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# Australia-Cuba Friendship Society NEWSLETTER March 2008



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## Thank You, Comrade Fidel

The moment has come to nominate and elect the State Council, its President, its Vice-Presidents and Secretary.

For many years I have occupied the honorable position of President. On February 15, 1976 the Socialist Constitution was approved with the free, direct and secret vote of over 95% of the people with the right to cast a vote. The first National Assembly was established on December 2nd that same year; this elected the State Council and its presidency. Before that, I had been a Prime Minister for almost 18 years. I always had the necessary prerogatives to carry forward the revolutionary work with the support of the overwhelming majority of the people.

There were those overseas who, aware of my critical health condition, thought that my provisional resignation, on July 31, 2006, to the position of President of the State Council, which I left to First Vice-President Raul Castro Ruz, was final. But Raul, who is also minister of the Armed Forces on account of his own personal merits, and the other comrades of the Party and State leadership were unwilling to consider me out of public life despite my unstable health condition.

It was an uncomfortable situation for me vis-à-vis an adversary which had done everything possible to get rid of me, and I felt reluctant to comply.

Later, in my necessary retreat, I was able to recover the full command of my mind as well as the possibility for much reading and meditation. I had enough physical strength to write for many hours, which I shared with the corresponding rehabilitation and recovery programs. Basic common sense indicated that such activity was within my reach. On the other hand, when referring to my health I was extremely careful to avoid raising expectations since I felt that an adverse ending would bring traumatic news to our people in the midst of the battle. Thus, my first duty was to prepare our people both politically and psychologically for my absence after so many years of struggle. I kept saying that my recovery "was not without risks."

My wishes have always been to discharge my duties to my last breath. That's all I can offer.

To my dearest compatriots, who have recently honored me so much by electing me a member of the Parliament where so many agreements should be adopted of utmost importance to the destiny of our Revolution, I am saying that I will neither aspire to nor accept, I repeat, I will neither aspire to nor accept the positions of President of the State Council and Commander in Chief.

In short letters addressed to Randy Alonso, Director of the Round Table National TV Program, --letters which at my request were made public-- I discreetly introduced elements of this message I am writing today, when not even the addressee of such letters was aware of my intention. I trusted Randy, whom I knew very well from his days as a student of Journalism. In those days I met almost on a weekly basis with the main representatives of the University students from the provinces at the library of the large house in Kohly where they lived. Today, the entire country is an immense University.

Following are some paragraphs chosen from the letter addressed to Randy on December 17, 2007:

"I strongly believe that the answers to the current problems facing Cuban society, which has, as an average, a twelfth grade of education, almost a million university graduates, and a real possibility for all its citizens to become educated without their being in any way discriminated against, require more variables for each concrete problem than those contained in a chess game. We cannot ignore one single detail; this is not an easy path to take, if the intelligence of a human being in a revolutionary society is to prevail over instinct.

"My elemental duty is not to cling to positions, much less to stand in the way of younger persons, but rather to contribute my own experience and ideas whose modest value comes from the exceptional era that I had the privilege of living in.

"Like Niemeyer, I believe that one has to be consistent right up to the end."

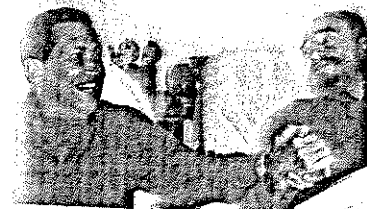
Letter from January 8, 2008:

"I am a firm supporter of the united vote (a principle that preserves the unknown merits), which allowed us to avoid the tendency to copy what came to us from countries of the former socialist bloc, including the portrait of the one candidate, as singular as his solidarity towards Cuba. I deeply respect that first attempt at building socialism, thanks to which we were able to continue along the path we had chosen."

And I reiterated in that letter that "I never forget that 'all of the world's glory fits in a kernel of corn.'"

Therefore, it would be a betrayal to my conscience to accept a responsibility requiring more mobility and dedication than I am physically able to offer. This I say devoid of all drama.

Fortunately, our Revolution can still count on cadres from the old guard and others who were very young in the early stages of the process. Some were very young, almost children, when they joined the fight on the mountains and later they have given glory to the country with their heroic performance and their internationalist missions. They have the authority and the experience to guarantee the replacement. There is also the intermediate generation which learned together with us the basics of the complex and almost unattainable art of organizing and leading a revolution.



The path will always be difficult and require from everyone's intelligent effort. I distrust the seemingly easy path of apologetics or its antithesis the self-flagellation. We should always be prepared for the worst variable. The principle of being as prudent in success as steady in adversity cannot be forgotten. The adversary to be defeated is extremely strong; however, we have been able to keep it at bay for half a century.

This is not my farewell to you. My only wish is to fight as a soldier in the battle of ideas. I shall continue to write under the heading of 'Reflections by comrade Fidel.' It will be just another weapon you can count on. Perhaps my voice will be heard. I shall be careful.

Fidel Castro's message to the Cuban people in the state newspaper, Granma, announcing his resignation.



## US Blockade of Cuba Top Priority for Bush

by Jean-Guy Allard, Granma International Staff Writer, January 2008

• UNITED States customs officials devote more energy to bothering airline passengers arriving from Cuba than terrorists and drug traffickers, to the point of putting national security at risk, according to the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

When it comes to the surveillance of active and presumed terrorists, that is a low-priority task for the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), the responsible body which devotes more than half of its resources to sanctioning citizens who travel to Cuba.

A GAO report disclosed by **The New York Times** reveals that Customs and Border Protection (CBP), a division of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), has conducted full searches of 20% of passengers on flights arriving in Miami from Havana, more than six times the total for passengers on all other international flights, including those from countries linked to drug trafficking.

The report calls on the Treasury Department to review OFAC's priorities, made evident by the revelation that 61% of its investigations involve individuals or organizations suspected of having connections with Cuba.

According to the **Times**, the GAO noted that the OFAC has more than 20 economic and commercial sanctions programs, including those intended to freeze terrorists' assets and even counteract the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, but has for years concentrated disproportionately on Cuba.

Between 2000 and 2006, 61% of the investigations and sanctions carried out by the entity have been linked to the Cuban embargo, writes the New York newspaper, citing the federal accountability report.

During this same period, 10,823 investigations of possible infractions related to Cuba have been conducted and only 6,791 related to all other cases.

"This is not a good policy," said Congressional Representative Charles B. Rangel, Democrat from New York, who asked for the inspection over a year ago along with Representative Barbara Lee from California. "It's vengeful. It's stupid. It's expensive. And now we find out that it threatens national security," he said.

**Artists, tour operators, banks and tourists singled out, but there is intimidation of all travellers.**

Described as the worst in the country, Miami Airport has for years taken steps to intimidate passengers traveling to Cuba, measures established at the request of Florida mafia leaders. Mistreatment of travelers, stacks of machine guns in halls, in addition to armored cars on the runway are methods used by the staff which Miami terrorists claim to have infiltrated.

The customs officers and federal agents are so fierce that in October of 2003 they managed to intercept Ana Tomé, a "mule" for the Spanish Aznar government, who was "accidentally" discovered carrying \$75,000 in a suitcase after having visited representatives of the anti-Cuban Miami mafia.

It is well-known that at least 14 of the conspirators responsible for the September 11 attack entered the United States through Miami Airport and were later trained as pilots a few kilometers from their offices. The FBI's local anti-terrorism agents and its chief, Hector Pesquera, were busy chasing the five Cubans who had infiltrated terrorist circles in Miami with the objective of obstructing planned attacks on Cuba.

On the other hand, the OFAC claims to lack the personnel needed to process with a minimum of efficiency the permit requests made by thousands of Cuban-Americans who wish to exercise their "right" to travel to Cuba once every three years, while dozens of functionaries are devoted to pestering those who dare to travel to the island without their blessing.

Famous individuals, among them the documentary filmmaker Michael Moore, film producers and important artists have been subjected to the rigors of the federal agency that also take out its frustration on banks, tour operators and various countries' hotel chains in flagrant violation of international regulations.

The news agency AP revealed in 2004 that the Treasury Department had only four staff members assigned to investigate the financial dealings of international terrorist Osama Bin Laden, while 24 were dedicated to pursuing citizens and companies interested in Cuba. The news was published precisely at the time that a new best-seller appeared in U.S. bookstores confirming the Bush financial links with the Bin Laden family.

Nonetheless, the abuses identified by the GAO are no more than the tip of the iceberg of what constitutes the longest blockade in history, conceived of by corrupt right-wing politicians associated with the heirs of the Batista dictatorship to starve 11 million Cubans into submission. •

Dear Comrades,

25 January 2008

We knew it was coming, but still felt sad when it happened, the resignation of one of the great icons of our age, ending 49 years as leader, but going out on his own terms, ensuring a smooth transition to brother Raul. Castro, 'El Comandante', more often known to his people as 'Fidel' - even to his face - has left an indelible mark on history and is someone who will never die. More people than ever, especially young Latin Americans, still look to the Cuban leader for inspiration.

Fidel has outwitted ten hostile US presidents, outlived most of them and led an impossible revolution which has survived. And despite all its difficulties, Cuba, a tiny poor country, has a higher life expectancy than its wealthy northern non-neighbour, manages to export doctors wherever they are needed and has schools that would leave most parents drooling.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez wrote that Castro's vision of Latin America is ... 'an integrated and autonomous community capable of moving the destiny of the world'. Decades ago, such a statement seemed unrealistic, but not now, with such momentous changes taking place. Fidel Castro is the man who has left his whole being in today's Latin America, thanks to his revolution. But he is not disappearing from public life. 'I am not saying goodbye to you. I only wish to fight as a soldier of ideas', he wrote, officially changing titles from commander-in-chief to commentator-in-chief. Viva Cuba! Viva the Revolution!

Joan Coxsedge, ACFS President, Melbourne (03) 9857 9249

*'Condemn me, it does not matter. History will absolve me.'* 16 October 1953, at his trial for the raid on the Moncada barracks

*'A revolution is not a bed of roses. A revolution is a struggle to the death between the future and the past.'* January 1961, Havana

*'Discovering Marxism was like finding a map in the forest.'* November 18, 1971, Chile

*'I have concluded - maybe a little late - that speeches must be short.'* August 2000

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR ALL ACFS MEMBERS**

The cut-off date for the 2008 National Consultation is 21 March, so please fill in your registration form (see pages 13 & 14 of this newsletter) and post it off to us at: PO Box 1051, Collingwood, 3066 with the relevant information and cheque for \$130. This will cover you for registration, all meals on the Saturday and Sunday, the Saturday night concert and consultation package. It does not include accommodation.

Booking and payment by 21 March is absolutely essential so we can properly organise the event and tell the caterers the specific number of meals required.

If you require accommodation, you need to ring the Miami Hotel (see back page), speak to Kelly and tell her you are an ACFS attendee, as a cheaper rate has been arranged.

Friends are welcome to attend the Saturday night dinner and concert, but they must book and pay in advance - \$25 - when they will be issued with a special dinner/concert ticket. To gain entry, you must present this ticket.

For any inquiries: Ring Rhonda 0407091946, Amy (03) 9547 6167 or Joan (03) 9857 9249

**DO NOT RING THE MUA**

Australia-Cuba Friendship Society  
[www.geocities.com/melbaacfs](http://www.geocities.com/melbaacfs)



### **CUBA NEEDS YOU!**

#### **Join the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society**

The Australia-Cuba friendship Society aims to promote and encourage friendship, understanding, cultural, trade and other exchanges between the peoples of Australia and Cuba.

☐ I wish to join the ACFS. Enclosed is a cheque/money order for \$25 (full membership)  
\$10 concession

☐ I am interested in the annual work/study brigade to Cuba. Please send me information.

☐ I wish to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ towards the aid campaign for Cuba

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ P/c \_\_\_\_\_ Ph \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: ACFS PO Box 1051, Collingwood, Victoria, 3066



We'd like you to join us for our next meeting

**Monday 3 March  
at 7.30 pm**



Our address!

1st Floor, 139 Queensbury Street  
(near Swanston St. corner)  
ring bell on left-hand side of door

**Scenes from the extraordinary life of Fidel Castro, the revolutionary president who weathered the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, the US embargo, the fall of the Berlin Wall and economic difficulties to triumphantly lead a Communist Cuba for almost five decades**



**Santiago, Cuba: A picture taken in 1940 shows Fidel eating a lolly at his school, Nuestra Señora de Delores.**



**Taken during the guerrilla war against Batista shows Castro (2nd from r) and brother Raul (kneeling), 1957.**



**With fellow revolutionaries and supporters, along with the press on the 'March to Havana', 1959.**



**Taken a few days after the overthrow of Batista, January 1959.**



**New York: Laughing off reports of an assassination plot, 1959.**



**On the cover of Time magazine, 1960.**



**Havana: Joking after an anti-American TV broadcast in 1960.**



**With American author Ernest Hemingway, 1960.**



Meeting the press in June 1961 after increasing the ransom for the 1,173 prisoners captured by Cuban forces during the Bay of Pigs invasion. The men were finally released in December 1962 in exchange for \$53m of medical supplies.



Moscow: Meeting the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev during an official visit, 1963.



Vinh Linh, Vietnam: Inspecting a gun during a visit, September 1973.



Santiago, Chile: Speaking to the Chilean president Salvador Allende, November 1971.



New York: Making a speech at the UN in 1979.



Havana: Speaking under a poster of Che Guevara, 2005.



Havana: Accompanied on the podium by his Venezuelan and Colombian counterparts, Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales, April 2006.



# How To Sink America (Part Two)

by Tom Engelhardt and Chalmers Johnson LewRockwell.com



With this understanding, American strategists began to build up a massive munitions industry, both to counter the military might of the Soviet Union (which they consistently overstated) and also to maintain full employment as well as ward off a possible return of the Depression. The result was that, under Pentagon leadership, entire new industries were created to manufacture large aircraft, nuclear-powered submarines, nuclear warheads, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and surveillance and communications satellites. This led to what President Eisenhower warned against in his farewell address of February 6, 1961: "The conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience" – that is, the military-industrial complex.

By 1990, the value of the weapons, equipment, and factories devoted to the Department of Defense was 83% of the value of all plants and equipment in American manufacturing. From 1947 to 1990, the combined U.S. military budgets amounted to \$8.7 trillion. Even though the Soviet Union no longer exists, U.S. reliance on military Keynesianism has, if anything, ratcheted up, thanks to the massive vested interests that have become entrenched around the military establishment. Over time, a commitment to both guns and butter has proven an unstable configuration. Military industries crowd out the civilian economy and lead to severe economic weaknesses. Devotion to military Keynesianism is, in fact, a form of slow economic suicide.

On May 1, 2007, the Center for Economic and Policy Research of Washington, D.C., released a study prepared by the global forecasting company Global Insight on the long-term economic impact of increased military spending. Guided by economist Dean Baker, this research showed that, after an initial demand stimulus, by about the sixth year the effect of increased military spending turns negative. Needless to say, the U.S. economy has had to cope with growing defense spending for more than 60 years. He found that, after 10 years of higher defense spending, there would be 464,000 fewer jobs than in a baseline scenario that involved lower defense spending.

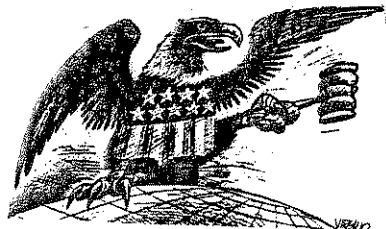
Baker concluded:

"It is often believed that wars and military spending increases are good for the economy. In fact, most economic models show that military spending diverts resources from productive uses, such as consumption and investment, and ultimately slows economic growth and reduces employment."

These are only some of the many deleterious effects of military Keynesianism.

## Hollowing Out the American Economy

It was believed that the U.S. could afford both a massive military establishment and a high standard of living, and that it needed both to maintain full employment. But it did not work out that way. By the 1960s, it was becoming apparent that turning over the nation's largest manufacturing enterprises to the Department of Defense and producing goods without any investment or consumption value was starting to crowd out civilian economic activities. The historian Thomas E. Woods, Jr., observes that, during the 1950s and 1960s, between one-third and two-thirds of all American research talent was siphoned off into the military sector. It is, of course, impossible to know what innovations never appeared as a result of this diversion of resources and brainpower into the service of the military, but it was during the 1960s that we first began to notice Japan was outpacing us in the design and quality of a range of consumer goods, including household electronics and automobiles.



Nuclear weapons furnish a striking illustration of these anomalies. Between the 1940s and 1996, the United States spent at least \$5.8 trillion on the development, testing, and construction of nuclear bombs. By 1967, the peak year of its nuclear stockpile, the United States possessed some 32,500 deliverable atomic and hydrogen bombs, none of which, thankfully, was ever used. They perfectly illustrate the Keynesian principle that the government can provide make-work jobs to keep people employed. Nuclear weapons were not just America's secret weapon, but also its secret economic weapon. As of 2006, we still had 9,960 of them. There is today no sane use for them, while the trillions spent on them could have been used to solve the problems of social security and health care, quality education and access to higher education for all, not to speak of the retention of highly skilled jobs within the American economy.

The pioneer in analyzing what has been lost as a result of military Keynesianism was the late Seymour Melman (1917–2004), a professor of industrial engineering and operations research at Columbia University. His 1970 book, *Pentagon Capitalism: The Political Economy of War*, was a prescient analysis of the unintended consequences of the American preoccupation with its armed forces and their weaponry since the onset of the Cold War. Melman wrote (pp. 2–3):

"From 1946 to 1969, the United States government spent over \$1,000 billion on the military, more than half of this under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations – the period during which the [Pentagon-dominated] state management was established as a formal institution. This sum of staggering size (try to visualize a billion of something) does not express the cost of the military establishment to the nation as a whole. The true cost is measured by what has been foregone, by the accumulated deterioration in many facets of life by the inability to alleviate human wretchedness of long duration."

In an important exegesis on Melman's relevance to the current American economic situation, Thomas Woods writes:

"According to the U.S. Department of Defense, during the four decades from 1947 through 1987 it used (in 1982 dollars) \$7.62 trillion in capital resources. In 1985, the Department of Commerce estimated the value of the nation's plant and equipment, and infrastructure, at just over \$7.29 trillion. In other words, the amount spent over that period

The fact that we did not modernize or replace our capital assets is one of the main reasons why, by the turn of the twenty-first century, our manufacturing base had all but evaporated. Machine tools – an industry on which Melman was an authority – are a particularly important symptom. In November 1968, a five-year inventory disclosed (p. 186) "that 64 percent of the metalworking machine tools used in U.S. industry were ten years old or older. The age of this industrial equipment (drills, lathes, etc.) marks the United States' machine tool stock as the oldest among all major industrial nations, and it marks the continuation of a deterioration process that began with the end the Second World War. This deterioration at the base of the industrial system certifies to the continuous debilitating and depleting effect that the military use of capital and research and development talent has had on American industry."

Nothing has been done in the period since 1968 to reverse these trends and it shows today in our massive imports of equipment – from medical machines like proton accelerators for radiological therapy (made primarily in Belgium, Germany, and Japan) to cars and trucks.

Our short tenure as the world's "lone superpower" has come to an end. As Harvard economics professor Benjamin Friedman has written:

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"Again and again it has always been the world's leading lending country that has been the premier country in terms of political influence, diplomatic influence, and cultural influence. It's no accident that we took over the role from the British at the same time that we took over... the job of being the world's leading lending country. Today we are no longer the world's leading lending country. In fact we are now the world's biggest debtor country, and we are continuing to wield influence on the basis of military prowess alone."



Some of the damage done can never be rectified. There are, however, some steps that this country urgently needs to take. These include reversing Bush's 2001 and 2003 tax cuts for the wealthy, beginning to liquidate our global empire of over 800 military bases, cutting from the defense budget all projects that bear no relationship to the national security of the United States, and ceasing to use the defense budget as a Keynesian jobs program. If we do these things we have a chance of squeaking by. If we don't, we face probable national insolvency and a long depression.

## Management's Dirty Little Secret Why Some Companies Prefer Having Unions

by David Macaray, Counterpunch, February 19, 2008

For obvious reasons, no company is going to want its employees represented by a tough, effective labor union. No company is going to want its employees represented by a vigilant organization dedicated to improving wages, benefits and working conditions by any means necessary. What management team would welcome something like that? And who could blame them for not?

But given the choice between having no union at all, or having a weak, ineffective, largely *symbolic* one-one with no stomach for a fight, one that lacks the confidence and respect of its own members-many companies have come to appreciate the virtues of the latter.

Companies have found that a union is often the perfect "buffer" between management and the hourly workforce. A union deflects a lot of stuff that would otherwise land on management. Employees who would normally take their gripes and criticisms to their bosses, now have a union to go to instead; and because most of those complaints don't reach the stage of becoming formal grievances, or issues that require action, the union serves as an effective filter.

But more than that, the union also plays the role of whipping boy. By some weird, inverted logic, the membership will hold the union responsible for stuff outside its ultimate control. Perhaps it's the union's visibility and accessibility; but whatever the reason, the membership often blames it, rather than management, for any bad news that happens to come down the pike. It's a strange dynamic.

An example: Following contract negotiations, when the members don't get the wage increase they expect, or find out that a key benefit is being taken away, it's not uncommon for them to blame the union. Blame the union for not getting them a raise, rather than blaming the company for not giving it to them. Blame the union for being unable to prevent losing a benefit, rather than blaming the company for taking it away. A strange dynamic..

Similarly, on the company side, a lazy or incompetent management team has its own convenient uses for a union.

For one thing, it provides a whole range of built-in excuses. The union can be blamed for every manner of screw-up. Weak managers tell their bosses that restrictions imposed by the union contract were responsible for everything from production flascos, to scheduling problems, to tying their hands in personnel matters. However, deep down, they know that having a union around can be a blessing. Example: When employees approach management with one of those messy he-said/she-said disputes, management simply defers them to a union rep. They pass the buck. They dump the problem on someone else. It's one of the benefits of having a union shop.

For another, the union is there to share the pain. Take the recent landmark pact between General Motors and the UAW, which takes the administrative responsibility for the hourly health care plan out of GM's hands and gives it to the union. Such an arrangement is unheard of.

Over the last quarter-century the UAW has lost, literally, hundreds of thousands of members. What was once, arguably, America's most prestigious labor union has been ravaged. But along with the sheer numbers, the UAW has, unfortunately, also lost much of its credibility with the membership. To the extent that it has become not only the messenger delivering bad news, but the perceived *co-creator* of that bad news, the UAW has come to be seen as management's "accomplice."

Of course, as far as the company is concerned, things are peachy. They now have the best of both worlds: a labor union that's too weak and fangless to do battle, but one that (as the nominal representative of the employees) is still in the line of fire, still there to take the flak when things turn sour. In a word, the perfect buffer.

And now that the UAW has been saddled with the staggering responsibility of administering the hourly health plan, the union risks moving to the next step in the declension-going from buffer to *scapegoat*.

Just wait until the health insurance issue hits a major snag and things turn ugly. Management is going to thank their lucky stars that they have a union to "protect" them.



# Castro, Bush and Cuba

by Robert Fantina, Counterpunch, February 22, 2008

With the surprising news of Fidel Castro's resignation as Cuba's president after a reign of forty-nine years, U.S. President George Bush made an even more astounding statement. In response to Mr. Castro's announcement, Mr. Bush said he was committed to "help the people of Cuba realize the blessings of liberty."

One is left practically speechless by that pronouncement. Does Mr. Bush think the people of Cuba are now filled with bright-eyed hope? Does he believe that they look at 'the blessings of liberty' he has bestowed on Iraq, and dream of the same? Do they long to have their infrastructure destroyed, essential services disrupted, their families torn apart in the middle of the night? Do the look forward to the need to flee their nation for the relative safety of a refugee camp in whatever other country might be willing to let them in? This is what Mr. Bush has brought to formerly peaceful and sovereign Iraq.

Perhaps Mr. Bush feels that Cubans ignore Iraq, and look to that shining light of freedom and democracy only ninety miles off their northern shore. There the upper class and wealthy can enjoy health care, something all Cubans already have. Walking through any U.S. street, pedestrians are accosted by the homeless, begging money for food, liquor or drugs. This too would be an unfamiliar sight to most Cubans. Those with sufficient monies in the United States can afford to send their children to private schools, which are at least equal to the education that is government-provided in Cuba.

But Mr. Bush did not stop there. Not content with astounding his listeners with his desire to bestow his bizarre brand of 'the blessings of liberty' onto the unsuspecting Cuban people, whether they want it or not, Mr. Bush went on. In the same speech he said: "Eventually, this transition ought to lead to free and fair elections, and I mean free, and I mean fair, not these kind of staged elections that the Castro brothers try to foist off as true democracy."

One might think that in a 'true democracy,' the voters speak. If two or more candidates are running for the same office, and one receives more votes than any of the others, it might be reasonable to assume that that candidate would win that office. Does Mr. Bush forget his own infamous pseudo-election in 2000? Does he not recall that his major opponent in that election, former Vice President Al Gore, garnered more votes than he? Perhaps Mr. Bush himself is attempting "to foist off as true democracy" his own 'election' to the presidency.

Not wanting to disappoint his legions of fans who wait with bated breath for his astute proclamations, Mr. Bush continued. He further stated that, without significant changes in the Cuban government, "political prisoners will rot in prison."

Indeed, on the island nation of Cuba one of the most notorious prisons on the planet operates. In this hell hole, prisoners as young as sixteen are held without access to legal assistance or families. They are subjected to treatment that the civilized world rejects as torture. They may be held for years, experiencing horrors that most minds cannot imagine, but which the government that operates that prison with complete impunity, indifferent to its reputation in the world community, and apparently uncaring about the effects this prison could have on its own citizens, is able to conceive. And while Cuban soil houses that prison, it is the U.S. government that owns and operates it.

A senior analyst at George Washington University's National Security Archive, Peter Kornbluh, stated that Mr. Castro's resignation does indeed open up the possibility for improved U.S.-Cuban relations. But, he cautioned, this is unlikely to happen under Mr. Bush's administration. Said he: "Fidel Castro's resignation does present a true opportunity to revisit a U.S. policy of perpetual antagonism towards Cuba, even though the current U.S. president is unlikely to make any changes in a hostile position towards Cuba."

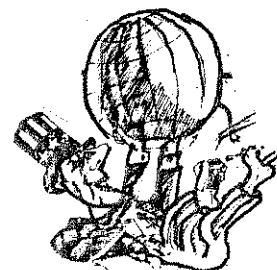
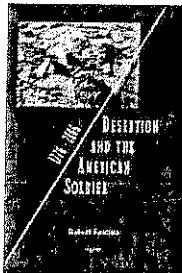
It will long remain a puzzle what the intent of the U.S. government has been for forty-nine years in its disdain for Cuba. President Richard M. Nixon, hardly a great American hero, recognized the People's Republic of China in 1972, apparently deciding that pretending that that nation wasn't there didn't make a whole lot of sense. Ten U.S. presidents have not ignored Mr. Castro and his island nation. They have been busy trying to invade it, overthrow its president, isolate it and generally make life for the Cuban people as difficult as possible. What, one wonders, have ten presidents been trying to accomplish, beyond pandering to the Cuban-American vote that is a fairly significant constituency in Florida.

One wonders what it is that the U.S. knows that the 160 nations with which Cuba has formal relations remain in the dark about. Mr. Bush has condemned the governments of some of those, such as Venezuela; yet one further wonders what possible objection the U.S. can have to Cuba's long-term and very cordial relations with Canada. The U.S. has gone so far as to station its customs agents in Canadian airports, attempting to catch U.S. citizens traveling to Cuba in defiance of U.S. law. Cuba is a popular tourist destination for Canadians, and U.S. travelers wanting to visit the pristine beaches of that nation must do so from Canada or another nation with diplomatic ties to Cuba.

Mr. Bush, in the last several months of his second and final term in office, is often referred to as a lame duck. One must remember that an injured animal or bird is dangerous and prone to erratic behavior. Mr. Bush's behavior has been bizarre in the best of times (if one is able to find any 'best of times' in the U.S. in the last seven and a half years), and now he must be considered extremely perilous. His blowhard grandstanding about Iran has led to nothing; no one beyond his own insulated cadre of power-hungry capitalists seems to take him seriously on that score. But Cuba has long been a major bugaboo for Mr. Bush, as it was for his last nine predecessors. He may harbor grandiose schemes about being the U.S. president to finally defeat the Communist government of Cuba, and bring to the Cubans the poverty and suffering that are so much a part of U.S. society but are swept under the American rug. He might believe he can leave office a hero, having destroyed the non-existent threat from Iraq and then having given the Cuban people his particular brand of 'the blessings of liberty.'

A naïve citizen might think that this is not possible: Congress will not allow a U.S. president to invade a sovereign nation posing no threat to America. But since Mr. Bush has proven himself adept at manipulating intelligence, or simply making it up as he goes along, we may all soon hear dark warnings about Cuba's nuclear stockpile. Perhaps Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will stand before the United Nations Security Council and show blurred photographs, Collin Powell style, and swear to the world that Cuba presents a threat that must be stopped pre-emptively. And members of Congress will rush headlong to the nearest microphones to assert their patriotism, express horror at Cuba's murderous plans, and give Mr. Bush the same authority they gave him in 2002 to invade Iraq, so he can unleash U.S.-brand terrorism on Cuba.

One hopes this can be prevented. One desperately hopes that Mr. Bush will decide that two wars are sufficient for him to continue to call himself the 'War President.' Cuba, unlike Iraq and Afghanistan, has no oil, nor is it required for an oil pipe to a further destination, as Afghanistan was. But Cuba, with its long history of antagonism from the U.S., presents Mr. Bush with a unique challenge, and one that he may perceive could salvage his disgraceful legacy. He seems to believe that his two gods, war and capitalism, equate to strength and democracy. And he may seek a new altar at which to worship them, and Cuba in transition may appear to him a welcoming sight.



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next  
page



Should Mr. Bush have such designs there is little to stop him. Congress has proven itself completely lacking in statesmanship, leadership or spine despite the actions of the voters in 2006 who ejected to Republicans and gave both the House and Senate to the Democrats. The three major candidates now seeking their party's nominations offer more of the same, or a slight variation thereof. Despite high-sounding rhetoric by Democratic senators Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama, a 'meet-the-new-boss-same-as-the-old-boss' model is all the world can

reasonably expect. Republican John McCain practically proclaims with pride that a McCain administration will be an extension of the current disastrous Bush one.

A world looking for peace and solutions to international problems cannot expect the United States to spearhead such behaviors. As long as corporate America is pulling the strings, waging industrial wars and purchasing the White House for those who bow to capitalism above all else, war, death, carnage and injustice will continue.

# Watching the US Presidential Campaign from Havana

by Fidel Castro, Counterpunch, February 23/24, 2008

That Tuesday there was no fresh international news. The modest message I wrote to the Cuban people on Monday, February 18, was widely and easily disseminated. As from 11 o'clock in the morning I started to receive concrete news. The previous night I had slept like never before. I had a clear conscience and I had promised myself a vacation. The days of tension, awaiting the proximity of February 24, had left me exhausted.

Today I will not say a single word about persons very dear to me in Cuba and in the world who in many different ways expressed their emotions. I also received a great number of opinions collected in the streets through reliable methods, which almost without exception and in a very spontaneous way conveyed the deepest feelings of solidarity. Someday I shall discuss that issue.

Right now I am focusing on the adversary. I enjoyed watching the embarrassment of every United States presidential candidate. One by one they all felt compelled to exact urgent demands from Cuba to avoid the risk of losing a single vote. Anyone could have thought that I was a Pulitzer Prize winner interviewing them on very sensitive political and even personal issues for the CNN from Las Vegas, a place where the logics of the games of chance prevails, and that should be humbly visited by anyone running for President.

Fifty years of blockade seemed too little to the favorites. Change! Change! Change! They all cried in unison.

I agree. Change! But, inside the United States. Cuba changed long ago and will now follow a dialectical path.

We will never go back to the past! Cries our people.

Annexation! Annexation! Annexation! Responds the adversary. That is what it really means when it speaks about change.

José Martí, unveiling the secret of his silent struggle, denounced the voracious and expansionistic empire that his brilliant intelligence had discovered and described more than one century after the enactment of the revolutionary Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies.

The end of a historical period is not the same as the beginning of the end of an unsustainable system.

All of a sudden, the weakened European powers, allied to that system, are exacting the same demands. In their opinion, the time has come to dance to the music of democracy and freedom, which since the times of Torquemada, they never really knew.

The colonization and neo-colonization of entire continents, from which they get energy, raw materials, and cheap labor, are a moral discredit to them.

An illustrious Spanish personality, once an Impeccable socialist and minister of Culture, who for some time now and even today has been advocating for the war and the use of weapons, is the synthesis of sheer nonsense. Kosovo and its unilateral declaration of independence are now hunting them as an impertinent nightmare.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, men of flesh and blood wearing the United States and NATO uniforms continue to die. The memories of the USSR, which disintegrated in part because of the interventionist adventure in Afghanistan, are chasing the Europeans like a shadow.

Bush senior endorses McCain as his candidate, while Bush Junior declares in some country of Africa -where man originated yesterday and which is a martyr continent today- where no one knows what he was doing, that my message was the beginning of the road towards freedom in Cuba, that is to say, the annexation decreed by his government in a huge and thick text.

The day before, TV networks from all over the world showed a group of state-of-the-art bombers performing spectacular maneuvers, giving full guarantees that any bombs could be launched, that the aircraft that carried them will not be detected by radars, and that this will not be considered a war crime.

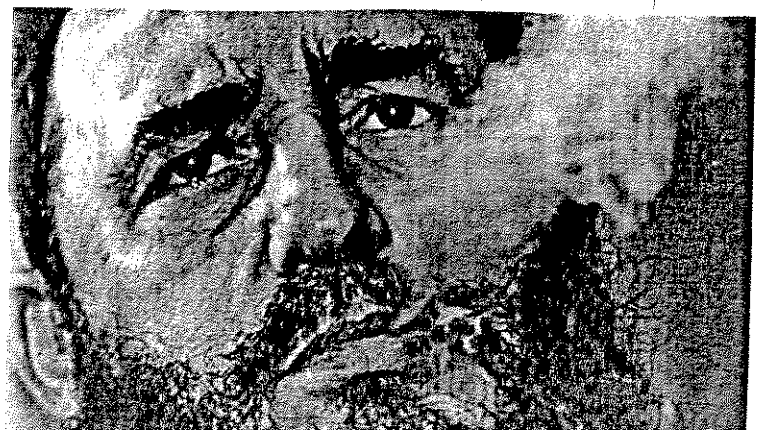
A protest raised by some important countries had to do with the imperial idea of testing a new weapon under the pretext of avoiding the possible fall on the territory of a foreign country of a spy satellite, one of the many artifacts that the United States has put into the planet orbit for military purposes.

I had thought not to write a reflection at least in 10 days, but I had no right to remain silent for so long. We need to open ideological fire against them.

I wrote this on Tuesday at 3:35 pm. Yesterday, I reviewed it and I will deliver it today, Thursday, in the afternoon. I have begged that my reflections be published on the second page or any other of our newspapers, never on the front page, and that brief summaries of them should be published in other media in case they are long.

I am now fully devoted to the effort of casting my full-slate vote in support of the Presidency of the National Assembly and the new State Council, as well as on the right way to do it.

I thank all readers for having waited so patiently.



# Two Opinions About Hugo Chavez

by Ken Masson, January, 2008

A person named Daniel Mandel, a reader in history at the University of Melbourne, is author of an article published in the Australian Financial Review, Wed. 16 May.

Headed "Chavez can't be left to run amok", the article made numerous accusations against Chavez, including subverting democracy, economic mismanagement, a march toward one-man rule' and so on.

The revoking of the license of Radio Caracas Television is instanced as an attack on democratic balance.

Mandel concludes by scolding Washington for ostentatiously ignoring Chavez and his support for like-minded forces in Latin America, and proposes various means by which the U.S. might devise strategies to isolate Chavez.

Tariq Ali, also a well qualified historian and highly respected writer and commentator on modern world events recently spoke at an event in Noosa, Queensland

Tariq has visited Venezuela and other Latin American countries on a number of occasions in recent years, and has observed first hand events which are taking place, as well as talking to numerous people from broad cross sections of the various societies

On the question of subversion of democracy, Tariq points out that Chavez has been elected and re-elected on seven successive occasions and that his support continues to grow. The elections have undergone more scrutiny by outsiders than almost anywhere in the world, and no one has been able to show that they are unfair.

Why is Chavez so popular? Put simply it is because his government are doing what they said they would do. At the heart of the Chavez phenomenon is the question of whether the regime is succeeding in improving the lives of the majority of the Venezuelan people, a large percentage of whom have lived for decades in poverty-which worsened instead of improving when the previous government bowed to the dictates of globalization and the world bank.

Chavez has expelled these influences, nationalized the huge Venezuelan oil industry, and other large monopolies and is using the massive profits, which formerly lined the pockets of foreign investors and local elite, for the benefit of the poor.

Just fewer than one million Venezuelan children from the shantytowns and poorest villages now obtain free education; 1.2 million formerly illiterate adults have learned to read and write; secondary education has been made available to 250,000 children whose social status would have previously excluded them. Three new university campuses were functioning by 2003, and 6 more expected by 2006.

With health care the 14,000 Cuban doctors sent to help the country have transformed the situation in the poor districts, where 11,000 neighbourhood clinics have been set up, and the health budget has tripled.

New homes are being built for the poor, and an Agrarian reform law has seen 2,262,467 hectares redistributed to 116,899 families. Not of course without resistance, legal and violent, from former landlords.

Mandel, however, in his article states "Already on his (Chavez') watch the country has dropped two places on the U.N. Human Development Report's list of poorest nations. More than 2 million of that country's 25 million live on a daily income of one U.S. dollar"

In making his comment about the revoking of Radio Caracas T.V. license Mandel failed to point out that the proprietor of this significant media outlet was heavily involved in the attempted military coup to overthrow Chavez in 2002. His offices were used as a meeting place by the plotters, and his T. V. station put out a constant stream of lies and slanders against the government.

Tariq Ali pointed out that no government in the world would tolerate such behaviour, and most would have acted very quickly. However Chavez argued to his colleagues who would have acted the same way that they must act legally, and hence waited until the licence was due to be renewed before bringing a case against the proprietor.

Regarding U.S. involvement, Tariq outlines considerable evidence that Washington was certainly covertly supporting the attempted coup, the strike at the oil refinery, and that by middle class organizations (teachers and doctors). All fell over mainly because of widespread support for Chavez in Venezuela and across Latin America.

Mr Mandel, if he wishes to be taken seriously as a historian would do well to make a thorough going investigation into the effects of U.S. involvement in Latin America during the past century. It might lead him to be less inclined to parrot the disinformation of the Washington consensus, and the spokespersons of the wealthy classes of the South American elite.

Tariq Ali's book "Pirates of the Caribbean, Axis of Hope" provides, on the other hand, valuable insight into the situation in Venezuela and Latin America.

Two pro-Cuban letters that made it into the mainstream

A Cuba to admire

IT IS a pity it was not mentioned in your editorial (*The Age*, 21/2) that Cuban people all have a full belly, a roof over their heads, a free, world-standard health system and a free education system to university level, something not all Australians have. Oh, and that Cuba trains doctors and shares them with Third World countries, such as Timor. This despite the hatred of the Western world and a blockade by the US, which includes sanctions against countries that talk and trade with Cuba.

Renns Witham, Williamstown

My response to a strident personal attack by ultra right Sun/Herald columnist Andrew Bolt

Sun/Herald, Saturday 23 February

## Sovereignty should rule

"GUSH", proclaims Andrew Bolt, ("Now you can be president", February 22), when describing my response to a 6.15am call from 3AW to comment on Fidel Castro's presidential resignation.

Andrew, I was barely awake and decidedly soft of voice.

I quietly commented that Castro was departing on his own terms and has courageously refused to bend the knee to 10 US presidents, despite their cruel blockade and bully-boy tactics.

I dared to mention the current president is about as popular as a minaret in the Vatican (even with his own people).

In spite of all its difficulties, Cuba continues to send teachers, doctors and other workers to other developing countries in a spirit of internationalism.

It has achieved First World standards in health care, life expectancy, literacy and universal education, nutrition, full employment, housing and social welfare.

You may not like Cuba, Andrew Bolt, but surely you accept the right of a small sovereign nation to determine its own destiny free from interference from the world's most powerful nation.

And a reminder: it is in Washington DC — not in Havana — where homeless people die of exposure just a few blocks from the White House.

Joan Coxsedg, president, Australia-Cuba Friendship Society, North Balwyn



# Slow Train Across Cuba

by Ed Ewing, Guardian Travel, February 21, 2008

The Hershey Train seemed like the most interesting way to leave Havana. Built in 1917 by the Hershey Chocolate Company, it still rattles 60 miles east to the port town of Matanzas every day, stopping at tiny stations and villages along the way. The journey should take three hours, or maybe four, or maybe you won't get there at all.



Built by the Hershey chocolate company in 1917, the train is still going strong. Photograph: Ed Ewing

Pennsylvania.

The train leaves from Casablanca, a suburb of Havana across the harbour from the capital's Old Town. The easiest way to get there is the ferry across the bay. However, whether or not the ferry is in service is another thing. Local public transport might be cheap in Cuba, but it certainly isn't reliable, or in most cases even timetabled. (Tourist buses, on the other hand, are efficient, but no fun and certainly no way to meet Cubans.)

Finding the boat out of service, we joined the queue for a bus, and took a tour of the city as it rolled around town, finally making its way under the harbour tunnel. It took us past the statue of Christ, a smaller version of Rio's Christ the Redeemer, which overlooks the city and its harbour, and dropped us near the station.

We joined half a dozen people waiting for the 12.30pm train. Our little group had swelled to about 20 by 1pm, all of whom checked watches, tutted occasionally to each other, and shrugged their shoulders. Even the ticket office didn't know if or when it would arrive.



The only electric train in Cuba. Photograph: Ed Ewing

hard and local currencies. One convertible peso is roughly the same as one US dollar).

The train is electric, a marvel of its time and the only one of its type in Cuba. It is made up of three dusty green carriages, built in Spain in 1945, with a driver's cabin at each end, and is more like an old city tram than a train.

It is a farm train really, and as we rattled away from Havana into the countryside we passed through fields worked by solitary farmers and occasional Brahman cows, each one with an ever-present white egret standing elegantly beside it. Not even half full, we trundled from stop to stop – each one no bigger than a bus stop – letting on groups of women on their way to the next village, or a few men making their way from field to field. The biggest event was a man calling for an unscheduled stop, jumping from the carriage and running to collect two-dozen tomatoes from a straw-hatted farmer in a field. He leapt back on, handed some to the driver, and we continued, hooting thanks.

The line was built when sugar was king, trade with the US was brisk and Cuba was on a high. Milton S Hershey, an enlightened industrialist of the time, built the line to shuttle workers to the company's sugarcane refinery about 40 miles east of Havana, and to send refined sugar back to the port. From there it was shipped to the company's chocolate factory in

The idea was to take the Hershey Train to Matanzas and then a second train to Santa Clara, a university town famous as Che Guevara's final resting place and, 50 years ago this December, scene of one of his most epic battles. In the battle, Guevara and a band of revolutionaries derailed a train carrying 350 government troops. The victory set the scene for the overthrow of the dictator General Batista and the triumph of the Cuban revolution. Guevara, of course, is long gone, killed in Bolivia in 1967, while Castro has resigned.



If the train doesn't show, it's time to thumb a lift. Photograph: Ed Ewing

But it didn't work like that. The train wouldn't go to Matanzas today we were told. Instead, we stopped after an hour and a half at the village of Hershey, where the sugar refinery still looms large on a hill nearby. A long afternoon of public transport – truck-travel, hitchhiking and walking – got us all of 15km further on to Playa Jibacoa, a local beach resort. A night in an empty holiday

camp was the only accommodation open to foreigners, so we took it. We set off again in the morning in the rain, first walking then flagging down an air-conditioned tourist bus to Matanzas – in the end only a 45-minute journey.

At Matanzas, a collapsing colonial town, we tried to get back on track. A hot walk to the station, hidden two kilometres from the bus station, found us in the world of "real" railways. Cuba was the sixth country in the world to get a railway – even before Spain – and as a result has an extensive, although slowly declining, network. Matanzas to Santa Clara, 276km from Havana, is on the main 861km cross-country route from Havana to Santiago de Cuba. It should be relatively easy to jump on board a proper locomotive.

"Four o' clock" we were told at midday. We couldn't buy a ticket. We went for peso pizza, the staple food of lunchtime Cuba. Sold from people's windows and doorways, it is one of the few examples of private enterprise you see in the country. Then we took in the sights – a square, church and port.

Back at the train station, we waited. Every half an hour we asked about tickets, but nobody knew when or if a train would arrive. Again, a waiting room full of, this time, 100 or so people, sat unknowing, at the mercy of the antiquated transport system.

At 7pm we – by now four Europeans were trying to take the train – were escorted across the rails to the end of the platform, away from the Cuban passengers. We never found out why.



Darkness falls and still the 4pm Matanzas train hasn't arrived. Photograph: Ed Ewing

It was dark when the train finally arrived at 8pm. We clambered into an unlit carriage by the light of someone's torch, struggling to climb over piles of boxes and luggage packed in the aisles and seats. In the half-light, it seemed more cargo train than passenger train.

However, when the lights finally came on, it was in fact revealed to be a pleasant enough old European-style carriage, with comfortable leather double seats and lots of leg room. We settled in. The air rushed past the open windows like it should, Cuba swept by in the darkness, Santa Clara was a steady four hours away and we'd be there by midnight.

**The Hershey line was built in 1917 by the chocolate company to transport workers. Now anyone can jump aboard for a fascinating – if somewhat unreliable – insight into the country.**

# Bush on Safari

## Looking for Friendly Faces

by Walter Brasch, Counterpunch, February 19, 2008



President Bush is in Africa this week, sulking because he didn't get his way.

In one of the rare times the past seven years, the House of Representatives, now under Democrat control for the first time in 12 years, defended the Constitution and refused to allow the President to bully it with a program of fear mongering. He really tried, though.

In a Feb. 15 speech, the President, mad at yet another delay in voting on the Protect America Act, harrumphed, "[B]y blocking this piece of legislation our country is more in danger of an attack. [T]he House leaders must understand that the decision they made to block good legislation has made it harder for us to protect you, the American people." Not through with his saber-rattling, the President declared that not only would he veto an extension he would cancel a scheduled visit to five African nations and, maybe for all we know, hold his breath until the House acquiesced to his will.

In August, Congress had passed the **Protect America Act**, designed as a six-month temporary "fix" to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978. The modified Act would have further strangled Americans' civil liberties by reducing judicial oversight and by removing the constitutional provision from FISA that for federal law enforcement to obtain a court warrant for surveillance, it needed to show probable cause that the target is a "foreign power" or an "agent of a foreign power."

However, the most controversial part of the Protect America Act was that it gave immunity to several national telecommunications companies, which had willingly acceded to government requests to illegally and secretly monitor the phone conversations of millions of American citizens. If the 40 lawsuits currently on file were to proceed, significant information about the government's illegal and unconstitutional actions the past six years would be revealed.

With several provisions still under discussion, the House leadership agreed to a 15-day extension, and then proposed another 21 day extension. That's when George W. Bush got really mad, and played the only card he had in his hand, the fear card. It worked innumerable times before; he'd just trump those other silly useless cards, like the civil liberties card. This time, the President's threats didn't work. The House was firm that because of a refusal by the Administration to budge on any part of the Protect America Act, more time was needed to try to reach compromises that would still protect Americans, yet not continue to tear at the Constitution. George W. Bush put what was left of his tail between his legs, didn't veto anything and did go to Africa.

Even if the House didn't fall over, as it had so many times before, Americans had nothing to worry about any loss of protection against terrorism. In August, Kenneth Wainstein, assistant attorney general for national security, said that even if the law expired in February, "intelligence officials would still be able to continue eavesdropping on already approved targets" for six more months.

President Bush, who several times had threatened Congress to rush the Protect America Act into law, "is attempting to rattle Congress into hastily expanding his own executive powers at the expense of civil liberties and constitutional protections," Richard Clark wrote in an OpEd column for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Clarke had been assistant secretary of state for intelligence for Ronald Reagan, special intelligence and security advisor to George H.W. Bush, and chief counter-terrorism advisor to Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

During the past seven years, the BushCheney Administration has shoved fear into Americans' hearts as a replacement for the Constitution. This Administration rushed a willing Congress into passing the USA PATRIOT Act, which cuts into several Constitutional protections, and then led Congress to vote to extend or delete most of the provisions of the sunset clause, which would have terminated 16 of the most odious, and unconstitutional, parts of the Act. The BushCheney Administration has gotten a fawning and mentally-imp Congress to pass the Military Commissions Act of 2006, which allows the federal government to hold "any person," foreign as well as citizen, who does not show "an allegiance or duty to the United States," or who speaks out against the government's policies, to be tried by military tribunal. The Act further provides for the suspension of the right of *habeas corpus*, thus condemning individuals to years of imprisonment without knowing the charges and without seeing any evidence. The law permits secret trials for both citizens and aliens. According to the Act's provisions, "no court, justice, or judge shall have jurisdiction to hear or consider any claim or cause of action whatsoever" regarding anyone the Administration brought under its own jurisdiction, thus nullifying most of the Bill of Rights. The Military Commissions Act also disregards Geneva Conventions and international law for the humane treatment of prisoners, permits hearsay evidence in trials, and the right of the government to impose the death sentence on prisoners based upon the testimony of others who may have been tortured.

Apparently, President Bush hopes that the people of Benin, Ghana, Liberia, Rwanda, and Tanzania will give him the standing ovations so few Americans extend to him.

He isn't visiting Darfur.



# Booking Form

## ACFS 14<sup>th</sup> National Consultation Melbourne

April 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008

**Venue:** The MUA HQ  
46 Ireland Street, West Melbourne, 3003.  
**For inquiries:** Contact Rhonda 0407 091946, Amy (03) 9547 6167 or Joan (03) 9857 9249

**Personal Details: Please complete one form per ADULT PERSON attending Consultation**

Name: (Mr. / Miss / Mrs. / Ms.) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone (w): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (h): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

**Confirmation of registration and receipt will be sent to you when booking form and payment are received.**

Please note all bookings must be received by March 21<sup>st</sup> 2008.

### **Cost:**

- **\$130 - Full weekend** (includes registration, all meals on Sat & Sun, Saturday evening function and consultation package). **Does not include accommodation.**
- **\$25 option - Saturday evening function only** (dinner and concert for any additional persons)

Name of additional persons attending concert	Total @\$25 per person

### **Food requirements**

Please indicate any special dietary requirements.  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Friday Night Welcome**

*Delegates booking in to the Miami Hotel will be met by members of the ACFS Melbourne branch. Delegates have the option of joining us for drinks at a local Hotel. If you are flying into Melbourne let us know so we can endeavour to meet and transport you to the conference.*

*SkyBus - airport to Hotel \$15 one way or \$24 return*

Expected arrival time: \_\_\_\_\_ Flight number \_\_\_\_\_

### **Children (Please Tick)**

Children are most welcome at this consultation. No extra charge.

☐ I will be bringing my children. No. of children and ages: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Payment:**

Return Booking form(s) and cheque(s) payable to:

**Australia Cuba Friendship Society (Melbourne)**  
**PO Box 1051, Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia**

*(Don't forget to keep a copy of this form for your records)*

Signed as acceptance of terms and conditions \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Accommodation

Please book your accommodation directly with the Hotel. The Melbourne ACFS is not in a position to organise accommodation.

It is advisable to book accommodation as soon as possible; we cannot guarantee accommodation booked at late notice.

This special accommodation package has been organised due to its close proximity to the conference facility and walking distance to the CBD.

## Accommodation Details

### Miami Hotel Melbourne

13 Hawke Street, West Melbourne, Vic, 3003

Tel (03) 9321 2444 Fax (03) 9328 1820

Freecall within Australia 1800 132 333

Room Type	Rate	Details
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#### Superior Room

Single/Twin/DBL	\$99.00
Triple	\$110.00
Quad	\$120.00

3.5 Star Rated.

Private Bathroom with shower and hairdryer, a/c, coffee & tea making facilities, colour TV, phone with data port, small fridge, central heating and clock radio, NON Smoking

#### Standard Room

Single/Twin/DBL	\$89.00
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3 Star Rated

Private bathroom with shower, ceiling fan, coffee/tea making facilities, colour TV, telephone with data port, small fridge, central heating and clock radio. Some with desk. Smoking allowed

#### Family Unit

\$140.00

3 Star Rated

2 room unit with ensuite including hairdryer, a/c, coffee/tea making facilities, colour TV, telephone with data port, small fridge, central heating and clock radio, NON Smoking

#### Economy Room

Single/Twin/DBL	\$79.00
Triple	\$99.00

Shared bathroom facilities, wash basin, tea/coffee making facilities, wardrobe, telephone with data port, central heating, desk fan

## Breakfast

Light - \$8.00 per person

Cooked - \$14.00 per person

NB: Accommodation bookings are the responsibility of delegates. It is important to ask for Kelly as the above rates are conference specials.

[www.themiami.com.au](http://www.themiami.com.au)

Email: [desk@themiami.com.au](mailto:desk@themiami.com.au)

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