

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In 1959 a revolution broke in Cuba. A young lawyer in his late 30s led the revolution, overthrowing the existing government. Fidel Castro came into power, replacing his predecessor Fulgencio Batista. Fidel Castro aimed his victory over a long period of struggle in the street of Havana. The Cubans have celebrated the revolution day every January 1st since then.

The administration of Fidel Castro was never replaced by other power ever since, until nearly the end of 2008 when he handed over his chair to his brother, Raul Castro, due to his decreasing health condition. By that, Fidel Castro finally stepped down from the chair of the legitimate power after ruling for 50 years. Along with his leadership in the 50 years of his administration there were many hurdles and obstacles that a country could face.

Moreover, with the fact that Fidel Castro adopts an ideology that can be said pretty unique this day because not so many other countries are still imposing this kind of ideology. Fidel Castro is a socialist. Consequently, he has not been a man who was very fond of capitalist, which is identical with the west. The fact that he overthrew his

predecessor Fulgencio Batista should already depict his dismay to the west capitalist, as Batista was known for his close relation with the west, especially the United States.

Before going into further discussion upon the current situation of the relation between Cuba and the United States, a comprehensive understanding over the long time shaped and established kind of relationship between Cuba and the United States needs to take place.

An Overview of the Past Relationship between Cuba and the United States

The Spanish began its conquest in 1511 and since the island of Cuba was found it become a dispute among some European countries like Spain and Britain. The war between Spain and Cubans for 10 years from 1868-1978 was the first war of independence, which ended with Cuba was still a part of Spain under the condition that it got more autonomous rights and share in determining its own faith. But that was just a promise that was never met by Spain.

There was another war of independence in the late 1800s. At that time the United States declared war on Spain, of which most of the outsiders knew as the American-Spanish War. But in the Cubans' case, it was an intervention in Cuba's war of independence by the United States. However, the United States and Spain still finally signed a bilateral armistice without including any representatives from Cuba. That meant Cuba was technically and practically seized by the United States, as the

United States penetrated its influence and power into Cuba through its intervention in Cuba's constitution and military force.

A long struggle finally led Cuba to its independence in 1902 with Tomas Estrada Palma as its first president. Unfortunately, the United States still had its influence referred to the fact that Cuba had previously agreed to adopt the Platt Amendment.

The Platt Amendment represented a permanent restriction upon Cuban self-determination. Cuba's constituent assembly modified the terms of the amendment and presented it to the United States only to be turned down.¹ It kept the island under US protection and gave the US the right to intervene in Cuban domestic affairs. U.S. consent was required for all Cuban treaties and trade agreements.

More significantly, the United States was given "the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty . . ." ² The Platt Amendment, an unwelcome limitation on Cuban independence, was not abrogated until 1934. Since the U.S. Government had made it clear that its military occupation would not have ended until this amendment became part of Cuban law, Cuba incorporated the Platt Amendment into its 1901 Constitution.

Then came the time when Fulgencio Batista was glorious in his peak of power, backed up by the United States, in terms of economy and arm force. But later

¹ www.historyofcuba.com (accessed March 20, 2011)

² www.u-s-history.com (accessed march 21, 2011)

in that era the Cubans learned not to believe Batista anymore, proven by the raising number of strikes against his obvious manipulation in presidential election.

In 1953 Fidel Castro had ever experience a failure on an attempt of coup upon Batista. The attack failed and Fidel and Raúl Castro were jailed, but it brought them a great deal of attention. But his mission eventually came to realization in 1959, when he succeeded in overthrowing Batista regime. Sooner after the revolution Fidel Castro took an enormous change of behavior towards the United States and other western states. It nationalized all private companies without any compensation. He practiced Confiscation as a mean of fight against capitalism from the west.

In 1961, soon after the revolution run by Fidel Castro took place, the United States broke off the diplomatic relation with Cuba. The United States' ambassador for Cuba was recalled to Washington and the United States arranged a representative at the Switzerland Embassy to manage all of the diplomatic and consular relation with Cuba. Likewise, Cuba also arranged the same thing as to provide its diplomatic and consular representative through Czechoslovakian Embassy at the United States.

The United States banned all kinds of trades with Cuba, which resulted in hardships for the Cubans with regard of its economy. Cuba has been put in such condition that it could poorly provide enough basic needs such as food and medicines for its people. Yet, Fidel Castro's survival spirit was never knocked down.

Fidel Castro's attitudes towards the United States gave no advantages at all to the uprising power since it won the Second World War. In an attempt of surviving

Cuba tightened its relation with the USSR (the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). At the time Cuba received countless aids from the USSR. The aids were in the form of commercial agreements, funds, transfer of technology in the form of scientific institution plantation, machinery and equipments.³

Since the revolution which reached a climax on 1 January 1959, Cuba has seen the attempted Bay of Pigs invasion, a few assassination attempts against Fidel Castro, the collapse of its best friend, the Soviet Union, and a decades-long US trade embargo. One by one, Cuba under the regime of Fidel Castro was considered quite effective in handling the problem, though it was not a big triumph.

Numerous assassinations attempted against Fidel Castro failed. The invasion at the Bay of Pigs, which was planned by the United States government in collaboration with CIA also ended up in failure. The objective of the invasion was to overthrow Fidel Castro from power and replace the administration with a more friendly and “democratic” successor, a government that was more beneficial for the sake of the United State’s importance, a government that was pro-western and capitalist.

Though the invasion attempt failed, Fidel Castro decided to let the USSR deploy nuclear missiles in Cuba. The crisis was subsequently resolved when the USSR agreed to remove the missiles in return for the withdrawal of the United States’ nuclear missiles from Turkey. And so on the struggle of Cuba very much depended on the USSR aids, until the time of the fall of the so-called east block, the fall of the

³ Robert S. Walter. 1996. *Soviet Economic Aid to Cuba*. Michigan: Blackwell Publishing. p.78.

USSR in 1991. The Soviet Union split into 11 independent states, dividedly based on distinct ethnic and racially separate units. By that, Cuba was no longer a recipient of aids from former state Soviet Union. It was said that that was the starting epoch of Cuban's mortal crisis.

Despite all of those hurdles, Cuba still now exists as a sovereign and legitimate state. Though, it cannot be said that Cubans have been living a very prosperous lives, as such condition is common in the early stage for countries that adopt socialism or communism as their ideology.

The leadership by Fidel Castro during its regime in Cuba, either in hardships or good times, can be said as a phenomenon. There is no doubt that Castro, leader of Cuba for 50 years, is one of the great political survivors. Ten American presidents from Eisenhower to George W Bush wanted him gone but they came and they went and he stayed, stubbornly alive, stubbornly in power.

To this fact, the urge to pick this international phenomenon as a topic to discuss appeared out of interest. Came from a number of data collections and valid information, this research is trying to elaborate the formulation of Cuba foreign policy under the regime of Fidel Castro towards the United States. By over viewing and analyzing his policies, the system of decision-making process and the related elements such as governmental structure, it is hoped that the survival of Fidel Castro regime for half a century can be explained. It also eventually leads the research to the relation of Cuba with the United States.

The ideology held by Fidel Castro is imminently brought into practice. It influenced how he managed problems, made decision and formulated some policies. However, this research will not cover the whole period of time within which Fidel Castro ran his regime. Having been considering several factors, which includes the relevancy of the content of the discussion with the purpose of this research, it only takes the period of time of 1991-2008.

Therefore, this research is entitled “The Foreign Policy of Cuba under the Regime of Fidel Castro in Dealing with the United States Embargo in the Post Cold-War Era”.

I.2 Research Problems

According to Heywood there are three worlds’ typology, which are a capitalist ‘first world’, a communist ‘second world’, and a developing ‘third world’.⁴ The first and second worlds were further divided by fierce ideological rivalry. The three worlds classification had economic, ideological, political and strategic dimensions. The first world was wedded to capitalist principles, such as the desirability of private enterprise, material incentives, and the free market.

The second world was committed to communist values such as social equality, collective endeavor and the need for centralized planning. Such ideological differences must have clear political manifestations. First-world regimes practiced

⁴ Andrew Heywood. 2002. *Politics*. New York: Palgrave Foundation. p.29.

liberal-democratic politics based on a competitive struggle for power at election time. Second world regimes were one party states, dominated by ruling communist parties.

This research mainly focuses on the relation between Cuba under the regime of Fidel Castro with the United States. Based on the above classification by Andrew Heywood, Cuba is typically the second world typology, with a phenomenal leader, Fidel Castro. He proclaimed himself as a socialist. On the other hand, the United States is a liberal state from the west that believes in the power and advantages of capitalism for humankind, by which it played the role of the first world typology.

On the one side, Cuba was a small country with limited access to sources of life empowerment after centuries of being conquered by other nations. Cuba was an infant form of state at the time though it had long before started its struggle to gain its independence. Of course, during those hard times it attained some characteristics of maturity as a nation. But still, faced with the United States, Cuba was merely a small hurdles that could be easily overstepped by the United States.

In fact, at the time the United States was in its joyous time as it turned out to be the winner of World War the Second with the rising leverage of its economy. It was at the very high concentration to put the effort of the USSR, another winner of World War the Second, in spreading communism to a halt.

In contrast to the fact, Cuba has been proven successful to survive until the present time. For the discussion of this research, it tries to seek an explanation of the survival stance by Cuba in facing the United States despite of all the obstacles,

especially after the fall of the USSR which means Cuba no longer received significant aids from its main supporter. So when it gets to the core discussion, this research will mainly analyze the foreign policy of Cuba under the regime of Fidel Castro in dealing with the embargo imposed by the United States. Hence, there will be a deeper and comprehensive elaboration of how the foreign policy towards the United States was then formed in Cuba. Then finally, along the way of the effort to understand this international phenomenon will be found several research questions.

They are:

1. What are the components in Cuba foreign policy that help to shape it?
2. How did Cuba under the regime of Fidel Castro cope with the embargo imposed by the United States?

I.3 Research Objectives

The research entitled “The Foreign Policy of Cuba under the Regime of Fidel Castro in Dealing with the United States Embargo in the Post Cold-War Era” covers the discussion that is hoped to be able to deepen one’s understanding upon this international phenomenon that has become the topic. The research may enlighten one’s interpretation towards the relation between Cuba under the regime of Fidel Castro and The United States that has become an international issue. In Accordance

to its title, this research will mainly discuss the foreign policy formulated by the administration of Fidel Castro in dealing with the embargo imposed by the United States in the post Cold-War era.

Hence, this research is written with regards to deepen the understanding and broaden the information on the process of foreign policy formulation, along with the related factors, like the decision-making process. As the discussion goes deeper, the research will hopefully give the reader a thorough answer to the research questions. This research is also written so that it can be the next source for other people who might by chance take this topic as the discussion material for the thesis or any other kinds of writings.

