and reexported Soviet oil—are likely to remain weak, and, in our opinion, Cuba will fall well short of its 3.5-percent growth target for 1986. The serious drought and devastating hurricane that struck Cuba last year will substantially reduce this year’s sugar harvest—perhaps by as much as 2 million metric tons (25 percent)—and Havana’s commitment to meeting CEMA quotas will limit exports to the West.

In the political arena, the draft party program emphasizes that increased discipline will be imposed not only in the economic sector, but also in the government, the party, and among the masses. The program reflects the regime’s concern with worker apathy as well as increasing street crime and corruption, and seems to point to increasing regimentation of daily life. The program’s emphasis on a “war of all the people” and the need for intensified indoctrination of Cuba’s armed forces suggest that Havana will continue to use the alleged threat from the United States to justify ever-greater sacrifices on the part of the population.
In his presentation of the Main Report, Castro's rhetoric on many foreign policy issues was so uncompromising that two days later a separate, hastily drafted resolution on foreign policy was approved, explicitly supporting US-Soviet dialogue and peaceful coexistence. We believe Soviet pressures may have been responsible for the document. On balance, the Soviets were probably pleased with the congress's moves toward domestic reform—Moscow has been pressing for improved efficiency and production—although piqued at Castro's familiar recalcitrance on specific issues in the foreign policy arena.
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Figure 1. Cuban President Castro reading the six-hour Main Report on 4 February 1986, the first day of the Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party. Castro's Report, presented to some 1,784 party delegates and 500 foreign guests, was generally critical of Cuban economic performance during the five years since the second congress and projected further austerity and tough times for the Cuban people.
Cuba: Implications of the Third Communist Party Congress

Introduction
The Cuban Communist Party’s Congress, held approximately every five years, is billed by Havana as an occasion for party revitalization, renewal of its membership, and setting out policy guidelines for the future. The Castro regime’s Third Congress, held in February, focused on four main tasks. The principal action was the selection of the party’s leadership—the Politburo, Secretariat, and Central Committee. Second, the Cuban leadership presented its evaluation of the country’s economic performance over the past five years and outlined the economic plan for 1986-90. The congress also threshed out ideological issues and presented a draft party program aimed at improving revolutionary fervor. Finally, President Fidel Castro outlined the party’s foreign policy views in his two major speeches of the congress.

This paper examines the personnel changes made in the party’s Politburo and Central Committee, assessing their impact on the regime’s future policy directions. It also analyzes the degree to which the congress addressed Cuba’s weakening economic situation, Soviet dissatisfaction with Cuban economic management, and US pressures on Cuba’s foreign policy interests in the Third World. Finally, the paper considers the implications of the party congress for the United States.

Dramatic Personnel Changes
In our view, the dramatic changes made in the Cuban Communist Party leadership at the congress underscore the regime’s concern about its economic plight as well as its public image. An examination of the personnel shifts in the Politburo and Central Committee indicates an effort to remove those whose political or administrative credentials had become tarnished, and to replace them with technocrats that have the skills needed to address the country’s economic ills. A second objective, based on our analysis of the public speeches during the congress, was to eliminate the popular perception that the party leadership was not representative of Cuban society as a whole. Despite the influx of new faces, however, many of them a generation younger than Fidel Castro, a review of the personnel of the new Politburo reflects continued domination by the Castro brothers and their ex-guerrilla colleagues who took control in 1959.

Politburo Castoffs. In the biggest shakeup of the Politburo since it was created in 1965, nine of the 24...
The Cuban Communist Party 1986 Political Bureau

Full Members
Fidel Castro Ruz, First Secretary
Raul Castro Ruz, Second Secretary

(B) Juan Almeida Bosque
   Julio Camacho Aguilera
   Osmany Cienfuegos Gorriaran
   (N) (B) Esteban Lazo Hernandez
       Jose Ramon Machado Ventura
       Pedro Miret Prieto
       Jorge Risquet Valdes
   (N) Abielardo Colome Ibarra
   (N) (F) Vilma Espin Guillois
       Armando Hart Davalos
       Carlos Rafael Rodriguez
       Roberto Veiga Menendez

Alternates
(N) Luis E. Alvarez de la Nuez
   Senen Casas Reguero
   (N) Jose Ramirez Cruz
   (N) Julian Rizo Alvarez
   (N) Jose R. Fernandez Alvarez
   (N) Ulises Rosales del Toro
   (N) (F) Yolanda Ferrer Gomez
   (N) Rosa Elena Simeon Negrin
   (N) Lazaro Vasquez Garcia
   (N) Raul Michel Vargas
   (N) new.
   (B) black/mulatto.
   (F) female.

incumbents were replaced by new faces. Three honored veterans of the Sierra Maestra guerrilla campaign of the 1950s—Ramiro Valdes, Sergio del Valle, and Guillermo Garcia—lost the seats they had held since 1965. Their formal departures will help dampen criticism that guerrilla veterans—many of them administrative incompetents—hold too many positions of influence. All three retained their seats on the Central Committee, however, and probably will continue to play an important advisory role.

Most of the Politburo castoffs lost their positions because of diminished competence or major slip-ups:

• Valdes, who was dismissed as Interior Minister in December, had been in charge of Cuba’s police and internal security apparatus and had developed a well-earned reputation for ruthlessness. He was unable, however, to halt the steady increase in street crime in recent years; his own ministry had become infected by the corruption that it was tasked to eliminate. As the US Interests Section in Havana noted, his heavyhanded methods were no longer appropriate in the era of “socialist legality” that Castro is now promoting. Valdes is not in disgrace, however, and he has been put in charge of developing an electronics industry in Cuba.

• Former Public Health Minister Sergio del Valle also lost his ministerial rank in December. According to an official announcement, he asked to be replaced in that position, which he had held since

1 The 1980 Politburo had 27 members. Two have since died and one was removed
1979, by "another comrade with more technical knowledge and organizational experience in the area of public health."

- Guillermo Garcia was removed in June 1985 from his post of Minister of Transportation.

- The removal of 78-year-old Blas Roca was expected. Roca, who had served since 1934 as the Secretary General of the pre-Castro Communist party, has been in poor health for years and asked to be released from his duties. He apparently will now devote all his energies to overseeing the legal team that is drafting Cuba's new civil code.

- The ouster of Politburo alternate member Humberto Perez was also expected. He had lost his job as Minister-President of the Central Planning Board in mid-1985 and had exhausted his political credibility.

- Division General Sixto Batista lost his seat as alternate Politburo member, apparently as a result of the poor performance of the few dozen Cuban military officers in Grenada during the US-led intervention in October 1983. He was ousted as head of the Armed Forces Ministry's Central Political Directorate—which is responsible for ideological preparation of the troops—in mid-1984 following a formal probe of the Grenada affair. His subsequent assignment as head of the Central Committee's Military Department, however, as well as his appointment at the congress to the party Secretariat, suggest that Batista has not fallen from grace with Castro.

- Armando Acosta, who heads the regime's largest mass organization—the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs)—also lost his alternate seat on the Politburo. He apparently fell out of favor in 1980 as a result of the Peruvian Embassy incident (when many local CDR functionaries joined the 10,000 Cubans seeking asylum in the Embassy) and the Mariel boatlift.

- He probably was not penalized at the Second Party Congress in December 1980 because the leadership wanted to maintain an aura of unity.

- The removal of Jesus Montane, a participant in both the historic attack on Moncada Barracks in 1953 and the Granma landing in 1956, from his alternate Politburo seat was unexpected. Although he retained his Central Committee seat, he apparently was removed as head of the Central Committee's General Department of Foreign Relations, which handles party-to-party relations with countries outside the Western Hemisphere. He is now described in the Cuban media as simply an assistant to Fidel. His removal was unexplained, although according to the US Interests Section, diplomats in Havana attribute it to health problems.

- The ouster of Miguel Cano Blanco, party chief in Holguin Province, also was unexplained. He was named an alternate Politburo member in 1980, but his service at the national level during the past five years seems to have been singularly unexceptional.

### Politburo Newcomers

Three of the alternate members on the old Politburo were promoted to full membership. The most significant of these moves was that of Division Gen. Abelardo Colome Ibarra, one of three First Vice Ministers of the Armed Forces. His promotion may presage a reshuffling in the Armed Forces Ministry in which Colome Ibarra would take over as minister if Army Gen. Raul Castro resigns—to assume a much broader role in government. Colome Ibarra, one of only three Cubans to be awarded the
Figure 3
Cuba: Prominent Politburo Winners

Division Gen. Abelardo Colome Ibarra
First Vice Minister of the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces ... named Hero of the Republic in 1984, one of only three so honored ... has had extensive overseas military experience in both Angola and Ethiopia ... likely candidate to replace Raul Castro in top Armed Forces post if Raul moves on to broader responsibilities in the government.

Vilma Espin Guillelis
Heads Federation of Cuban Women ... first woman named as full member of Politburo ... viscerally anti-American ... married Raul Castro in 1959.

Division Gen. Ulises Rosales del Toro
Ranks fourth in Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces hierarchy ... served in Angola during 1976 ... studied from 1977-79 at Soviet Military Academy of the General Staff ... described as intelligent and capable.

Esteban Lazo Hernandez
Relative unknown ... former party secretary for Matanzas Province ... second black on Politburo ... appointment intended to improve regime's image on racial matters ... expected to play visible role as regime spokesman on African issues.

Jose Ramon Fernandez Alvarez
Professional military officer under Batista jailed in 1956 for plotting against him ... right-hand man to Raul Castro in Ministry of Revolutionary Armed Forces from 1959-69 ... currently Education Minister but expected to assume broader responsibilities.
nation’s highest distinction of Hero of the Republic, has served in Angola and Ethiopia and is in charge of all Cuban military forces abroad.\footnote{The other two are Arnaldo Ochoa, a key actor in Cuba’s overseas military interventions, and Arnaldo Tamayo, the Cuban cosmonaut.}

Also promoted from alternate to full membership were Vilma Espin and Roberto Veiga. Espin, a guerrilla veteran of the Sierra Maestra campaign, is more widely known for her advocacy of women’s rights in Cuba as president of the regime’s mass organization for women, the Cuban Women’s Federation. Veiga also heads a mass organization—the Central Organization of Cuban Workers—which includes all of Cuba’s legally recognized unions. His promotion, in our opinion, is meant to give the impression that organized labor in Cuba has a representative at the highest level of the regime. Veiga played little or no role in the revolution and apparently has not served overseas in either a military or civilian capacity, which is likely to put him at a serious disadvantage in Politburo debate.

There are nine newcomers to the Politburo. The appointment of Division Gen. Ulises Rosales del Toro as an alternate member seems designed to fill the seat vacated by Division General Batista. Rosales del Toro’s presence—he is the most junior of the three First Vice Ministers of the Armed Forces—means that the regime’s top-ranking military officers, including Fidel and Raul Castro, presently hold five of the 24 full or alternate seats on the Politburo. Like Colome Ibarra, Rosales del Toro saw duty in Africa, and, as chief of the General Staff, he plays an important role in military operations overseas. According to press reports, for example, he was the military representative on a delegation that went to the USSR recently to take part in a high-level Soviet-Cuban-Angolan meeting on southern Africa.

The backgrounds of the remaining new Politburo members are varied. Jose Ramon Fernandez Alvarez, who is Minister of Education, was elevated to the Politburo as an alternate, as were Julian Rizo Alvarez, a member of the party Secretariat; Rosa Elena Simeon de Negrin, head of the Academy of Sciences; Yolanda Ferrer, a women’s organization official; and three provincial first secretaries of the party, Luis Alvarez de la Nuez (Havana Province), Raul Michel Vargas (Guantanamo Province), and Lazaro Vasquez Garcia (Camaguey Province). A fourth provincial first secretary, Esteban Lazo Hernandez of Matanzas Province, was given full membership in the Politburo.

Of these eight, we believe only Fernandez Alvarez is likely to carry much weight in Politburo debate in the near term. Alvarez is a protege of Raul Castro and a professional military officer who received training in the United States during the early 1950s. One of Raul Castro’s top aides, he played a major role in the defeat of the exile contingent at the Bay of Pigs in 1961 and is generally credited with turning Castro’s ill-educated rebel band into a professional military establishment, rising to the position of Armed Forces vice minister before being reassigned to the Education Ministry as a troubleshooter in 1970.\footnote{None of the other new Politburo alternates can match Fernandez Alvarez’s executive experience or his long-standing links to Raul Castro. Most were probably appointed primarily for symbolic reasons. Lazo Hernandez, for example, is a black party official who is only 42 years old. Too young to have participated in the revolution, Lazo may owe his lofty appointment to his race. His presence avoids a further reduction in the number of blacks or mulattoes in the Politburo that would have been caused by the retirement of Blas Roca. Since 1980, the high percentage of whites on the party’s most important body has been an embarrassment for a regime that openly boasts of Cuba’s African heritage and the leadership’s alleged lack of racial prejudice.}

Similarly, Rosa Elena Simeon de Negrin and Yolanda Ferrer almost certainly were appointed because of their sex. Neither is known to have taken part in the revolutionary struggle, and neither has played a political role in the last 20 years that was significant enough to gain attention in the Cuban media. Simeon de Negrin’s area of expertise, for example, appears to be animal husbandry—she was head of the Agriculture Ministry’s National Animal Health Center for
seven years prior to her recent appointment as president of the Academy of Sciences—and there is little in her background to suggest she merits an alternate seat on the party's highest decisionmaking body. Her Politburo role is likely to be that of an adviser to provide technical assistance to Castro when questions concerning his latest pet project—biotechnology—arise. Much the same is true of the three provincial first secretaries who won alternate seats; they have had no national political exposure and their appointments, in our estimation, were intended to signal the party's middle-level officials that the leadership is aware of and interested in their concerns.

Focus on the Economy
The Cuban leadership's concern over economic issues was underscored in Castro's Main Report to the congress, which dwelled on inefficiency, and the continued need for austerity and consumer sacrifice. Although the Cuban leader pointed to several positive indicators—such as a claimed (but inflated) average annual growth rate of over 7 percent and a 25-percent decline in energy consumption over the 1981-85 period—the overall thrust of his economic remarks was critical. The Cuban leader castigated bad management in agriculture and industry, inadequate central planning, and failure to adopt new technologies.

Castro's harsh assessment probably was stimulated by Cuba's poor performance in its 1981-85 Five-Year Plan (see table 1). According to official Cuban statistics, actual production fell short in at least 12 of 18 major areas. In fact, available production data in nine major areas indicate Cuba even failed to reach the 1980 goal. Looking ahead to the next five-year plan, Castro reiterated the austerity or "economic war" theme introduced in late 1984 and emphasized that worker productivity must improve.

Havana's strategy for resolving its economic difficulties was outlined in the 1986-90 Five-Year Plan that was unveiled at the congress. The plan's major features suggest that it was heavily affected by Moscow's criticisms of Cuban inefficiency and the tightening up of Soviet economic aid to Cuba.

### Table 1

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Cuba: Comparison of Production Goals With Actual Performance</th>
<th>Thousand Metric Tons (except where noted)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980 Goal</td>
<td>Percent Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export crops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>8,000-8,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citrus</td>
<td>350-550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seafood</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic crops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickel</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric power</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cement</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoes</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerators</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radios</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Estimated. 
+ Million dozen. 
+ Million kilowatt hours. 
+ Million pairs. 
+ Thousand units.
the Soviets were reportedly calling the Cuban rationing system a political embarrassment, and were censuring Havana for wasting oil and for investing in the depressed sugar industry.

These developments probably convinced Havana that it would have to assume more responsibility for its own economic welfare, continue its austerity program, and liberalize the economy to some degree to improve efficiency.

**Austerity and Limited Reform.** The plan indicates that economic policy will feature further austerity, increased integration with other CEMA countries, and a number of small steps toward liberalization, such as greater reliance on market mechanisms. Austerity is highlighted by the importance placed on energy conservation, import substitution, and a reallocation of budget priorities from social welfare to the productive sector. In addition, the plan calls for a move away from rationing by reducing subsidies on a number of basic consumer products. The plan also stresses that Cuba must fulfill its trade obligations and meet delivery schedules with CEMA partners, implicitly acknowledging such shortcomings in recent years.

It is clear that the Cuban consumer is given lowest priority under the plan. Much of the country’s resources will be devoted to increasing production for export, either to the West in exchange for badly needed hard currency or to CEMA. Reduction of subsidies deals an additional blow to the Cuban worker. The 1986 national budget—with its cuts in social welfare programs such as health and education—is a preview of the austere days ahead for the Cuban consumer. Ironically, the harsh treatment of the Cuban worker, in our judgment, will help undermine the incentives introduced in other parts of the plan.

### Table 2

**Cuba: Estimated Gross National Product, 1981-85**

<table>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GNP</td>
<td>11,972</td>
<td>12,288</td>
<td>13,025</td>
<td>13,843</td>
<td>14,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>1,739</td>
<td>1,723</td>
<td>1,759</td>
<td>1,702</td>
<td>1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>3,462</td>
<td>3,473</td>
<td>3,632</td>
<td>3,729</td>
<td>3,847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>6,771</td>
<td>7,092</td>
<td>7,634</td>
<td>8,412</td>
<td>9,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNP per capita</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: There is no estimate for a real US dollar/Cuban peso exchange rate; thus, the series is presented in pesos. The official exchange rate, which overvalues the peso, in 1985 was US $1.08 = 1 Cuban peso.

### Table 3

**Cuba: Estimated Soviet Economic Assistance, 1981-84**

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,555</td>
<td>4,666</td>
<td>4,260</td>
<td>4,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic aid</td>
<td>1,415</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>1,070</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development aid</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical services</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade subsidies</td>
<td>3,140</td>
<td>3,691</td>
<td>3,190</td>
<td>3,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>1,365</td>
<td>2,580</td>
<td>2,740</td>
<td>2,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petroleum</td>
<td>1,655</td>
<td>1,006</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickel</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* On the basis of estimated balance-of-payments aid necessary to cover Cuba soft currency trade deficits with the USSR, Cuban purchases of capital goods from Moscow, and public statements by Cuban and Soviet officials concerning the amount of development aid extended.
The reform aspects of the plan, and of other documents unveiled at the congress, all stress greater use of market forces in the economy. The primary elements of this policy shift include decentralization of decisionmaking to lower levels; increased use of prices, profits, and labor incentives; reduced subsidies; and less emphasis on consumer welfare. These initiatives are intended to help Cuba achieve increased efficiency, a more dynamic application of science and technology, and improved product quality.

For example, the plan indicates that “economic incentives should become a real lever” promoting worker efficiency, and that the use of profitability as an indicator of efficiency will be “fundamental and decisive.” In addition, payrolls are to be tightened in order to increase profits. The plan also hopes to improve labor productivity by linking pay to the quality and quantity of output and calling for better use of bonuses and premiums. The wholesale and retail pricing systems are to be reformed so that they play an important part in saving scarce resources—especially energy—and in regulating the distribution of various goods and services.

Any benefits to the Cuban economy from liberalization measures will, in our opinion, be slow in coming. Hardliners in the regime have opposed such reforms in the past for ideological reasons and can be expected to again resist anything more than limited reforms. Fidel Castro himself has been a stumbling block to decentralizing decisionmaking, and he could be swayed relatively easily by the arguments against reform from the ideologues in his inner circle. Even if Castro implements these measures, however, the short-term outlook for the Cuban economy remains poor, and, in our opinion, Havana will fall woefully short of its 3.5-percent growth target for 1986. Hard currency markets for Cuba’s primary exports—nickel, sugar, and reexported Soviet oil—are likely to remain weak. It is also unlikely that Cuba will be able to diversify its export base enough to increase its hard currency earnings significantly. Moreover, the serious drought and devastating hurricane that struck Cuba last year will substantially reduce this year’s sugar harvest—perhaps by as much as 2 million tons—and, combined with Havana’s commitment to meet CEMA trade quotas, will limit Cuba’s exports to the West.

The New Party Program
The party program—which embodies the party’s ideological guidelines for the next five years—introduced at the congress was, by prior decision of the Politburo, approved only in draft form. Cuban officials announced last year that the congress is to be reconvened in late 1986 in one last session to give it final approval. The drafting of the program, which is based on the “programmatic platform” approved during the party’s first congress in 1975, began in 1984 but, according to the US Interests Section in Havana, was not completed until just before the congress convened on 4 February. According to party spokesmen, the unprecedented delay in approving the party guidelines is designed to permit grassroots discussion of the program and allow it to be “enriched” with contributions from the rank and file of the party, the party’s youth arm, the mass organizations, and the personnel of the Armed Forces and Interior Ministries.

We believe that this process of “broad discussion” is being instituted to sell what essentially is an unpleasant dose of medicine to the Cuban people. Rather than presenting the population with an unpalatable fait accompli, the regime wants to have the opportunity to explain the program’s features, give the people the chance to let off steam through debate with local officials, allow time for the gradual acceptance of the program’s provisions, and lay the groundwork for the eventual claim that the program has the support of the masses. Unless the regime detects massive resentment of specific elements of the program during the discussion process, we believe the present version of the program will be finally approved with only minor modifications. In the meantime, the Cuban media will portray the discussion process to the world as the purest form of democracy.

Among a number of specific trouble spots addressed by the draft program, two—worker apathy and antisocial behavior—are given special attention. At the same time, the program provides ideological underpinnings for dealing with these problems. Viewing the entire program, the regime clearly is focusing on overcoming ideological problems, especially flagging revolutionary commitment, and is looking to the party rank and file and the media to take a strong role in boosting morale.
**The Party Program**

The Cuban Communist Party’s draft program is a 187-page document that defines the character of the Cuban revolution and outlines the “objectives and tasks of the Cuban Communist Party in carrying out the construction of socialism in Cuba.” It discusses economic, political, and social strategy, Havana’s foreign policy goals, national defense, and ideological responsibilities. The document, which will be discussed at all levels of the party, mass organizations, and the Interior and Armed Forces Ministries over the next six months, will serve as official guidelines for all party work over the next five years. In late 1986, the Third Party Congress will be reconvened to approve the program in final form.

**Worker Apathy.** The program addresses apathy as one of the main stumblingblocks to a solution of the country’s economic ills. It calls for making wider use of monetary/market relationships and states that the “distribution of goods according to work will be the main method of satisfying the needs of the population.” It also demands “strictest labor and technical discipline” to help meet efficiency goals.

The program calls for a gradual reduction in rationing and the sale of more goods on the higher priced, parallel market, thus giving hard workers, who earn bonuses, additional work incentive. While Cuba’s rationing system has resulted in a more equitable distribution of the limited supply of goods, Cuban planners may have concluded that it has also tended to generate worker apathy.

The program also directs all branches of the economy to organize workers into “productive brigades” and to pay them based upon the total production of their brigade. The adoption of this “brigade” concept, an obvious effort to mobilize social pressure to force poor performers to work harder, has already been tried in selected industries. Widespread application of the scheme could backfire, in our opinion, because apathy is so prevalent and the peer pressure and harassment may only cause further resentment among Cuban workers.

**Antisocial Behavior.** The program indirectly acknowledges Cuba’s growing street crime and corruption. It gives new emphasis to the roles in society of “socialist legality” and respect for the law. Ignoring the fact that most street crime is the work of the postrevolutionary generation, the program describes antisocial behavior as a legacy of the pre-Castro era that is being exploited by US propaganda.

The new emphasis on “socialist legality” suggests the regime is still trying to recover from the scandal uncovered in the judiciary in 1983 and other more recent instances of corruption.

For acquittal verdicts and light sentences had apparently become so commonplace that the Ministry of Justice was shaken from top to bottom when scores of defense attorneys and judges—including most sitting on the Supreme Court—were jailed during a lengthy investigation by the Interior Ministry. In the midst of the affair, Politburo member and Justice Minister Dorticos committed suicide. Even the Interior Ministry, charged with rooting out graft, was embarrassed when its own high officials were found to be taking bribes and embezzling government funds.

In dealing with antisocial behavior, the party program warns against failing to make a distinction between political subversion and a lack of misunderstanding of the standards of socialist society. This is an indirect but damaging admission that, after 27 years of total control, the regime’s political education apparatus has done a poor job of indoctrinating the masses.

**More Indoctrination.** To cope with these problems in the coming years, the party program places the largest part of the burden on the regime’s propaganda machinery. In Cuba’s closed society, the media’s role is one of educating the masses on the goals of the regime, explaining how and why the population should contribute to the achievement of those goals. The party’s Secretariat, through the various working departments of the Central Committee, establishes rigid ideological guidelines for all press, radio, television, and educational and cultural entities in the country; and the program will serve as a basic working document for these departments and their governmental affiliates over the next five years.
The program announced that steps will be taken to “elevate the role and responsibilities of journalists and the press as a whole.” These include institutional reorganization as well as better training for press personnel and the adoption of unspecified measures of a legal and professional nature. These are designed to enable the press to carry out its “most important daily task,” which the program defines as promoting the ideological development of the population.

Radiobroadcasting, according to the program, will get “priority attention,” and an effort will be made to improve the quality of television programming and expand regional television broadcasting. News personnel of both the printed and electronic media are urged to develop better contact with the masses and to engage in criticism “as a means of achieving political, educational, and ideological goals.” The program identifies the countering of “imperialist propaganda” as one of the media’s most important tasks, which tends to confirm that Cubans in increasing numbers are listening to broadcasts from outside the country.

As part of the indoctrination process, Castro also seems quite willing to use alleged external threats to fortify revolutionary fervor. The program strongly reinforces the propaganda line that an invasion by the United States is being prepared and uses it to justify the continuation of measures designed to increase the regimentation of the entire population. The praise devoted by the program to the concept of the “war of all the people” appears intended to create a siege mentality and suggests to us that the Cuban leadership perceives the next several years as a time of trial in which it will be subjected to stresses in several different areas—political and economic, internal and external.

Renewing Foreign Policy Commitments
The uniformity that characterized the congress on economic and ideological issues was less evident on foreign policy matters. Nevertheless, several main themes emerged in Castro’s speeches:

- Castro praised the Soviet-Cuban relationship, but he may have irked Moscow by concentrating far more on Latin America and regional issues than on East-West strategic concerns.

- Although he struck a moderate pose and emphasized Havana’s solidarity with new civilian governments in Latin America, Castro strongly reiterated Cuba’s support of key clients Nicaragua and Angola, and threatened to increase aid to them if the United States increased assistance to rebels.

Although Castro did not set any dramatic new directions, he tried to demonstrate that increased US pressure would cause Cuba to strengthen, rather than back off, its commitment to Third World socialist governments and revolutionary movements. His hard line on Nicaragua and Angola, however, as well as his warning that Soviet-US “detente,” if it comes, will not affect Washington’s policy in regional trouble spots, betrays Castro’s grave concern about continuing US foreign policy resolve in those areas.

Relations With Moscow. In the Main Report, Castro thanked Moscow for its longstanding and continuing military and economic assistance, and noted again that Soviet-Cuban economic relations should serve as a model for relations between underdeveloped and developed countries. He asserted, however, that all members of the socialist community, regardless of their size, deserve “absolute reciprocal respect,” implying perhaps Cuban bitterness over Moscow’s aid levels to its Third World allies in recent years.

Castro probably annoyed Moscow by glossing over contentious Soviet-US strategic issues, such as the Strategic Defense Initiative. The Cuban leader also barely acknowledged recent Soviet initiatives on arms control for which Moscow is actively seeking international support.

We believe that these omissions resulted in pressure from the Soviet delegation, which may have led to the hasty preparation and approval of a resolution on foreign policy two days later. Fidel Castro played no part in the presentation of the resolution, which was read by Cuban Vice President Rodriguez instead of being distributed to the delegates in advance. The
document contained much more explicit statements of Cuban support for continuing dialogue between Moscow and Washington and emphasized the need for all socialist states to “struggle for peace.” It called for peaceful coexistence, constructive negotiations, general and complete disarmament, and a broad and active international campaign to oppose the alleged US policy of confrontation.

Despite Soviet and Cuban differences in emphasis—Moscow’s focus on strategic issues and Havana’s concern with regional conflicts—Castro’s addresses reinforced the coherence of their foreign policy views in a number of areas. His positive remarks on China parallel the warming trend in Sino-Soviet relations over the past two years. Moreover, the overall domestic thrust of Castro’s Main Report, that of economic reform and improved efficiency, is sure to please the Soviet leadership, which has been pressing Cuba to improve its economic performance and stop wasting Soviet assistance.

**Relations With the United States.** Castro’s Main Report did not deviate from his established anti-US line. He charged that, even if the Reagan administration reached agreements with the Soviet Union on strategic weapons, its “aggressive attitude” toward regional conflicts will not necessarily change. In his closing speech to the congress—which he delivered without a prepared text—Castro was far more vitriolic, indirectly comparing President Reagan to Hitler and castigating capitalist society for “living off war and the arms race.”

Although Castro reiterated his familiar line that Cuba is willing to discuss its problems with the United States and seek better relations, his vituperative language demonstrated that he was not offering to make the first move. He cited the immigration accord reached in late 1984 as evidence of Cuba’s willingness to negotiate, but claimed that he breached the agreement because the initiation of Radio Marti broadcasts indicated that the United States was not yet ready to deal with Cuba on the basis of “sovereign equality.”

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**Promoting Third World Solidarity**

Castro devoted the major portion of his foreign policy comments in the Main Report to developments in Latin America, portraying, once again, the United States as the aggressor in the hemisphere. He stated, for example, that the Reagan administration—despite “recent signs of the possibility of a return to detente”—is increasing its role as “imperialist gendarme” in Central America and other regional flashpoints. In his highly charged closing speech, Castro said that, if more US aid is extended to the Nicaraguan insurgents, Cuba would do everything possible to increase its assistance to the Sandinistas.

Consistent with his public relations campaign of the past year or so, the Cuban leader tried to project an image of himself as a moderate and flexible regional partner and saluted the rise of civilian, democratic governments in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. He portrayed the election last year of Cuba’s National Assembly into the Latin American Parliament as “a great expression of solidarity.” Castro again expressed support for the Contadora negotiations, noting that they are an expression of Latin America’s growing independence from the United States.

Castro addressed the Latin American debt issue by repeating his view that the debt is unpayable, but tried to project the reasonable—rather than revolutionary—nature of his ideas by denying that he was seeking a breakup of the international financial system. He then reiterated his proposal that the developed creditor nations assume the Third World debt by saving 12 percent of their annual defense expenditures to pay off the loans.

Castro went on to score the Reagan administration for its southern Africa policy, using UNITA leader Savimbi’s visit to Washington earlier this year as his point of attack. In his emotional closing speech, he rejected the notion that US support to the Angolan insurgents could achieve a Cuban troop withdrawal and asserted that Cuba is willing to keep its troops in Angola for up to 30 years; he implied that a total withdrawal of Cuban forces could only occur after apartheid is abolished in South Africa.
Outlook and Implications for the United States

We believe the Third Party Congress marked the first significant step toward broadening the base of the leadership since Castro assumed power in 1959.

The ouster of such hallowed figures as Valdes, Garcia, and del Valle from the Politburo appears to have convinced many Cubans that Havana is finally making a break with the past. The new Politburo will probably be seen by the average Cuban as more competent than its predecessor, and, in our judgment, the replacement of some of the old guard has bought the leadership some time to regroup and try to come to grips with the country's economic problems.

The Politburo changes are likely to have fallout for Cuban foreign policy. In our judgment, the makeup of the new Politburo increases the likelihood of friction with the United States. The promotion of Vilma Espin to full membership places in a key position a woman who is said to be as antipathetic toward the United States as Raul Castro. In international meetings and in sessions of the Cuban National Assembly, she has shown herself to be vehement, outspoken, strong-willed, and prone to simplistic and sometimes extreme solutions to problems. We believe she will continue to display these characteristics in Politburo debate.

Several other Politburo members are also likely to strengthen the anti-US sentiment of the Politburo. For example, Avelardo Colome, now a full member, is likely to take his cues on key issues from his mentor of many years, Raul Castro, who alternates Ulises Rosales and Jose Fernandez, both of whom also owe their rise to high office largely to Raul. The party provincial officials added to the Politburo, on the other hand, have weak revolutionary credentials and little experience in politics at the national level; thus, they are likely to play only a minor role in debating matters of special importance. We doubt, for example, that they would have the courage to oppose Fidel or Raul on issues related to the United States. Gone from the Politburo are those such as Blas Roca, Armando Acosta, and Humberto Perez who might argue for more pragmatism in dealing with Washington.

Despite the personnel shifts, we believe Castro, at least over the next several years, will continue to lean heavily on his colleagues of the guerrilla struggle when faced with critical decisions. He almost certainly is wary of placing his faith in the younger element of the new Central Committee and probably believes they have not yet paid their dues in the revolutionary society that he and his generation of rebels have sacrificed so much to create. Many of the new faces—such as Esteban Lazo and Yolanda Ferrer—clearly were picked as window dressing, and these people have no incentive to challenge Castro or the ranking members of the leadership on any vital policy issue. Given the nature of the Cuban political system, we believe these new members of the party elite know what their role is and will respond by giving Castro their full support. They are unlikely, therefore, to press for innovations in Cuban policy.

Castro gave several indications that he is concerned that Washington will increase further its pressure on Cuban interests in the Third World. His tough language threatening to strengthen Cuba's commitment to Angola and Nicaragua probably was intended, in part, to influence US public and Congressional opinion on the issue of US assistance to insurgents in those countries. Moreover, in contrast to his 1980 address to the Second Congress, when he headlined Angola, Nicaragua, and Grenada as evidence of the inevitable swing in the balance of forces toward socialism, this year he cited no similar "victories" for celebration. Indeed, aside from congratulating Luanda, Managua, and the Salvadoran insurgents for holding on against their opposition, Castro was forced to hold up the return of several Latin American governments to democratic rule as the greatest "victory" against imperialism over the past several years. In addition, Castro's failure explicitly to back the prospect of improved US-Soviet relations and any potential agreement on strategic weapons may betray a real concern that any improvement in Moscow's relations with Washington could negatively affect its commitment to its Third World allies.
Appendix A

Statistical Analysis of the New Central Committee

The Third Party Congress marked the first significant expansion of the narrow-based representation on the Central Committee since the Cuban Communist Party was formed in 1965. Although all the data are not yet available, the preliminary statistical analysis that follows indicates that the basic demographic composition of Cuba's party elite—as reflected by the Central Committee—is changing. Early central committees were clearly dominated by white males from Oriente Province who had participated in the guerrilla struggle against Batista. Our analysis of the changes in central committees formed between 1965 and 1986 reveals that, for the first time, the new Central Committee has increased the proportion of nonwhites and younger individuals, but that little progress apparently has been made in the proportional representation of females as full members.

Background
The Cuban Communist Party, in its present form, was established in 1965 after a merger of Fidel Castro's 26 July Movement, the 18 March Student Revolutionary Directorate, and the pre-Castro Communist Party (then called the Popular Socialist Party). The Central Committee named in 1965 consisted of 100 members, two-thirds of whom had military rank in either the armed forces or the security services. The First Party Congress—at which a new Central Committee was named—was not held until 1975. The party statutes adopted at that time called for party congresses to be held every five years hence, with a new Central Committee being "elected" at each as a means of renewal of the leadership. The Second Party Congress was held in December 1980; thus, there have been three Central Committees prior to the one named in February, all of which have been headed by Fidel Castro as First Secretary and Raul Castro as Second Secretary.

The Central Committee theoretically is the highest decision-making body of the party, but in reality functions only as a rubberstamp for policy decisions made by Fidel Castro, usually after discussion in the Politburo. The Central Committee convenes regularly only once a year. Unscheduled meetings are held infrequently, primarily to provide the appearance of unified leadership in support of major policy decisions made by the Politburo.

While it lacks power, the Central Committee does possess significant political symbolism. Virtually every individual holding a key post in the government, party, armed forces, or mass organizations is a member of the Central Committee. Membership is rarely a source of an individual's elite status; instead, it almost always is evidence of that status. Committee members form the political elite of the Cuban political system (See appendix B).

Trends in Leadership Composition
In 1965, when the Castro regime established the party and appointed its first Central Committee, the importance of ideological correctness and participation in the guerrilla struggle was reflected in the membership of the committee. The committee as a whole confirmed the political dominance of those who had participated most closely with Castro in the guerrilla struggle and represented an extremely narrow band of the political spectrum. Many elements of the loose coalition that had participated in the anti-Batista struggle gained only token representation.

When the party held its First Congress in December 1975 and appointed its second Central Committee, the revolution had long since been consolidated. The Castro regime had a clear opportunity to broaden the base of its leadership and incorporate the representatives of new sectors or groupings that had been excluded in 1965 or had appeared during the ensuing decade. This opportunity, however, was ignored. Even though the turnover in personnel was large, the composition of the new committee virtually duplicated that of its predecessor and reconfirmed the dominance of the guerrilla elite.
By the 1980 party congress, the Castro regime had just experienced the massive emigration of the Mariel refugee boatlift.\footnote{The data of birth is known for some 75 percent of the full members. Virtually all of those whose ages are not known are new members and it is expected that most are younger than the average age.} We believe the Cuban leadership was fearful that the country could experience internal problems similar to those in Poland, and Havana made a number of symbolic changes to “close the gap” that had developed between the party and the masses. The number of members on the Central Committee increased dramatically, and the position of alternate Politburo member was created. In a bid to increase the popular base of the party, the chiefs of the four mass organizations were all added as Politburo alternates. Nonetheless, the narrow demographic base that had characterized the full members of the 1975 Central Committee remained unchanged in 1980.\footnote{Cuba implemented a redistricting plan in 1976 that expanded the number of provinces from six to 14. Oriente Province was divided into five new provinces: Las Tunas, Holguin, Granma, Santiago de Cuba, and Guantanamo. For purposes of statistical comparison, members of the 1980 and 1986 Central Committees who were born in those five provinces are considered “Orientales.”}

**Age.** The individuals who joined the guerrilla struggle were, for the most part, relatively young when Castro achieved power in 1959. Castro himself was 32, and many of his guerrilla comrades were even younger. More than half of the 1965 Central Committee members belonged to the “guerrilla generation” born between 1925 and 1937. A comparison of age profiles of the 1965 and 1975 Central Committees shows that little effort was made to incorporate younger age groups into the leadership (see table 4).

Comparing the 1975 and 1980 Central Committees, however, we see the beginnings of a greater representation of the postrevolutionary generation, with the number of members born after 1938 growing by 9 percentage points, although the guerrilla generation retained a majority. By the 1986 Central Committee, however, the guerrilla-veteran age group had fallen by 11 percentage points from 51 percent in 1980. Although the data show that the membership born after 1938 has grown only slightly since 1980, a large proportion of members in the unknown age category probably also belong to the post-1938 generation. Despite the probable growth in later generation membership, however, at least 40 percent of the Central Committee still belongs to the guerrilla-veterans age group.

Comparing the average age of the party leadership over time gives us another indication of Castro’s recent willingness to gradually bring members of the postrevolutionary generation into the leadership ranks (table 4). In December 1965, the average age of members was less than 38 years. Ten years later, the average had increased to over 46, an increase of almost 9 years. Clearly, there had been no real effort to bring in younger members. By 1986, however, the average age of those full members whose age is known was 54, an increase of only 7 years, indicating an infusion of younger members.\footnote{25X1}
Table 4
Cuba: Generation Groups of the Leadership a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1965 Central Committee Full Members</th>
<th>1975 Central Committee Full Members</th>
<th>1980 Central Committee Full Members</th>
<th>1986 Central Committee Full Members</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1913 or earlier “generation of 1930”</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914-25 Batista era</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1926-37 guerrilla generation</td>
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<td>51.8</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938+ postrevolution era</td>
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<td>23.1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>25.3</td>
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a The Cuban youth of Castro’s era were strongly sensitive to the generation factor. In their view, the injustices of Cuban society were the products of the old political class, generally known as the “generation of 1930.”

Figure 4
Cuba: Central Committee Full Members

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1986 (n=107)</td>
<td>53.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980 (n=137)</td>
<td>49.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975 (n=101)</td>
<td>46.4</td>
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<td>1965 (n=99)</td>
<td>37.6</td>
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<td>Racial Composition</td>
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<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black/Mulatto</td>
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<td>n=146</td>
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<td>1975</td>
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<td>0.7</td>
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<td>1980</td>
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<td>1986</td>
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Figure 5
Cuba: Central Committee Full Members

Provincial Origins

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<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
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<th>Havana born</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
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<td>18.4</td>
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<td>1986</td>
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<td>22.6</td>
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Composition by Sex

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
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<td>1975</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>87.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>87.0</td>
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</table>

The percentage of members born in Oriente declined again, this time by 13 percentage points. Because of the decline in the number of "Orientales," Havana now ranks a much closer second. If this trend holds for the large unknown category, a dramatic shift will have occurred with non-Oriente representation exceeding Oriente representation by almost 2-to-1.

Composition by Sex. The original 1965 Central Committee of 100 members had only five female members. Only one woman full member was added in 1975. Although the representation of women climbed to 12.2 percent in 1980, the 1986 Central Committee shows only slight improvement in the female-to-male ratio. The small number of women in the Cuban party elite apparently is a reflection of the guerrilla origins of the party leadership as well as a traditional Cuban bias against women.

As additional information on the new 1986 Central Committee becomes available, we believe that the pattern of a younger, more racially balanced membership will be borne out. Future Central Committees may show greater female representation; approximately one-third of the new Committee alternate members are women. Although alternates clearly have a secondary status, they have sometimes been promoted to full membership at subsequent party congresses. As Cuba prepares for the post-Castro era, we believe the trend toward a broader based leadership will continue.
Appendix B

The Cuban Communist Party
Central Committee,
February 1986

Political Bureau

Fidel Castro Ruz, First Secretary
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