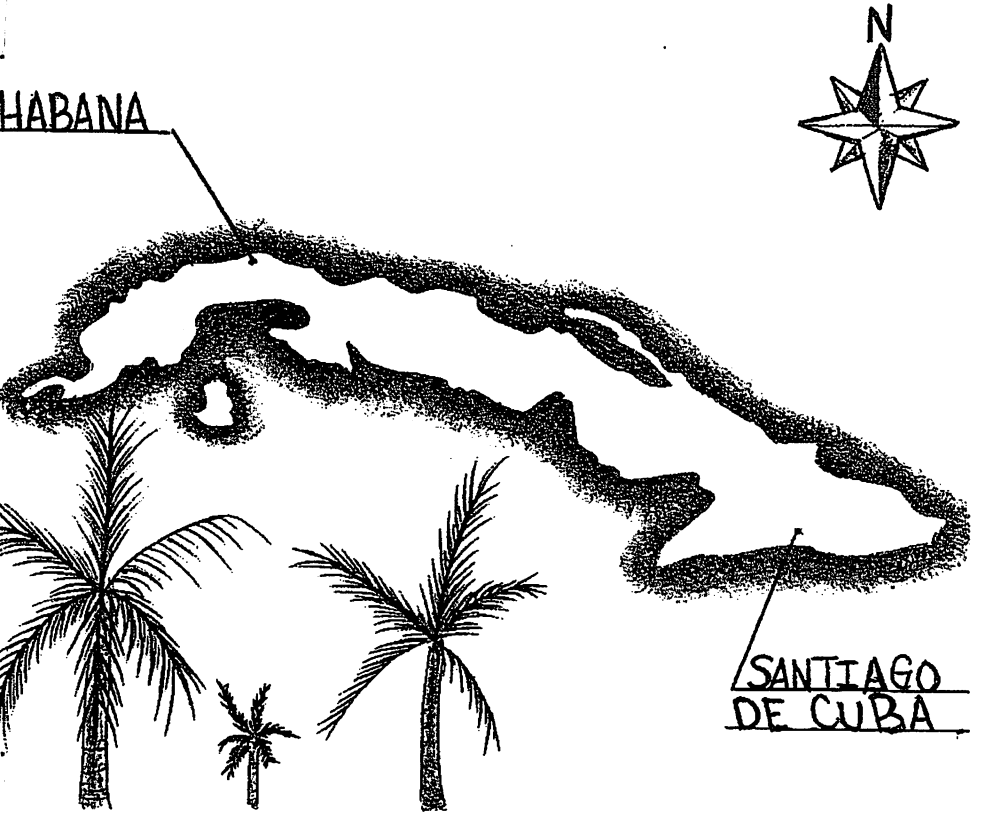
Friend or Foe?

Post-Fidel Perspectives



Authored by E.C. Thews-Roberts

Cover Art and Design by Alfredo Gonzalez

Friend or Foe?: Post-Fidel Perspectives

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to Alfredo for such a good job on this cover. I know it wasn't easy; Many, Many thanks, papo. Next, thanks being due South Chicago ABC and the tireless Anthony Runyon. Keep up the amazing job of getting the word out and spreading consciousness. Last and not least, I'd like to give two special thanks. First, a mi pueblo cubano, the most resilient gente in the western hemisphere. Second, to you, the reader. Without you to read these words, I'd simply be another voice in the wilderness.

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Friend or Foe?: Post-Fidel Perspectives

For centuries, in western histories, Cuba has been treated as an undistinguished supporting actor in major events which have shaped our today. Events such as the October Crisis[1] (U.S. history, Cuban Missile Crisis) in 1962. As then, even when Cuba and us, Cubans, are central to the issues at hand, we are still treated dismissively. One hundred and fifty years will have passed since our declaration of independence[2] (October 10, 1868) from Spanish domination. Another hundred and twenty spent resisting U.S. dominance[3] (1898). A lot has changed in the world, but much is still the same for us Cubans. In an era where U.S.-Mexico relations are dictated by a man proudly expressing xenophobia — no, hispanophobia —, blaming latinos and, specifically, Mexicans, for crime, vowing to militarize mass deportations, stoking domestic dissension, and agitating

nuclear war with North Korea. For Cuba it is a time to pay attention, reflect and confront the perils of getting in bed with the Giant to the North.

Cuba's dilemma has been both a curse and a blessing. A blessing because we've been able to escape most global embroilments and conflicts. On the flipside of the coin, considering the U.S. embargo, sanctions, damages from almost sixty years of economic starvation, lack of influence in global policy decision-making; only to name the uppermost. Our dilemma has been a curse. Though, today, perhaps for the first time, being considered an international footnote is a great gift. Cuba may be a poor, handicapped state - by and through U.S. connivance and machinations - but it is a free state. Cuba has an unparalleled vantage point on how the Giant

commiserates with friends (i.e., Mexico) and foes (i.e., North Korea) with the perspective of over twelve decades of Cuban-U.S. history and relations as backdrop. Under these auspices, we confront a post-Fidel future.

Friend or foe is the question. Unfortunately, there is no clear answer. In watching the Northern Giant interact with North Korea, we can clearly spell out the latter. Open antagonisms, blatant threats of annihilation by nuclear coupé de grâce and retaliation for not adhering to a pro-U.S. agenda. It seems as if the Northern Giant is always shaking its fists at those who displease it. Similar to Cuba, North Korea is a small country pursuing a political and socio-economic course beneficial to its population, first and foremost. Of course, this is what frustrates the United States so

greatly. The benefit of North Korea's people clashes, heavily, with that of the U.S. agenda - creating a global economy conducive to U.S. version capitalism. Since the close of the Korean War and partitioning of that country, North Korea has been unceasingly assailed; psychologically, economically, and militarily; the last, to a much lesser extent than Cuba. Two factors compel the Northern Giant to act with any form of moderation: 1) China and 2) North Korea's nuclear armaments. Parallels to the October Crisis are striking to say the least. China and North Korea are allies as Cuba and the former - U.S.S.R.[4] were. In fact, the relationships are almost familial, a big and little brother. The little brother (North Korea) gets picked on by the playground bully (the United States) until his big brother (China) shows up. Even the nuclear character of

today's conflict harks back to 1962. A nuclear arsenal, regardless, however small, is a very big equalizer in modern politics. As in 1962, while there may be some impressive brinkmanship, potential rewards versus guaranteed losses aren't sufficient to push capitalists to take that plunge. Compromise and an uneasy armistice between foes results as one or both go back to the drawing board to concoct some new master plan.

Turning to relations of the Northern Giant with friends (i.e., Mexico), we can equally spell out the opposite, as in contrary to U.S.-North Korean relationship (foe), and face too too many similarities. Friendly relations in this "friendship" are strangely more demonstrative than the open hostilities and brinkmanship shown toward

North Korea. Here is Mexico, a country of burgeoning industrial, financial, and commercial importance among world powers. A country farther along and advanced than Cuba in many areas and firmly established in global politics. Yet, the country and its people are demonized. Blame is placed on Mexicans (and latinos, in general) for a whole host of U.S. social, political, economic, and personal weaknesses or failings. From crime and drugs reaching the suburbs and beyond to high unemployment and sky-rocketing taxes. Let us ignore the fact, the U.S. political structure excludes its masses from legitimate access / opportunity for achieving sufficient livelihood; creating the need for crime - by citizens as much as, if not more than, that by immigrants and latinos. Let us also ignore that were there

not a voracious U.S. appetite for mind-altering substances and the government did not benefit from an intoxicated, submissive populace, the multiple "drug epidemics" would not be present considerations. Furthermore, allow us to also ignore that latinos and latino immigrants often times take on the most menial, low-paying jobs, those which most U.S. citizens deem below their dignity. Finally, allow us to, again, ignore that taxes rise far more because of constant, unnecessary increases in governmental spending on superfluous projects, public welfare for U.S. citizens too proud to accept the undignified labor accomplished by legal and illegal immigrants than by any "ill effects" of mass latino immigration or what not.

Even if we could ignore all of that and more. It would still be striking the thinly veiled animosity evinced towards a "friend." Compared to relations with North Korea, only the blatant threats of nuclear annihilation are missing.

In the last instance, U.S.-Mexico relations are similar to that of a bully and a "favored" tag-along. Favored or not, a bully is a bully is always a bully. Which means a favored tag-along is still very liable to catch the brunt of a tantrum. U.S.-North Korean relations are a bully with the rest of the world. Thus, the real question for Cuba isn't whether or not friendship or foeship has the greater benefits or negative consequences. Rather, whether we want to be a favored punching bag

or a regular punching bag. Obviously, in this age of globalization (i.e., U.S. capitalism spreading nation by nation) there is no such thing as "equal footing" with the Northern Giant. Even the United Kingdom and Canada are seen by U.S. officials as subordinate powers. Considering this, it would be far better to plot Cuba's developmental course — post-Fidel — as far wide of U.S. involvement/investment as is possible, given our proximity. For if it is a choice of evils? Then, chosen should be neither; Make a third option. This is exactly what Cuba must do or face suffering a future fate far worse than Puerto Rico's current states of crisis and decline.

About the Pamphlet's Author:

E.C. Theus-Roberts is a cuban-american historiographer, author of "The Subjection-Manipulation Cycle: An Abstract and Other Essays" (available at www.prisonsfoundation.org; search "Theus Roberts"), writer of mostly nonfiction, some short fiction, and an incarcerated activist of latino, prisoner and human rights. He is currently working on his second book of nonfiction, one on cuban-U.S. relations and history.

To contact him, you can write to:

E.C. Theus-Roberts
D.O.C. #156128
Colorado State Penitentiary
P.O. Box 777
Cañon City, CO 81215

About the Illustrator:

Alfredo Gonzalez, born in Los Angeles, California in 1984, is thankful for being able to partake in creating this pamphlet and presentation of a great political view. As the cover artist he also provided much needed professional advice. If you have any questions or interest in his artwork, contact him at:

Alfredo Gonzalez
D.O.C. #142066
P.O. Box 777
Cañon City, CO 81215;

or via facebook @ Alfredo p. Gonzalez

Thanks for reading this pamphlet!

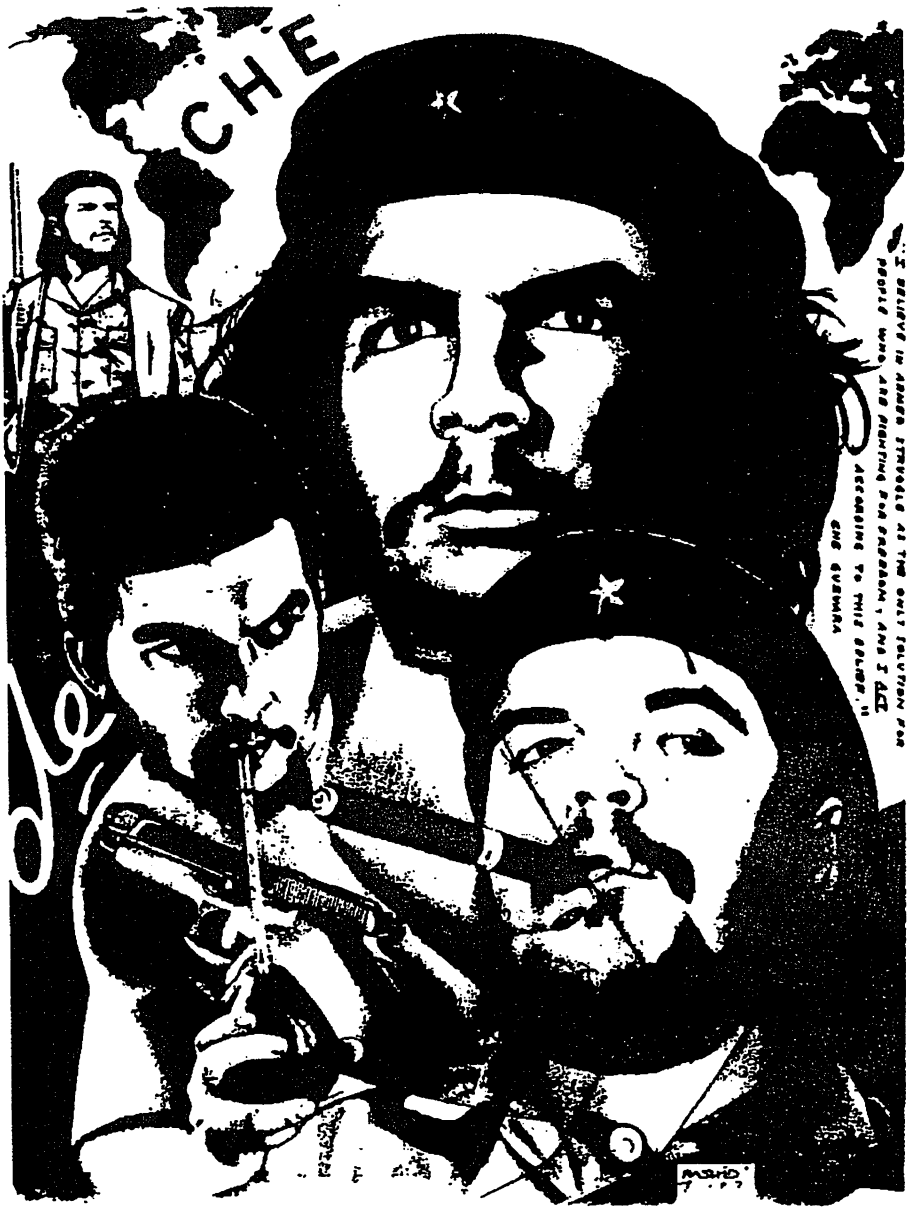
Notes:

1. October Crisis was the hottest point of the Cold War, post-World War II U.S.-Soviet conflict which lasted until the Berlin Wall was demolished in 1989, that almost caused a nuclear World War III.

2. October 10, 1868, day in which Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, a cuban criollo (i.e., landed gentleman), freed his slaves and launched the first armed, popular revolt against spanish rule.

3. In 1898, at the tail end of Cuba's second War of Independence, following the 7 years War of 1868, off the harbor of La Habana, the U.S.S. Maine, mysteriously, exploded and sunk. Following this the U.S. entered the fray, obliterated the waning spanish military might and has since supplanted it in attempting to control and dictate cuban life.

4. U.S.S.R., Soviet Union pre-1991, Russian Federation post-1991 to present year 2020.



South Chicago ABC
Zine Distro
P.O. Box 721
Homewood, IL 60430