

TOM PUTNAM: Good evening. I'm Tom Putnam, the Director of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. And on behalf of all of my colleagues and members of our Foundation's Board of Directors, many of whom are here in the audience, I thank you for coming to tonight's very special forum.

I want to first acknowledge the general underwriters of the Kennedy Library Forums, including lead sponsor, Bank of America, along with the Lowell Institute, represented tonight by William Lowell, the Corcoran Jennison Companies, represented by Gary Jennison, and the Boston Foundation. Our media sponsors are *The Boston Globe*, WBUR, and NECN.

When Madeleine Albright spoke from this stage a month ago, she noted that over the course of her long career she had learned not to make predictions, but that on this occasion she was going to go out on a limb and offer one. Our ears perked up. She paused and then stated in a confidential whisper, "At some point Fidel Castro will die."

We gather in an extraordinary moment in world history. Just this morning, President Obama reminded his Chinese counterparts that our belief in the fundamental human rights that are owed to each individual is not reserved solely for those living in democracies, but is universally held for citizens of all nations. Last week here at the Library, we marked the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall along with others, and the successful transition of East Germany and indeed Eastern Europe to a more democratic form of governance. And the question that looms before us, and in which we will engage this evening with an extraordinary group of panelists, is what the future holds for Cuba and the Cuban people.

An interviewer once asked Adriana Bosch, renowned for her documentaries on Presidents Grant, Eisenhower, Carter and Reagan, what was the biggest challenge in making her film on Fidel Castro. "Most American Presidents," she replied, "are in power for one or

two four-year terms, which in and of itself is hard to compress in a two-hour film. Castro has been in power the equivalent of twelve terms, longer than any other political leader of the 20th Century.”

As we all know, two critical moments during his early rule involved President Kennedy — the Bay of Pigs invasion, and the Cuban Missile Crisis. So I thought it appropriate to include an excerpt from the speech he gave in Miami on December 29, 1962 to members of the Cuban invasion brigade and to the wider Cuban community living in the United States. He quotes from José Martí, the guiding spirit of the first Cuban struggle for independence in the late 19th Century. [audio-video]

I know my role here requires me to be reverential. But President Kennedy was not known for mastering other languages, and it made me smile to hear his Boston accent turn Martí, into “Marty.”

To understand recent Cuban history, one can do no better than to watch Adriana Bosch’s wonderful documentary on Fidel Castro. A native of Cuba, leaving its shores at the age of 14, Ms. Bosch may be the only person in this room who can claim to have been kissed by Fidel Castro. I’m looking around to see if anyone else claims that distinction. Oh, we have yet another. As a child, her parents were initially enamored with Fidel, but in a short period of time became deeply disillusioned. The family moved to New Jersey where she completed her high school and university studies before moving to Boston to get her Ph.D. at Tufts and begin her successful thirty-year career with WGBH television. Along the way, she has won an Emmy, Peabody, and Christopher Awards. “There are so many myths about Castro and the role of the U.S. in Cuba,” she states, describing her film, “I felt a duty to tell the truth about the Cuban revolution and the man who guided it.”

We are honored to have back with us this evening Jorge Dominguez, the Antonio Madero Professor of Mexican and Latin American Politics and Economics at Harvard University. After visiting Cuba in March, he wrote a fascinating analysis for *Harvard Magazine*,

which concludes, “U.S. policy toward Cuba for the bulk of this past decade has assisted the Castro government’s state security in shutting out information from the outside world. Perhaps the United States will stop being an obstacle to change in Cuba,” he writes, “during this century’s second decade.”

Carlos Saladrigas was born in Havana and left in 1961 at the age of 12, one of more than 14,000 children who traveled in Operation Pedro Pan to the United States. When he arrived in Florida, he had three dollars in cash, six changes of clothes, five bottles of rum, and a box of cigars. He went on to put himself through college, attend Harvard’s Business School, and co-found Vincam, a staff leasing firm which grew to be the largest Hispanic-owned company in America. He is currently the vice chairman of Premier American Bank and the co-chair of the Cuba Study Group, which is devoted to finding more practical approaches to Cuban policy issues. “My Jesuit education has been a heavy burden,” he says. “The conscience you develop doesn’t let you enjoy life. There is this constant nagging to make a better world.”

Our moderator this evening is NPR news correspondent, Tom Gjelten, author of the recently published and widely acclaimed, *Bacardi and the Long Fight for Cuba*, which, along with Adriana Bosch’s documentary, will be on sale in our bookstore following the forum. And Mr. Gjelten would be happy to sign your copies. *Foreign Affairs* describes the book this way: “In this powerful tragedy, a famed business family, remarkable for its progressive social policies and passionate nationalism, is deprived of its hard-earned assets by a rapacious, double-crossing Fidel Castro -- and its very Cuban soul is then compromised in an embittered, unending exile. With its fabulous triumphs and poignant defeats, this stirring tale of rum, money and the revolutions has all the markings of a great epic movie.”

The New York Times review is more succinct: “This book is as smooth and as refreshing as a well-made daiquiri.” Most recently, Mr. Gjelten was here at the Library speaking on

a panel at the Presidential Library Conference on the Presidency in the Nuclear Age. And it's a privilege to have him back with us.

Before I close, I should note the Library's other connection to Cuba, for we are also the world repository for the papers of Ernest Hemingway, most of which came to us by the way of Cuba. And we continue to work in close partnership with Cuban officials, having just received digital copies of other documents that remain at Hemingway's home outside of Havana, the Finca Vigia.

So now with José Martí's admonition as our guide as we discuss the future of Cuba tonight, let the tenor of our words not be the useless clamor of fears, vengeance, but the honest wariness of Americans and Cuban exiles wishing to see constructive change on what President Kennedy once called "that imprisoned island." Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Adriana Bosch, Jorge Dominguez, Carlo Saladrigas and Tom Gjelten to the Kennedy Library.

TOM GJELTEN: Thank you, Tom. Thank you. It's great to see you all here. And welcome. And I'd like to extend my appreciation to Tom Putnam and everyone here at the JFK Library. You know, I've had the good fortune now of being involved in, I think, three fora here. And they've always been well attended, which speaks to the great thoughtfulness and curiosity of the Boston community. And these are terrific fora. Again, I appreciate the invitation to be here and to be on this stage with such a distinguished panel.

At NPR I'm kind of considered, I guess, the resident Cuba watcher. This was true before I worked on the book. I've been obsessed with Cuba, I think, as a reporter for pretty much the last fifteen years. I had been a correspondent in Eastern Europe. I witnessed the aftermath of the fall of Communism there and returned to the United States in 1994 and

was expecting, I think like many observers, to see something pretty dramatic unfold in Cuba as well.

You know, I tell people when I'm trying to explain my obsession with Cuba that the reason that I keep going back to Cuba and the reason that I'm so fixated, in a sense, on Cuba is simply that I don't understand it. I think for a journalist there is no story more irresistible than one that you just can't quite figure out. I've been to Cuba a number of times over the last fifteen years. Literally, it's true that every time I come back, I feel like I understand it less. So that, as I say, for a journalist, this kind of unpredictable element and the kind of complex and confusing aspect of Cuba is what keeps pulling me back. So even though I have now written a book about it, until I have figured Cuba out, I know that I'm going to continue to be obsessed with it. The fact that so many of you have come out here tonight shows that many of you are also sort of grappling with trying to unravel this very mysterious, enigmatic, and above all, complex place.

We are now, I think in another era of uncertainty about Cuba. I mentioned, you know, that in 1994, I was there. I covered the rafting exodus when there were about a thousand people a day who were taking to the seas, including lawyers and doctors and teachers and engineers and Communist Party members. Many of us concluded at that time that Cuba was about to fall. And now of course fifteen years later, the government there seems to be as strong as ever. So this is one of the great questions. Why is it that Cuba proved to be so different among other socialist nations?

But as I say, we're now in another period of great uncertainty. When Fidel Castro got sick in the summer of 2006 and appeared to be on the verge of death, there were many predictions about what would happen when Fidel died. And, basically, they would sort of fall into two broad categories. One theory was that Cuba would descend into chaos once he disappeared from the scene. And then the version that was favored by the Cuban

government was that, in fact, Cuba would ... that the revolution was not attached to just one individual and that the succession, the transition would go on.

Well, of course, Cuba did not descend into chaos and unrest when Fidel gave up power to Raul. On the other hand, we have not seen a real transition to a new generation of leadership there. So I think the truth probably lies somewhere in between. Raul Castro, Fidel's brother, is still very much in command. We have seen in the last year, in fact, kind of a purging of the younger leaders in Cuba and the ascension, as it were, of those most close to Raul. So I think that there is a legitimate question here. Has anything really changed in Cuba?

And again, it's been hard for me as a journalist to figure this out. I was last in Cuba in May of 2008. And at that time I was really impressed with how much things were appearing to change. I did a story at that time about the newspaper, *Juventud Rebelde* -- Rebel Youth -- whose reporters had been sent out by their editors on the most amazing assignments I think that any Cuban journalists had had in fifty years. They were basically commissioned to go out and critique the revolution, critique everything that was wrong in the Cuban economic system, from agriculture to health and education.

And I was really amazed at the openness. It almost seemed like kind of a period of Cuban glasnost. But then a few months later, that newspaper retreated back into the very wooden, uninteresting language that had characterized its writing in the previous months. So once again, sort of having thought that maybe Cuba was changing, I sort of had to reassess that original thought. And in fact, in the last year or so, we have seen very little evidence of change.

And yet something's clearly astir in Cuba. We have just quite recently -- one of the columnists, as it were, of *Juventud Rebelde*, actually wrote a column in which he complained about the kidnapping of information in Cuba. And this was a very bold

commentary by one of Cuba's sort of official journalists. And yet that commentary was removed from the website of *Juventud Rebelde* almost immediately. So clearly there are more questions being raised. Just today, we had a new poll come out from the International Republican Institute in which they found that something like seventy percent of the Cuban people are yearning for political and economic change.

But still, how it's going to happen, when it's going to happen, in what form it's going to happen is something that I think that none of us really can get a firm handle on. You know, people often ask me to make predictions, just as a journalist, about Cuba. And I truthfully can say I really have no idea what's going to happen in Cuba.

Now Jorge Dominguez and Adriana Bosch and Carlos Saladrigas have spent more time thinking about Cuba than I have. Maybe we can advance our collective understanding of Cuba this evening. I'm going to start with you, Jorge. I've often told people at NPR that when Fidel finally does die and we have obituaries and coverage of his death, one thing that I can guarantee you of is that Jorge Dominguez will be on NPR talking about it.

And the reason I can say that with certainty is because we already have him on tape on a shelf somewhere talking about what Cuba's going to be like. I have long emphasized to the people at NPR that Jorge Dominguez is perhaps the smartest, most thoughtful analyst of things Cuban in the United States. And I want to start, Jorge, with a quote -- one of my favorite quotes -- that I ever got from you. This is from an interview a few years before Fidel got sick. And I asked you what you thought would happen when Fidel passes from the scene, finally, in Cuba. And Jorge said, "Fidel is such a giant that when he passes, the word" ... Actually, the question was, "Is there going to be a vacuum of power evident in Cuba when Fidel goes?" And Jorge said, "Fidel is such a giant that when he passes, the word 'vacuum' does not do justice to the void that will exist. He has filled the history of that country to such an extent that it's very hard to imagine Cuba without him." Now,

this is probably about five years ago. Is it easier now, Jorge, to imagine a Cuba without Fidel than it was then?

JORGE DOMINGUEZ: I had forgotten that particular answer. But as I was thinking about it and your own comments a moment ago ... Go back to when Fidel enters the hospital at the beginning of August 2006 and, literally, for a period of two and a half weeks all that there was was a vacuum. Unlike Fidel, who never found a microphone or a TV camera that he did not hug, Raul Castro said nothing. There was no press release. He didn't go on national television to reassure everyone. In fact, it is only two and a half weeks later when he gives an interview to one of his journalists he's used before for these sorts of purposes, essentially to say two things, both very briefly.

One was he had never been accustomed to giving very many speeches before. And they were all very short. And he wasn't going to change. And the other one, the other topic he addressed was to the extent that there was anything he wanted to do was to change U.S./Cuba relations. But in that way, there literally is a vacuum. Fidel's torrent of words has been replaced by a political leader who says very little, who says it infrequently and who has in that way changed the characteristics of discourse.

I mean, one of the things that Fidel did is he was very frequently in the public arena. This is a very different style of leadership. I don't think it's working very well for Raul Castro. In retrospect, one of Fidel's important roles was he was the great explainer of whatever the government was doing or not doing. And this is not something that Raul Castro is doing particularly well. And no one else is doing it on behalf of the government and the Communist Party. So there is already a vacuum.

It's a vacuum that is working against the government and the Communist Party. It is a vacuum that some Cubans like because it means that now television programs start on time because Fidel is not just talking endlessly and endlessly and endlessly. There are

some good things about these vacuums. But the more dramatic element is it's difficult now to imagine what the next succession -- that's of course the preferred word for the Cuban leadership -- past Raul Castro. Raul Castro was born in 1931. He may govern Cuba for a while. But still one needs to think about the next succession.

You referred to many of the quite talented younger political leaders who were replaced. There are other new, young political leaders, but they are not experienced. It's not as if they're ready to govern. And so there is this gap between the top leadership, the people who are the vice presidents of the Council of State, the Executive Committee of the Political Bureau. They are the same individuals. The median birth year is 1936. This is an old leadership that has not replaced itself and that has not established means for replacing itself.

Their most recent important decision was, yes, to open a window to some of this replacement, but to postpone yet again the Communist Party congress. Why does a congress matter? Community parties use party congresses as a means to renovate themselves, to discuss new issues, to identify new leaders. Cuba had the last one of these in 1997. They were supposed to occur once every five to six years. So one is long overdue and they've postponed it even further. So it's a leadership at the top that does not know quite how to replace Fidel now -- you already see the vacuum -- and knows even less how to arrange for succession so that the political goals they value -- you and I may not value them, but they value them. They've yet to figure out how to sustain them. So I think that, in fact, we are at a moment where there is a question mark about the near-to medium-term future of a political regime.

TOM GJELTEN: Well, Raul's trying to do something very difficult right now, which is introduce some painful reforms. He's eliminated food rations, for example. And yet, as you say, he doesn't really have the political skill to explain this and defend it to the Cuban people.

JORGE DOMINGUEZ: He has adopted a number of measures that, in some respect, make sense for Cuba in terms of economic policy. But nearly all of them hurt individuals today. One of them is a series of measures, not yet eliminating entirely the food rationing card, but to reduce its significance signaling that he intends to get rid of them. Another one -- difficult in any society, difficult in the United States -- is to postpone (this happened by the end of 2008) increasing by five years the age of retirement for men and women and to do it on a very short clock. Changing pension policies, the age of retirement, is always very difficult, yet another source of unhappiness.

Just to illustrate that he's not crazy, at least on the substance: Cuba has an aging population. Cuba has been below what demographers call the population replacement rate since 1978. That means since 1978 fewer Cubans are being born every year than you would need to replace the population. In fact, in two of the last three years Cuba's population actually declined, even though there was no outflow of emigration beyond the normal. And so changing policies with regard to retirement is important. But then to do so little to give people more hope, that the present and the future are not just about pain but also about hope, is something that he has yet to develop. You know?

TOM GJELTEN: We're going to obviously be touching a lot on Raul and the current reforms. But let's return for a bit to Fidel, the figure who has dominated Cuba so much. And again, as Tom said, Adriana's film about Fidel is, I think, just a marvelous piece of work. And I'm glad to hear it's going to be on sale here.

Adriana, just talk freely a little bit about this amazing character, Fidel, and what your sort of bottom line feeling about him was after, not only as a native born Cuban, but then having spoken to so many people who knew him so well, remembering that he in fact kissed you. Can you summarize, in a sense, you know, who is this character?

ADRIANA BOSCH: Well, he kissed me and he said [in Spanish] you know? This is not quite a clear-cut memory for someone four years-old, three years-old. I go back to Jorge on this, because I spent a lot of time trying to figure out what made this character, as we say, tick, and what he was as a person and what he thought. And how did his childhood, his schooling, his class, the fact that he was an illegitimate son and all of that, had to do with what he did and how he acted? And then Jorge I remember said something very significant to me in our interview, which is Fidel is first and foremost an intellectual.

TOM GJELTEN: An intellectual?

ADRIANA BOSCH: An intellectual. He's not an intellectual in the pure sense of the word of someone who reads. But I think he's been a man who has acted primarily in accordance to his interpretation of Cuban history and a particular interpretation of his generation, of a nation that was broken, or a nation that never really came to be and that his duty and his mission as a revolutionary was to construct this nation and construct it away from the United States and rescuing the hopes and the dreams of a country that had a mission, a country that had a destiny. And that in some ways has guided him firmly in the way that he's approached his job in Cuba.

I think one of the things that became clear to me about Fidel is that he's not a man who listens. He's a man who acts out of his own perceptions and his own convictions of how things ought to be and that reality is not something that quite interferes very much with that overall direction. However, he was a brilliant man, or he is, at adopting to the changing circumstances. And one excellent example (and I think Tom brought that up) was the collapse of the socialist system, again, as I'm making this documentary and we're looking back. And he had written a book, a pamphlet, an essay when he went to jail saying, "History will absolve me." And when the Communist world collapses around him -- and here I quote Jorge again -- he's no longer marching with history.

So what does he do at that moment? What he does is something fascinating. He substitutes the dialogue and the entire legitimacy of the Cuban regime and what Cuba is doing by going back and rescuing the figure of José Martí, and beginning to construct yet another justification and yet another legitimacy for the revolution outside of Marxist and Leninist. And on the one hand, he's saying Marxism or death. On the other hand, he's bringing up the figure of José Martí; he's bringing up that whole idea of the hundred-year, inconclusive nation.

So he's rebuilding the legitimacy of the revolution as a nationalist experiment, as a nationalist quest. And in this, he, I think, intellectually at least, was able to provide another justification for his remaining in power and another sense of direction for Cuba: "We will survive, no matter what. And we are a nation that has fought very hard to have our own identity, separate from that of the United States. And this is going to continue to be our quest and our focus."

So in a sense, he really did a lot of in and out and adjustments and all. But I think in the end, he's a man that followed his own instincts and his own understanding of where the world was. And when the world left him behind, he found another thing to reconstruct his power, and his reason for being and the reason for his Cuban revolution. I don't know how long that will last and how long that is going to be valid.

One thing we keep hearing, the word that keeps coming up when people talk about Cuba in the future, is generation -- the young people want, the young people think, the young people are different. So that new generation are coming of age, people that were born after the collapse of the Soviet Union are coming of age now. What do those people think? What do those people want?

And if you really throw a transition forward into the kinds of successions and things that Jorge and Tom are talking about, you really are seeing not something that will happen in

the very short-term, but many of these people are going to be the people, I think, that will be inheriting a lot of the key decisions about the revolution and about that country. And the question is where is it going to go? And I do think that as time goes on, it becomes even more and more of a question mark.

TOM GJELTEN: You know, when you were saying that Adriana, I was thinking of the Elian Gonzalez case in 2000. And I know that one of the views in Cuba is that one reason that Fidel made such a big issue of Elian Gonzalez is because he saw in that case a way to sort of rejuvenate the revolution among younger people. He saw that this was actually a case, you know, the fate of this little boy whose father wants him back in Cuba, this was a way to make the revolution relevant to a younger generation. And you're right — I think he's always sought ways to sort of redefine the revolution according to the circumstances of the moment.

I want to say a word about Carlos Saladrigas before I kick the ball to him. You know, one of the themes of my book, I think, about the Bacardi Family is that one of the things I tried to do is sort of define kind of a trajectory of Cuban patriotism. And I think one of the tragic stories is that the way that so many genuine and progressive Cuban patriots, like the Bacardis were in their time, once they move into exile their patriotism takes on a different form. It becomes more negative. It becomes angrier. It becomes even spiteful. There is kind of a backward-looking aspect, a sense of betrayal that sort of permeates the feelings of many exiles about Cuba.

One of the things that I admire so much about you, Carlos, is that without ever underestimating the consequences of Fidel Castro's rule of Cuba, you have managed to sort of turn your patriotism forward-looking rather than backward-looking. And that's, I think, a real achievement. Can you talk for a minute about how much of a handicap or how much of a burden is the obsession with Fidel Castro as a person for the exile community? Has that been something that has been hard for the community to get away

from? And now that Fidel is disappearing from the scene, what effect is that going to have on Cuban patriotism as manifested within the exile community?

CARLOS SALADRIGAS: I think the obsession has been incredibly damaging to Cuba and to U.S./Cuba relations. I think that obsession with Fidel has allowed the Miami exile community to sort of accept one of Fidel Castro's most fundamental premises. You know? In his approach to survival and in his strategic planning to make sure the revolution survives, one of the tools that Fidel Castro has always recognized as essential is to identify Cuba and the Cuban people with him as one and the same.

And Miami has fallen for that. It has fallen into that trap. And the way Miami has gone, the way U.S. policy has gone, and it has failed to make that fundamental distinction. It has failed to make the distinction between Fidel Castro as a person and the Cuban people as a different entity. It has allowed us not to recognize the difference between Fidel's Cuba and Cuba. And that has been incredibly damaging.

Let me give you a couple of small manifestations. Watching a sporting event in the Olympics or whatever, and the Cuban athletes are winning. Cubans in Miami have actually found it very hard to go for him or her. Where, you know, this is our people. This is somebody that represents Cuba and the Cuban people, not just the government. So it has put the Cubans in Miami into this difficult dilemma that being against Castro means that you have to be against Cuba. And, therefore, it has allowed us to push for a U.S. policy that has sought to damage the regime even when he has inflicted significant collateral damage on the people. And that, I think, has been a major mistake. And it's a mistake that has consequences. Because over the long-term, it'd be difficult for us to answer to future generations whether we were truly helpful and whether we truly had the best interest of the Cuban people at heart in advocating the policies that we have advocated.

And I think as we look forward to the future, this really becomes a significant issue. We need to understand that the Cuban people are different from Fidel, and that it is ultimately the Cuban people who are going to be the actors of their own change. And, therefore, we need to engage them. We need to approach them. We need to provide them with the resources, the tools, information, the context, the friendships, the things they need to empower themselves to become agents of their own change in the future. And that's an essential, important split vision of what's happening in Cuba today.

TOM GJELTEN: Carlos, do you feel like there are people in Cuba today that you could, in theory at least, reach out to? And I don't mean dissidents, necessarily. I mean people in positions of responsibility in Cuba, that you could sort of reach out to and find common ground with?

CARLOS SALADRIGAS: No question. But understand how difficult it is because the environment is incredibly charged on both sides. And there are risks on the Cuban side of approaching somebody in Miami. And the consequences of that risk could be significantly onerous. I mean, they could pay with their lives. Look at what happened to Lage and Perez Roque because they were having contact with foreigners and saying things. And, of course, there are consequences for acting in Miami. It has been difficult to be a dissident in Miami for many, many years. But we are breaking the ice. And Miami is changing. So things that it was impossible to say or talk about in Miami or do in Miami are now becoming more acceptable. And the consequences of being a dissident in Miami are not onerous anymore.

TOM GJELTEN: When you say 'dissident' you're referring to being a dissident within the exile community yourself?

CARLOS SALADRIGAS: That's right. I'm saying dissent from the status quo, whether it is in Cuba or in Miami. It's just changing in a significant way. And in the end, you

know, I think for Cuba to change ... Cuba is such a deeply divided nation. Even Cuba families are torn apart, children and fathers, brothers and sisters, brothers and brothers. Cuba's such a divided nation that, in my opinion, reconciliation is essential to the processes of change. And for Cuba to change, all Cubans need to change. We need to change in Miami. The Cubans on the island need to change. And, you know, I am gratified that I see Miami way ahead of that change. Miami's changing in a very significant way.

Adriana and I were talking about that on the airplane today. You can feel it. You can sense it. Of course, you have to be used to the nuances of Miami to understand it, but you can sense it and you can feel it. And it is happening. It's a very important evolution. As well as Cubans are voting with their feet, you know? The number of Cubans going to Cuba is increasing dramatically since Obama lifted the restrictions on family travel, which was one of the most inhumane things that the Bush Administration did to Cuba policy. And that has been lifted so people are going back, families are reuniting. And transitions begin, one person at a time, one family at a time.

And this process is taking place. It's taking place in a very significant way. So I think from that perspective, I see an encouraging future. The question is what's going to happen on the other side of the straits? How are we going to see a process of change unfold? And, of course, that's more difficult. And we are paying the price of our own isolation. We just don't know what's going on in Cuba. We know very little about Cuba, whether you're policymakers or people in government or even in the intelligence communities. We know incredibly little as to what's happening in Cuba. And in great part that lack of knowledge is being caused by the lack of engagement and the isolation that we have put on ourselves in terms of how we engage Cuba.

TOM GJELTEN: It seems to me that for there to be change in U.S./Cuba relations ... you also said that it has to be on both side of the strait. Jorge, Karl Marx in 1848, when

he was writing about the February Revolution, said that that revolution did not advance through its own achievements, but on the contrary by the creation of a powerful united counter revolution in combat with whom the party of overthrow ripened into a really revolutionary party.

It seems like Fidel must have been familiar with that writing by Marx, because he said something very similar in 1961. He said, “A revolution that is not attacked would not be a true revolution. A revolution that does not have an enemy in front of it runs the risk of lulling itself to sleep.” How important has that sentiment been in sort of Fidelist ideology over those years? And how much of an obstacle is it? I mean, is the Cuban revolution ready for the United States not to be its enemy?

JORGE DOMINGUEZ: Probably the most articulate way in which Fidel Castro ever put that idea was in his major address to the Second Congress of the Cuban communist party. I mentioned before that these party congresses are important. This one took place in 1980, but it’s really an extraordinary sentence, “The United States has been the historic enemy of the Cuban people.”

And if you let that sentence roll in your mind, he didn’t say that it was the President of the United States or that it was the Central Intelligence Agency, that it was the U.S. government. It is *The* United States as a country. And for him this really has been very important. It has been very important for a long period of time. And it was one of the key ideas that enabled him -- to pick up on something Adriana said -- to reinvent his regime upon the collapse of the Soviet Union and other communist regimes in Europe in the early 1990s. It is: The United States is the historic enemy of the Cuban nation.

Fortunately, for him, the U.S. government came to his assistance. And so for reasons that are perhaps too detailed, but in 1992 in the context of the presidential election campaign, Bill Clinton outflanked the Bush Administration and came out in favor of a bill that

eventually President Bush running for reelection, endorsed, called the Cuban Democracy Act -- a nice name -- the impact of which was to stop the exports of food from Canada to Cuba.

And the Cuban government translated that act into Spanish and read it again and again over radio and television. And the message was very simple: "The United States may speak the language of democracy, but what it wants is for you to be hungry." The same thing happened again in 1996, the enactment of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996, more often known as Helms-Burton. And a key element of that was to highlight the importance of property claims and the return of property to the rightful owners. And the Cuban government translated it into Spanish, read it over radio and television: "The U.S. may speak the language of freedom and democracy. What it really cares about is property."

This issue of using the United States as an enemy and having the U.S. government play the role that Fidel Castro has most wanted, has been a significant issue for a very long period of time. It remains, to some extent, an act of consideration today, even in the post-Fidel, Raul Castro moment, in part because the Cuban government knows that nationalism may be its only remaining useful card to play. But also because -- and here is just a slight amendment to one of the sentences you used, Tom -- Fidel is not yet gone.

Fidel has rediscovered himself and reinvented himself -- again, to pick up on Adriana's idea -- now as an op-ed columnist. And so he writes these articles or dictates these articles, known in Spanish as [Spanish]. And whenever there seems to be too much of an approximation to a deal with the United States, he makes it clear that he thinks it's a terrible idea. So he is not ready for the U.S. to be anything other than the enemy of the Cuban nation.

That's why I wanted to refer in my first remarks to the first public comment Raul Castro made after becoming Cuba's acting president, those two parts. One is, "I'm a man of very few words." But the other one is, "Whatever few words I have, I want to change U.S./Cuba relations." And so what you now have is this very complex relationship between the two brothers, one who has nominal power but who defers to the op-ed columnist. It's very hard to do.

TOM GJELTEN: And I think that we can assume that probably Fidel is healthier now than he was when Raul uttered those words.

JORGE DOMINGUEZ: Yes. I think Fidel's health probably was worse in the second half of 2006 and in the early part of 2007. And he is, for someone who has to be under continuous medical care, functioning politically enough to be a veto. He no longer has enough power to make things happen, but he has enough influence to prevent things from happening or to slow them down.

ADRIANA BOSCH: That to me is a very interesting question about the power that Fidel has been able to maintain as an op-ed columnist, as ultimately the ultimate arbiter pretty much of what the government may or may not do. And the question I have of, I think, of the both of you, the three of you, which to me is fascinating is does this have to do with his control of people within the government elite? I mean, the Cuban elite has proven to be incredibly solid, and there's been very few rifts where that could have provoked a crisis at the top levels of government. Does Fidel still maintain power within the circles of the elite? Or is his power moral and derived from his long relationship with the Cuban people?

TOM GJELTEN: Can you answer that question, Adriana, on the basis of history, on the basis of his dealings with his closest comrades in the hour of the revolution?

ADRIANA BOSCH: Well, I think this is a very interesting dichotomy. Because what's happened is that with the rise of Raul to power, what you had was the rise of the army, of the Sierra Maestra, the Cuban army, and the army that Raul controlled through the international ventures in Africa and everything else. What you do have, effectively, is a military government. I think that the people that were close with Fidel in the Sierra Maestra are now the people who are not so much in control. A lot of them have died. It remains unclear how many of the people who are Raul followers do it against Fidel, what the distinction is in their minds between one brother and the next.

When Raul first took power from Fidel it was clear that, here was somebody who had a more collegiate way and habits of government. Raul has a family that apparently he listens to and that people hear about. One of his daughters, Mariele, is very active on behalf of gay rights. His wife, Vilma, for many, many years when she was alive, was a person of great significance in Cuba as the leader of the Cuban women's movement. He has grandchildren that everybody knows and thinks about.

And so I think he's a man that has more than what's in his head to look toward. I honestly don't know the answer to that. I think Jorge and Carlos may know better what it is, how it is that Fidel continues to exercise his veto power. Could simply be his relationship with his younger brother that gives him that legitimacy. That is a very private thing between the two of them.

JOSE DOMINGUEZ: Let me just come in. Some of it is that relationship between the two brothers. But some of it is, even those who are, say, twenty years younger than Fidel -- so they would be in their early sixties -- have been governing with him for a long time. And so if you count the members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the members of the National Assembly (that would include almost all the top officers of the government and the Party), it's about a thousand people. Chances are he's now not been in this role since the summer of 2006, but chances are that he knows by name and has

worked for a significant amount of time with nine out of every ten of those. And so some of this is deference, that others would say, “I have worked with you. I have developed this career. I am the person I have become thanks to you. And in the winter of your life, I’m not going to stab you in the back.” Some of this is this aspect of it.

TOM GJELTEN: Carlos threw out a couple of names earlier that maybe some of you didn’t catch — Carlos Lage and Felipe Perez Roque, two of the younger individuals in this generation Jorge just mentioned who were actually purged from power last year. And Carlos Lage was, I think to many people, considered to be sort of the one likely to succeed Raul. Felipe Perez Roque had been Fidel’s personal assistant for many years and then became foreign minister.

Now, these two individuals were known for much of their careers for their loyalty to Fidel. And yet, as you mentioned Carlos, they got pushed out. And from the outside, what do we conclude from this experience? What is it that gets people pushed out? Or what is it that secures peoples’, Cubans’ position in power? What is sort of the key element that explains whether you survive or not in that hierarchy do you think?

CARLOS SALADRIGAS: Well, you know, I think this Lage/Perez Roque incident is a consequence of the labyrinth ways of these types of totalitarian governments, particularly in their more declining stages, to a significant degree. It is rumored that they were not favored by Raul to begin with. And then they were caught in an act where they were disloyal to Fidel. And the evidence was used to go to Fidel and say, “Look — we’ve got to get rid of these people.” But that’s all heresy. We just don’t know. It’s only speculation.

But there is one factor that is important here as we look to the future. And we don’t know whether Fidel is in the driver’s seat. And if he isn’t in the driver’s seat, he’s certainly a backseat driver that’s constantly telling Raul what to do. But regardless of that, his

lifespan, by all statistical accounts and so forth, cannot be very long at all. The predictions that we have been saying in Miami every year since 1960/'61, Fidel is going to die. Okay?

TOM GJELTEN: Like Madeleine Albright said, at some point.

CARLOS SALADRIGAS: That's right. But what I think is interesting here is that what's more important to these people is survival. I think that they're long past the modality where ideology drove their lives. I think they're into a stage of their lives where survival is what matters.

Raul wants to die in his own bed as much as Fidel wants to die in his own bed, as much as Machado Ventura. And I'm mentioning names in the Cuban hierarchy. All of them are eighty years and better than eighty-some years-old. All of these people want to die in their own beds. And even the younger members of that nomenclature, of that pinnacle of power, they're interested in their survival. So here we have a significantly large group of people who're interested in their survival. We have a Miami community who doesn't want him to survive and a United States policy that doesn't want him to survive. And yet our behavior, the things we are doing are actually helping them to survive. And I fully agree with Jorge in that statement. I really believe that U.S. policy, far from helping these people lose their power, has helped them and continues to help them in perhaps unimagined and different ways.

Let's take the embargo for just a second. There is the rising possibility of a new aspect of U.S. policy that may be incredibly damaging to Cuba's future. The embargo has for a year been relatively innocuous to the Cuban economy. The Cuban economy has been impervious to the embargo because it has not been a market economy. It has been a closed economy. And, therefore, whether you embargo or not has been meaningless to the Cuban economy. But where the embargo could be incredibly damaging is to a Cuban

economy in the process of reform. And, therefore, we may be having the very opposite effect. Instead of facilitating change as we look down a few years, instead of facilitating change, this may actually be giving these people little options but to stay as they are, to maintain and continue the status quo.

They can look around and they have been incredibly resourceful in finding options in the many crises that they have had through the fifty years of revolution. I mean, staying in power under such adverse conditions, it's not easy. Let's give it to these guys. They have really learned how to do it and done it well. And they have been incredibly resourceful.

But most of them find themselves in a situation where they thought they would never find themselves again. Right after the collapse of the Soviet Union -- the Soviet Union was, of course, subsidizing the Cuban economy almost in its entirety, and all of a sudden when things were bad in that period, here came Venezuela which has given them very significant subsidies and economic transactions that are not at arm's length. They are not valued at true market prices. And that has bought them time. But in the end, it is not a permanent solution to the Cuban problem.

And the younger members of the Cuban nomenclature know that. The question is how do you change? And how do you change in the face of a U.S. embargo? And that's creating a significant difficulty.

TOM GJELTEN: The issue of the survival instincts applies to the Cuban, the ordinary Cuban population, as well. I remember I was in the airport in Havana catching a flight to Santiago in October of 2006 when Fidel first came on -- the first videos of Fidel after his operation were shown on television. And they were shown in the nightly newscast, and I was there in the airport. And one of the things that I did was I watched the expression on the faces of the Cubans around me as they looked at the monitor and saw for the first time these images of Fidel. And what struck me was how inscrutable their faces were. You

couldn't tell whether they were concerned, whether they were curious, whether they were happy. And, also, they weren't speaking to each other. They were just sort of stone-faced, impassive, looking straight ahead. And I have to think that this is partly sort of a skill that Cubans have developed over the years just to keep their opinions to themselves.

Adriana, do you have any sense of what's it like to be a Cuban these days? This would be a great next film.

ADRIANA BOSCH: Well, you know, I think you've hit on probably the greatest conundrum and the greatest secret of Cuba, which is nobody really knows what Cubans think. I was watching television the other day; I was watching a debate. And one of the panelists said, "The Cuban people want (inaudible)." And I'm sitting there, and I'm thinking, "No one knows what the Cuban people want." We can surmise. We can assume some things by looking at what all humans beings want. But I think that the Cuban government has stayed in power through a mixture of fear, charisma.

Initially, I think there was a great, great swelling of popularity, not only because Fidel helped get rid of Batista -- I think that put him in power -- but subsequently because there were some real changes that came to the people, that to the majority of the people were beneficial at the cost of very dear rights and a lot of pain for another group of people, who might have been right in the long-term, but at the moment were in the minority. I think subsequently you added to that a great dose right from the beginning of repression - - the idea that this was not a regime you could criticize in any way, whether it was violently, of course not, but no free speech, the entire literature, what people read, what people had access to, the information they saw. It all became very curtailed. And it became a population that was under control.

You had a loosening of that. And I think you've had some sense of a loosening of that lately. You see a lot of little things that are surfacing. You see the rockers. You see the

rappers. You see the bloggers. You see the dissidents are now joined by this plethora of voices [Spanish] of people who are demanding different things and different kinds of change.

But if I put myself in a position of a Cuban living in Cuba, I'd be terrified of uncertainty. To me, the one thing that I think every Cuban must think when they get up in the morning is what does my future look like? And how hard could it be to re-do and remake and rethink and reinvent the society in which I live? And I think that attitude of fear that was instilled in Cubans by the Helms-Burton agreement, that here we're going to come to Miami Cubans and take the places where they live and the schools where their children attended, and everything's going to be reclaimed, and they were going to be left with nothing. But to me, the one thing in addition to the real fear of real repression -- which is a day-to-day thing in the lives of Cubans -- the uncertainty of future must be a very heavy burden for everyone when they get up in the morning.

Things have to change. But how? To what? What does the past look like? People don't know what the past looked like. And maybe if they did, may not want it repeated. And what does the future look like? I don't think there is a sense of what that society will or may become in anybody's mind. Cubans have learned to wait. But I don't think they exactly know what they're waiting for, you know?

TOM GJELTEN: One Cuban I remember told me something I've never forgotten, which is, "We Cubans have so little that we can't afford to lose what little we have." And it's really produced, I think, a real, kind of conservatism or a skepticism.

Now, this panel has supposed to have been about the future of Cuba. I do want to leave some time for questions. But since Adriana set it up, let's just go down the row here very briefly, and beginning with you, Jorge, what do you think is the future? Look at Cuba ten years from now. Fortunately, as the moderator -- as I said before -- I won't answer that

question. I don't have to. But I'm going to leave it to my three guests here, my three panelists. Give us your view of where things are going to be ten years from now in Cuba.

JORGE DOMINGUEZ: Well, let me just take one element and put an optimistic note. Take an important point Carlos made a couple of minutes ago with regard to the agreement between the government of Venezuela and the government of Cuba, in ways that have been very helpful to both governments in different ways. And I also agree with Carlos that this is a temporary solution, not one for the future. But in the process of reaching that agreement, one important element of the agreement between the Castro brothers and Hugo Chavez is that Cuba has begun to learn to do something they should have done long ago and has never done before — to export services. And the way the export of services takes place is Cuban healthcare personnel may go to Caracas or Cuban healthcare personnel may go somewhere here or there. Tourists come to Cuba for one purpose or another. And at present, the export of services -- often paid for by Venezuela but not exclusively -- has become by far the most dynamic growth export for Cuba, well ahead now of international tourism, more generally, sugar exports, nickel exports and the like.

And one can imagine in a future in this timeframe, ten years into the future, when in fact Cuba would be exporting something quite different from its past. In the past, Cuba had only exported commodities, including sunshine. Now, it would be able to export the fruits of the brain power and the education of its people. That makes really for a very positive future some time down the road, but it assumes, of course, that there would be normal incentives for these very talented, hardworking, well educated people to do their best.

ADRIANA BOSCH: I think that everybody's been playing with scenarios of what's going to happen and what's not going to happen in Cuba. I will do like Jorge did, which is a good thing to do. I think the thing that needs to happen and that will happen and that I have noticed happen in at least from the point of view of Miami is this notion of a

reconstruction of a nation divided. I think one of the things that really hurt Cuba (and I mean Cuba as not an island, but Cuba as a nation that includes a very large dynamic, educated and successful diaspora, as well as people who are not, but that does include that) is that they're not playing together. These people are not playing together.

A lot of the people that Jorge was talking about, a lot of people who are very educated and who reap the benefits of the revolution's commitment to education, are people who live abroad, are people whose talents have now been driven away from Cuba because the possibilities in Cuba do not exist. And I'm not saying the people who go to work on behalf of the government, but people who actually have left, young people all over the world, in Europe, in the United States, everywhere.

And I do think that this kind of reconstruction of a nation, where the internal force of that population -- its exile or immigrant community as you might call it -- coming together and helping build a new country that transcends, in a sense, those frontiers and those limitations is a very positive thing. And I see it happening.

I was on Sunday at the Miami book festival. And the talk in most of the committees, the talk in most of the sessions was about that. How do you reconcile these two experiences? How do you bring the very rich experience that so many of us have had outside of Cuba with the experience and with what Cubans need and what Cubans can contribute within the island? And in that completion is the future of Cuba, in that completion, in really rebuilding that nation that we became, which is a divided nation. And that is something that I think is a positive thing. And it's likely to take place.

Cubans, you know, I was just telling Carlos today, there are not only flights to Havana and Santiago. You go to Miami and you go in front of the departure board, and there are flights to Camaguey, flights to Holguin, flights to Victoria de Las Tunas. Cubans are going from Miami to their hometowns directly. They're not even going to Havana

anymore. So that to me is a very positive indication that we might in the end be able to reconcile.

TOM GJELTEN: And as you mentioned, Carlos, the new relaxation of that travel policy means that even more Cuban-Americans are going to be going back.

CARLOS SALADRIGAS: That is correct.

TOM GJELTEN: What do you see happening?

CARLOS SALADRIGAS: Well, you know, Cuba is at a juncture here, as it's been a few times in its history. And it can go anywhere. I mean, the scenarios of change, if we do an analysis of scenarios of change, they range anywhere from a broken state with a complete breakdown of law and order, a real nightmarish scenario, to perhaps one where the talent of the well educated Cuban population can be harnessed in a knowledge economy in a significant way.

What's going to make the difference between those two scenarios is going to be how change unfolds and how it takes place. And here is the dilemma. I think we have a leadership in Cuba who is gripped by fear of change, much more so than the population is. And we have a neighbor to the north that is not enabling these processes of change. And I think the key is to enable this change, to facilitate them so that as changes are implemented, they proceed in a way that benefits the future of Cuba.

I remember a book by Ian Bremmer called *The J Curve*. And he postulated that as totalitarian closed societies open up to economic forces, market forces and cultural forces, they become increasingly unstable. The Cuban regime knows that. And this is the source of their fear. It behooves us, for our own security and for the sake of the Cuban nation, to help bring the bottom of that 'J' as shallow as possible. And the only way I

know that we can do that is by increasing the flow of contacts and communication with Cuba, by engaging and by facilitating the processes of change. That doesn't mean that we should give up on human rights. Quite the contrary — we need to continue to pressure for the respect of human rights. But we need to facilitate change, rather than impede change in the way we have done for so many years.

TOM GJELTEN: Well, you've been a very polite and attentive audience. But I'm sure that many of you have some questions. We do have about twenty minutes here.

QUESTION: My name is Jack Simons. I was intrigued by Fidel's very convenient re-translating of our English congressional acts for the people of Cuba. And I just wondered, don't we have an active Voice of America in Spanish that can get our views over to the people of Cuba? Or is Castro so clever at responding to these things that there is just an impossible obstacle to overcome until such time as Raul and Fidel are no longer with us, and then the re-nationalization that everyone hopes for can proceed?

TOM GJELTEN: Well, we do have Radio Martí, which is the equivalent. But the Cuban government has been very effective at blocking the signals. I mean, it is possible to get Radio Martí in Cuba, but it's very difficult.

CARLOS SALADRIGAS: It's not quite the equivalent. Radio Martí has become Radio Rebelde in reverse. Okay? And the Cuban people are so fed up with propaganda that whether it's one color or the other, they just don't like it. So they tune off.

JORGE DOMINGUEZ: That really is the difficulty with Radio Martí. If it were the kind of professional broadcasting that the Voice Of America is ...

TOM GJELTEN: Why isn't the Voice of America ... [simultaneous conversation]

JORGE DOMINGUEZ: Radio Martí became almost a wholly owned subsidiary of a faction within the Cuban-American community. And it has not changed very much. It is not very credible as a result.

CARLOS SALADRIGAS: And it has more corruption and patronage today than the Cuban ministry in the 1940s.

ADRIANA BOSCH: Information is key. And that's why I think the bloggers and the ability ... Now Cubans are going to be able to text. I think that's incredibly dangerous. I mean, you can text and nobody knows what you're writing, especially if you have a BlackBerry with a PIN. The Venezuelans know this and do it all the time. So in a sense, that exchange of information is a key thing. Things happen in Cuba we learn about in Miami. And then when people go to Cuba from Miami, the ones who are in Cuba never heard of it. And you realize that there is a real silence in terms of the information that goes to the Cuban population, especially outside of Havana and some of the other capitals of the province.

QUESTION: Hi. I'm Ed DeMore, founder of the Boston Global Bridge Institute. In 2003/2004, I was a consultant for the U.N. DP in Havana, and in that role worked with Eusebio Leal, historian of Havana, and Gustavo Machin, who was director of North American relations. And what I'd be curious for any of the panelists to comment on is what their position is presently in Cuba, if you're aware.

TOM GJELTEN: Well, Eusebio Leal was just seen not very long ago walking with Fidel in the suburbs of Havana. So he is, I think, still in good graces. Eusebio Leal is the historian, as you say, of Havana, the man who's sort of most responsible for the restoration of old Havana, is a really beautiful section of the city. And it's been a very impressive restoration.

Gustavo Machin, I don't know where he is now. I knew him because he was an officer at the Cuban Interest section in Washington. He's a member of the Cuban diplomatic corps. I really don't know what's become of him. I don't know if any of you others have any thoughts?

JORGE DOMINGUEZ: Leal is, and has been for quite some time, a member of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party. He has also played in the restoration of the city. He has approached it with a very sort of plural perspective. So it has included not only the restoration of castles, but also the restoration of churches and he has thought about the old city not just simply as a museum to look at from afar, but as a city that is being reborn so that there are some active human life and activity and endeavors, and in many ways I think is one of the most successful embracers of how to connect Cuba's past to a possible Cuban future.

TOM GJELTEN: One of the interesting things that he did in regard to what Jorge just said is he instituted some community radio operations in Havana that are really genuinely -- I come from a public radio background -- community radio, where people can come on and they can complain about housing issues, about infrastructure issues, really trying to establish sort of some sort of open town hall community dialogue through these local radio stations in the city of Havana.

CARLOS SALADRIGAS: And the best of which would be, you're calling in and you're public radio and you say, "The bakery in the corner is supposed to be open at this time, and it is not." "Wait. Wait. Hold for a minute. I'm going to call so that someone goes and checks it out." And this kind of use of public radio is extraordinarily interesting.

QUESTION: Goro Lenzman(?), member of Russian speaking science club. To me, condition in Cuba right now, it's similar to condition when Stalin died in Russia. So can

you elaborate on this? And second question -- I think that has connection with this -- who is in power of secret intelligence?

TOM GJELTEN: Can I ask you to, just in one or two sentences, say what Russia was like when Stalin died, that you think is comparable?

QUESTION: Condition right now in Cuba, it's similar to condition in Russia.

TOM GJELTEN: How was it in Russia when Stalin died?

QUESTION: Exactly as I say.

TOM GJELTEN: You're focusing on the uncertainty that exists in Cuba, right now, right?

QUESTION: On everything.

JORGE DOMINGUEZ: I think on the head of intelligence, the head of intelligence is one of these people who has long been associated both with Raul Castro and with Fidel Castro. He had been a significant field commander in one of Cuba's three wars in Africa, successful wars from Cuba's perspective. He has been in charge of state security for almost exactly twenty years, since 1989, division general Abelardo Colomé, "Furry" as his nickname is.

In terms of the level of uncertainty, yes, I do think that there is an element of uncertainty. But there are some kinds of uncertainty that have not appeared. Example — back to Tom, to something that you said, there was in Washington and to some extent in parts of Miami the expectation that when Fidel would be rushed to the hospital, that the whole thing would come tumbling down. Didn't happen. And so part of the uncertainty is

indeed that this is not a political regime that collapsed, this is not like former Communist Eastern Europe, in that sense, that collapsed one after another in 1989. Part of the uncertainty is how much of this regime may endure? Would this regime endure in ways that make it more similar to China and Vietnam? Would it endure in ways that would lead to involution, so it would look more like North Korea? Would it be some other tropical invention that people may or may not like?

So there is uncertainty about that. There is a little less uncertainty -- and here you began your remarks citing a public opinion poll. A public opinion poll in Cuba is difficult to do. Public opinion polls that say, "And what is your opinion of the president's performance," really don't have a whole lot of utility, in part because Cuba and the U.S. had been so close to each other. There has been professional public opinion polling in Cuba since the 1940s. It did not stop with Fidel Castro. There has been ongoing public opinion polling for a long period of time.

The good public opinion polls are ones that do not ask, "What do you think is the future of the political regime;" that do not ask, "What is your opinion of the president's performance," but ask something different: "What do you think is the quality of public transportation?" And the answer in public opinion polls is, "It's terrible." What do you think about the adequacy of the food supply?" And the answer is, "It's terrible." "What do you think of the family doctor?" "Terrific." "And your grandkid's school teacher?" "Wonderful."

It is a discerning public. It can make distinctions. It knows that there are some things that are terrible. It knows that there are other things that it likes. And that adds to the uncertainty: "How could I, as an ordinary human being, make it more likely that the Cuba that I like will continue and the Cuba that I do not like will not?"

TOM GJELTEN: To save time, I'm going to ask everyone in line to ask their questions one after the other and then we'll have our panelists address them.

QUESTION: The United States government has a plan to assist the Cuban government in its transition from Communism to democracy. In that plan, it repeatedly states that if the Cuban people request, they will assist. My question becomes, who is the Cuban people that the United States government refers to when they talk about requesting assistance for transition? Is it the Cuban people in Cuba? Is it part of the Cuban diaspora? Or is it the Cubans in Miami who make policy for the United States government in terms of its politics with Cuba?

QUESTION: Canadian government seems to have a very different relationship with Cuba than the U.S. government. And we're close to Canada. Have they played, are they already playing a moderating force? And would they possibly play a moderating force as the future goes forward to bring these groups together?

QUESTION: My nephew, my Cuban nephew-in-law is a scientist. He's been here three years. He's a biochemist. And he says that exporting the services to Venezuela, the scientific services and some of the medical services, but more the scientific, that no longer is the wonderful education that he got as a scientist in Cuba available to Cubans now. And I think also is concerned about the medical situation. I don't know what they're exporting in medicine. But that's what he told me just about five days ago.

QUESTION: Okay, so I have to say that I'm a student at UMass Boston in political science and Latino studies. And I want to thank you guys so much for coming, *muchas gracias*. I am not a Cuban, but my question is from my generation -- I'm in my early 20s -- if I were Cuban or a Cuban-American going back, how would I be perceived? I know, for example, a lot of the baseball players are seen as greedy imperialists when they defect. How would I be received by the general public, family members? And also as I

am an American, if I managed to sneak through Canada, how would I be perceived by people of my generation there? I'm very curious. Thank you.

QUESTION: There seems to be a presumption that there will be some openness following the end of the Castro regime, and that of course means that there will be a lot of commerce back and forth. And that raises the question of property. American businesses want to go back in to reclaim the property that was appropriated and nationalized in the early '60s; the Cuban exile community that I watched grow in Florida in the early '60s will want to return to claim their ancestral property; and then of course there is the legitimacy of the people that have been living there for the last forty years. What kind of situation will that create?

TOM GJELTEN: I'm just going quickly to give a really off-the-top-of-my-head answer to the first question. Anyone else can add to it that wants to. As I understand it -- because I have covered this; this is a question about the United States assistance to a future Cuba if the Cuban people request it -- I think that the assumption there is that there would be a different government in power, maybe a transition government or some kind of coalition. And if the request from that new government were to come to the United States, that would be the basis for it.

I don't think that there's any assumption that there will be a kind of referendum on this issue or anything like that. I think it's in the context of a new Cuban government. Is that your understanding as well?

JORGE DOMINGUEZ: Yes.

TOM GJELTEN: Then the next question is about Canada. Carlos, have you spent much time in Canada? They do have a lot of seminars. And I know you've been there, Jorge. They do have a lot of seminars in Canada on Cuba. Correct?

CARLOS SALADRIGAS: Well, you know, Cuba seminars, it's turning into a nice little business ...

TOM GJELTEN: It is, isn't it?

CARLOS SALADRIGAS: You know, there's this issue of predicting and what's going to happen. Fact of the matter is, we don't know. We just don't know. We can only wish. And we can help. We can create an enabling environment for a transition to take place. And once we come to understand our role as that, not as directing what's going to happen in Cuba, not drawing plans to fit the transition in Cuba for Washington, D.C.; none of that is going to work. The Cubans are going to transition on their own terms, in their own time, under their own circumstances. The question is are we doing all we can to create an enabling environment for that transition to take place? And that should be the objective of U.S. policy, in my opinion.

TOM GJELTEN: Jorge, since you brought up just a couple minutes ago the quality of education and health in Cuba, isn't it true that there has been some deterioration in the delivery of those services, exactly as this lady's nephew mentioned?

JORGE DOMINGUEZ: Correct. One of the impacts of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of massive transfer of resources from the Soviet Union and to a lesser extent other former Communists in Europe, in fact has had a gigantic impact on all sorts of things in Cuba. And so whether it is laboratory equipment and the science faculties at the university, or other resources for the training of scientists, the lady is quite right as she reports. It is actually very difficult now in the University of Havana or in other Cuban universities to have the kind of training that requires the expensive equipment that the University of Havana once did have.

Similarly, by sending tens of thousands of healthcare personnel for service in other countries means that they're not available in Cuba so that the duration of time now required to see a physician necessarily lengthens. And so that would be yet another effect of these circumstances. It remains -- I think it's important to say -- still a remarkably effective healthcare system, though not one as effective as it was twenty years ago.

TOM GJELTEN: And the departure of professionals from their professional fields for economic reasons has impacted both education and healthcare.

JORGE DOMINGUEZ: Correct. Because often the skill that, say, a physician might have, a family doctor might have, the most important skill turns out to be, not the medicine learned in the faculty of medicine but the English language learned in order to learn some of the medicine in the faculty of medicine. And you would earn more by working as a maid in a tourist hotel than you would as working as a family doctor. The reason to refer to a woman is that the majority of Cuban physicians are women, another element of important change in Cuba, that as we think about how complex a society is, it's worth remembering.

CARLOS SALADRIGAS: But I think it's important to point out that the export of services, as useful as it has been to the Cuban economy, is not a sustainable economy strategy in the future.

JORGE DOMINGUEZ: Not on these circumstances.

CARLOS SALADRIGAS: Exactly, not under these ... Well, if it were to be, people would rather emigrate then and render their services elsewhere. So it is not one of the options that's on the table for a Cuba in transition that begins to open up to market forces.

TOM GJELTEN: Adriana, I don't know. Are you able to go back to Cuba? Have you been back to Cuba?

ADRIANA BOSCH: No. I'm not ... I don't know if I am now. I wasn't when I tried to go to do a film on yellow fever. I touched the one thing that is untouchable in Cuba, which is the reputation of Fidel Castro. And though I think I did a fair job of it, it wasn't really what they might have been looking for.

I want to take one question about that young man. I think you'd be welcome. I think Cubans are welcome. I think there is a great connection that is taking place. And, you know, Carlos and I were talking about this on the plane over from Miami. There is a group called Raíces de Esperanza, which, Jorge knows, it's at Harvard. It began at Harvard. And it has spread to many other universities among Cubans. The Roots of Hope is the name of the group. And part of what they do, and they do very effectively, is connect with Cubans in Cuba. And there are a lot of similarities, and they find a lot of commonalities between them in Miami or elsewhere in the United States and Cubans. Cuba has young people with a lot of the same issues, a lot of the same questions, a lot of the same problems. And I think what young Cuban exiles begin to explore is, "What is it that we can bring to Cuba that will be helpful to those young Cubans in Cuba? What is it that we know we have access to, we have learned that they have been deprived of in terms of constructing a future for Cuba?" And I have talked to many of these kids in the process of putting out the film on Fidel. I went to universities. I went to high schools. I met a lot of these young Cubans. And I have to tell you that a generation and two generations is a lot of time, and a lot of generations. And these kids really think in terms of what is it they can bring that their Cuban counterparts may find useful, and not in any way imposing their presence, and they see themselves as a potential resource for the future of Cuba, in way that I think a generation or two generations ago could not have been possible because, you know, of the pain and the separations and family conflicts and really people being on two sides of what I think is, or was, a divide, a true, deep divide.

TOM GJELTEN: Well speaking of generations -- and this is in reference to the last question -- I think with each passing year the issue of expropriated properties becomes less urgent. Because frankly, there aren't very many people still alive who were adults in sort of pre-Castro Cuba and who have properties there and have any intention of returning to them. I don't know if the rest of you agree or not. I think this issue is gradually disappearing, whereas it might have been a really difficult issue in the '60s or the '70s or even the '80s. I think at this point it has almost disappeared as a real obstacle to more peaceful relations between the divided members of the Cuban family.

CARLOS SALADRIGAS: Just on that particular issue, I think the claims on housing and things that has largely disappeared. But there are still important commercial claims, particularly intellectual property, like the Bacardi trademark and things. So these things are going to stay on the table. But, you know, look, the Cuban regime has said many times -- and I do believe they're serious about it -- they're willing to sit down and discuss those claims with the United States, particularly the claims of American companies. So that is not a significant issue.

I think the real issues to a transition are more people issues, personal issues, how we deal with it and how we in Miami can come back and embrace our brothers and sisters in Cuba in a way that facilitates the processes. And that I think is the most difficult of all the issues.

ADRIANA BOSCH: But Carlos, isn't it also that the transition will be driven by the limitations of the Cuban government itself, how far will they risk that thing we've been talking about here, survival? And I'm not saying personal survival. How far are they willing to risk that survival in implementing a transition?

To me, that has to be the greatest impediment. And a transition means, in a way, the end or a transformation of that regime in a way that is not entirely recognizable as what it was or for what it was, an inclusion of new voices and new people and really, I think, ultimately a loss of power. And to me, until the Cuban government comes to grips with the idea that, yes, the gig is up, it's been more than fifty years ...

TOM GJELTEN: Right, and the Cuban government is not there.

ADRIANA BOSCH: ... is not there.

CARLOS SALADRIGAS: But I agree with the consensus in the sense that we talk about U.S. policy and things. The real problem is the Cuban government. And we need to understand that. But, you know, it will change. I have a pillow in my living room that says, "Next Christmas in Havana." [applause]

TOM GJELTEN: I think the key point here throughout the evening was the element of uncertainty, and that we're sort of ending on the same point that we began at. I'd like to thank my panelists, and I'd like to thank you for coming. And the John F. Kennedy Library, Tom Putnam, Amy Macdonald, thank you very much. [applause]

THE END