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The End of the Soviet Union Revisited. Evidence from Ministerial de Relaciones Exteriores de Cuba (MINREX)

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ABSTRACT

This article uses a qualitative historical analysis to scrutinise previously underutilised documents housed in the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Cuba (MINREX) archive in Havana to examine Cuban-Soviet relations during 1991, the final tumultuous year of close Havana-Moscow relations. Specific focus will be given to the MINREX reaction to the August 1991 coup in Moscow and its aftermath. This article will offer several new findings. Principally that throughout 1991 MINREX officials firstly attempted to affect the bilateral relationship by both lobbying Soviet officials while in Cuba, and they proposed utilising glasnost for their own purposes. This proposal was despite a conceptual aversion to the Soviet process. Secondly, MINREX officials endeavoured to lobby Russian officials, including trying to facilitate a meeting with Andrei Kozyrev the Russian Foreign Minister. These endeavours were notwithstanding the adverse reporting of Boris Yeltsin, the Russian President, and his actions during 1991 in both the MINREX documents and Cuban state media.

Introduction

On 19 August 1991 the Cuban state newspaper *Granma* published a terse 33-word Cuban government statement on the coup which had taken place in Moscow. Mikhail Gorbachev had been removed from power with Gennady Yanayev assuming the position of Acting President of the Soviet Union. The statement noted, ‘The declaration stated that due to the ill-health of M. Gorbachev to perform the functions of the President of the Soviet Union, all functions of the President of the USSR have been transferred’.¹ Official Cuban comment on the coup materialised ten days later once it had been defeated. The Cuban government statement of 29 August 1991 was both very different in nature from its 19 August 1991 statement and acerbic in its content. The 29 August 1991 statement directly criticised the situation in the Soviet Union which it attributed to the number of Soviet/Russian politicians

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who favoured the ideas of the market economy. In comparison the statement noted that very few politicians were attempting to preserve the Soviet Union.²

This Cuban government response to the August 1991 coup in Moscow was indicative of the 'wait and see' policy that they employed in the late 1980s and early 1990s towards change within the Soviet Union and the Soviet reform processes, instigated by Gorbachev in the mid-1980s. Ideologically Havana may have disliked what was taking place in the Soviet Union, but the Cuban government waited for events in the Soviet Union to play out before passing comment for fear of jeopardising the bilateral relationship, and consequently the Cuban Revolution.³ Moreover, the failure of the August 1991 coup in Moscow also ended the influence of the powerful 'Cuban lobby' in Soviet politics because many of the Cuban Revolution's staunchest advocates within the Soviet ruling elite were members of the coup.⁴ With their defeat, reform within Havana-Moscow relations accelerated, evidenced with Gorbachev's historic announcement of 11 September 1991 to remove the final Soviet troops from Cuba.⁵

These events detailed above are emblematic of the final tumultuous year of close Havana-Moscow relations which ceased with the implosion of the Soviet Union in December 1991. Significantly the outcome of the end of close Havana-Moscow relations was that, '... Cuba's foreign policy and the Island's position in global politics have been altered',⁶ which impacted the region's political dynamic with the Cuban Revolution striving to survive the loss of its largest trading partner.⁷ Although this was the case, the end of both close Havana-Moscow relations and the Cold War in general in Latin America, were not part of the process which took place in the late 2010s when scholars began to revisit the Cold War in the region. Subsequent publications brought new perspectives that went beyond geopolitics and provided insights into culture and religion amongst other topics.⁸

The previous scholarship published on the end of close Havana-Moscow relations was formulated from the use of government speeches, media reports and Cuban academic output of the time.⁹ Additionally, in the intervening period the Cuban leadership have made little comment concerning this era of the bilateral relationship.¹⁰ This earlier academic output detailed the increasing strains within the bilateral relationship during 1991 which resulted from 1) Cuba's decreasing geostrategic significance for Moscow due to the improvement in Soviet-US relations and 2) the effects, several of which were unforeseen, of the Soviet reform processes of the mid-1980s which were very different in nature to the policies being pursued by the Cuban government at this time.¹¹ Specifically, the new openness in Soviet society which *glasnost* provided introduced a new dynamic to the bilateral relationship. Rhoda Rabkin has stated, '... that Soviet repudiation of the Brezhnev era subtly legitimises a more critical attitude towards questions of leadership inside Cuba itself'.¹² In 1991 the bilateral relationship, although substantially reconfigured,

continued to function which has been perceived as being pivotal to the Cuban government's response to the August 1991 coup in Moscow, noted above.¹³ Simply, as events in Moscow played out, Havana could not potentially compromise the bilateral relationship and subsequently the Cuban Revolution by publicly supporting the losing side in the coup. In short, the Cuban government's aforementioned 'wait and see' policy towards the Soviet internal situation.

Notwithstanding either the Cuban government's 'wait and see' policy, or the Cuban media not printing analysis of events in the Soviet Union (further examined below), prior scholarship has highlighted that Cuban citizens were cognisant of events in the Soviet Union.¹⁴ This cognisance arose from the Cuban press publishing critical Soviet media reports of events in the Soviet Union. This type of Cuban media reporting was particularly evident concerning Boris Yeltsin's increasing prominence in Soviet/Russian politics.¹⁵ Jorge Domínguez has posited that such reporting was underpinned by the Cuban government attempting to educate the Island's population on lessons from the historic changes occurring in the socialist bloc.¹⁶ Additionally, academic attention has also concentrated on the previously detailed acceleration of reform within the relationship which took place after the defeat of the August 1991 coup which simultaneously dismembered the powerful 'Cuban lobby'.¹⁷ In sum, the academic literature has focused on the Cuban dislike of the Soviet reform processes, the negative reporting (conducted via publishing Soviet media reports) of Yeltsin's increasing significance in Soviet/Russian politics and that the defeat of the 'Cuban lobby' in August 1991 quickened reform within the relationship.

This article will use a qualitative historical analysis to examine Havana-Moscow relations throughout 1991. Specifically, the article will scrutinise previously underutilised documents in the Ministerial de Relaciones Exteriores de Cuba (MINREX) archive on Avenida de los Presidentes in Havana that focus on the Soviet internal situation and Cuban-Soviet relations.¹⁸ Therefore, this original contribution will 1) enhance our understanding of the end of close Havana-Moscow relations which was central to the Cold War both in general and in Latin America specifically, and 2) illuminate MINREX's approach to Cuban-Soviet relations in more granular detail. Consequently, this paper will provide two suppositions. Firstly, that throughout 1991 MINREX officials attempted to affect Cuban-Soviet relations by both lobbying Soviet officials while in Cuba and by proposing the use of *glasnost* for their own purposes. Secondly, that MINREX officials strove to cultivate a relationship with the top echelons of the Russian ruling elite even while the Soviet Union continued to exist. These endeavours were striking due to the aforementioned Cuban media's adverse reporting of Yeltsin during 1991 and the negative nature of the language used within the MINREX documents towards him.

To illustrate these arguments, this essay's first section will provide a brief overview of Cuban-Soviet relations before focusing on the reform process initiated in both countries in the mid-1980s. The first section will also study the impact of these reforms on the bilateral relationship and the Cuban government's response to the Soviet reforms, including the Cuban press reaction. Sections two and three examine the available documents in the MINREX archive from January 1991 to the August 1991 coup and those from 19 to 29 August 1991, respectively. The paper concludes by scrutinising the documents in the MINREX archive from the end of August until December 1991.

Cuban-Soviet relations and reform processes

In March 1985 when Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Cold War superpower rivalry continued to dominate international politics and Cuba had been an integral part of the socialist bloc for over two decades. The role of the United States and Cold War geopolitics were also fundamental to the inception of Cuban-Soviet relations in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution. Washington had dominated Cuba, both economically and politically, from the time of Cuban independence from Spain in December 1898.¹⁹ Due to Cuba's colonial history and the nature of Cuban-US relations from 1898 to 1959 nationalism was a key pillar of the Cuban Revolution. Consequently, the new government in Havana wished to radically alter its relationship with Washington. Fidel Castro would later comment, 'We would not in any event have ended up as close friends. The U.S. had dominated us for too long. The Cuban Revolution was determined to end that domination'.²⁰ The revolutionary Cuban government began a nationalisation process of US property with its political programme becoming ever more progressive. Washington reacted with hostility towards the termination of its authority. Evident economically with the creation of sanctions and politically in April 1961 with the failed Bay of Pigs invasion.²¹

However, the result of the bipolar nature of the international system of the time was that if Havana's relationship with Washington deteriorated an improved relationship with Moscow was paramount. The Kremlin could provide economic and military security for the Cuban Revolution against the above noted US aggression.²² Moreover, the Soviet economic and political models appealed to the Cuban government's desire to create a new society on the Island.²³ In addition, the personal affinity that blossomed between Castro and Nikhita Khrushchev further aided fledgling Cuban-Soviet relations. For Moscow the advent of the Cuban Revolution coincided with its increased interest in the Developing World.²⁴ When this is combined with Cuba's shared history with the US in the first half of the twentieth century and its location, a mere 90 miles from the United States, Cuba had great geostrategic

importance for Moscow. Blossoming Cuban-Soviet relations demonstrated Moscow's ability to challenge US hegemony in Latin America. Additionally, the burgeoning relationship also answered Chinese accusations of Soviet revisionism.²⁵

Over the next 30 years many of these same pressures and forces continued to impact the relationship. Moreover, others came to the fore. After December 1961, and Fidel Castro's proclamation that he and thus the Cuban Revolution was Marxist-Leninist, this included the vernacular of Marxist-Leninism. Also prominent amongst these new pressures and forces was a legacy of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Tension appeared in the relationship due to a Cuban feeling of betrayal, the result of the agreement brokered between Moscow and Washington to remove the nuclear missiles from the island as the decision was made without prior consultation with Cuban authorities. Cuban indignation was intensified due to connotations with the Spanish American War in the summer of 1898.²⁶ However, Moscow could not permit the Cuban Revolution to fail because if it did the humiliation suffered by the Soviet Union at the end of October 1962 would have intensified. Likewise, the colossal Soviet investment in Cuba which over time increased exponentially and took multiple forms including economic, education and joint ventures would have been wasted if Cuban-Soviet relations were severed.²⁷ Something which Moscow could not afford to happen. In the mid-to-late 1960s differences on the correct path to socialism in Latin America materialised between Havana and Moscow, but from the mid-1970s Cuba and the Soviet Union had joint foreign policy interests in Africa.²⁸ Moreover, the opening of a Soviet intelligence installation at Lourdes outside Havana strengthened Cuba's geostrategic significance for Moscow. Additionally, due to the almost frozen nature of Cuban-US relations Soviet economic and military assistance remained key for Havana. In the early 1980s the Soviet leadership may have informed Raúl Castro that the Soviet Union would not deploy military personnel to defend the Cuban Revolution, but Cuba did receive state-of-the-art Soviet military hardware.²⁹ Furthermore, by the mid-1980s bilateral trade reached 10 billion pesos, making Cuba the Soviet Union's seventh largest trading partner.³⁰

Cuban-Soviet relations were affected by a series of reforms that Gorbachev instigated in the Soviet Union while he was General Secretary of the CPSU (March 1985 to December 1991). The rationale for these reforms was to try and resolve a myriad of problems that faced the Soviet Union. These problems included a leadership that had become a gerontocracy, Soviet science and technology had become increasingly antiquated in comparison to the West and the Soviet economy had stagnated. Moscow's military spending only exacerbated the dire Soviet economic situation.³¹ However, the Soviet reforms impacted the bilateral relationship in several unforeseen and unexpected ways which left it fundamentally altered even prior to the disintegration of the

Soviet Union in December 1991 that simultaneously ended close Havana-Moscow relations.

The reforms also caused momentous change in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In late 1989 a dramatic reconfiguration of the political landscape in Eastern Europe occurred. Socialist governments were removed from power due to a combination of eroding legitimacy in socialism, increasing nationalism, economic reasons and the region having less geostrategic significance for Moscow (repeated for Cuba's geostrategic significance for the Kremlin) as superpower relations improved.³² These political transformations in Eastern Europe resulted in increased calls for further reform within the Soviet Union.³³ In 1991, this led to a series of events which culminated in the collapse of the Soviet Union.

At the start of 1991 Moscow employed military force in the Baltic Republics to restrain political unrest and calls for independence. In March 1991 a referendum on the Soviet Union's future was held which, in Russia, included questions about the creation of an elected Russian Presidency. Subsequently, as noted, Yeltsin became the elected President of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (12 June 1991). Later that summer, during the August coup, 11 Soviet republics declared independence from Moscow. Additionally, the coup's defeat both ended the influence of conservatives within the Soviet state and consequently increased reform. This included both the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies dissolving itself and the CPSU being outlawed. In December 1991 the Soviet Union was disbanded and the Alma Ata Protocols agreed, creating the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).³⁴

Further complicating bilateral Cuban-Soviet relations was that the Soviet reforms of the mid-1980s appeared very different to the campaign of rectification of errors that Castro introduced in April 1986 to solve Cuba's own internal problems.³⁵ Both the Soviet and Cuban reforms were designed to reinvigorate their respective systems, but as *perestroika* and *glasnost* opened up the Soviet system, the Cuban campaign of rectification of errors appeared a retrenchment to ideals from the 1960s. On the differences between the Cuban and Soviet reform processes Domínguez has argued, 'From late 1984 and especially during 1986, President Fidel Castro's government adopted a Rectification Process (RP) that deemphasized the role of market forces associated with *perestroika*, thus nipping reform-communist ideas in the bud'.³⁶

As noted, *glasnost* introduced increased levels of scrutiny to the relationship. Bilateral economic links and the Cuban economy received specific focus. Moreover, in 1990 the Castro brothers' personal lives were even derided in the Soviet media. This drew a Cuban government rebuttal from José Ramón Balaguer, the Cuban ambassador to Moscow.³⁷ *Glasnost* intensified the pressure on Gorbachev to further reform the bilateral relationship. Simply, with Cuba's geostrategic significance for Moscow decreasing, many within Soviet

society could not understand why bilateral economic ties remained unreformed while the Soviet population endured economic difficulties as *perestroika* failed to improve the Soviet economy. This was evident in May/June 1989 at the Congress of People's Deputies held in Moscow when the radical economist N.P. Shmelyev was highly disparaging of Cuban-Soviet economic relations.³⁸ This increased criticism within Soviet society concerning the bilateral relationship and the Cuban Revolution strengthened the resolve of the 'Cuban lobby' to protect the status quo, thus further increasing the pressure on Gorbachev from both sides.

Perestroika and changes in Eastern Europe gravely affected the Cuban economy. Additionally, the 1991 Cuban-Soviet trade agreement, signed in late December 1990, further altered the bilateral relationship. This trade agreement differed radically from previous trade agreements as its duration was only one year and not five years as had been the norm since the mid-1960s. Additionally, trade was to be conducted at world market prices, a first for the relationship.³⁹ In short, Moscow wished its relationship with Cuba to resemble the relationships it had with other countries. Cole Blasier has argued, 'The new principle underlying Soviet aid to Cuba was mutual or reciprocal interest – a polite way of saying that the relationship should no longer mainly benefit Cuba'.⁴⁰ In 1991 bilateral trade fell dramatically, both because of this new trade agreement and Soviet internal economic problems.⁴¹

As detailed above, the August 1991 coup in Moscow impacted the bilateral relationship politically because it ended the power of the 'Cuban lobby' and accelerated reform in the bilateral relationship. Evident on 11 September 1991 when Gorbachev announced the removal of the final Soviet troops from Cuba. Gorbachev's announcement ended the 30-year Soviet military presence in Cuba, giving it huge symbolic significance. Moreover, this statement was made both without prior consultation between Havana and Moscow and during a live press conference with the US Secretary of State, James Baker. The Castro administration compared Gorbachev's decision to the aforementioned betrayal that it had felt at the end of the Cuban Missile Crisis.⁴² A MINREX statement on 11 September 1991 declared, 'The public statement made by President Gorbachev was made with no prior consultation, this constitutes unreasonable behaviour and is contrary to the international standards of agreements signed between states'.⁴³ However, at the 4th Congress of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) in October 1991, Castro was not excessively critical of the Kremlin's policies and highlighted that the bilateral relationship remained functioning.⁴⁴ The relationship's continued operation, although substantially changed, underpinned Castro's comments.

The perception of Havana's reaction to reform and change within the Soviet Union was negative, resulting from Castro's two highly critical aforementioned speeches in April and July 1989. Moreover, in late 1989 the pro-reform Soviet periodicals *Russian News* and *Sputnik* were banned for sale in

Cuba as they were 'against the policies of the USSR and socialism. They are for the ideas of imperialism, change and the counterrevolution'.⁴⁵ Additionally, the above cited MINREX statement concerning Gorbachev's announcement to remove the final troops from Cuba was one of the very few times when Gorbachev was directly criticised. In the main, as detailed, no direct Cuban statement was made on the Soviet situation and its effects for Cuba. Moreover, as noted, the Cuban press also contained no analysis or comment on these topics.

However, as specified, the Cuban media did print negative Soviet media reports on certain events in the Soviet Union, particularly evident concerning Yeltsin's rise to prominence in Soviet/Russian politics. In February 1991 *Granma* printed both General Sergey Akhromeyev, military adviser to Gorbachev, and Gorbachev's own criticism of Yeltsin, whom they blamed for creating the risk of the break-up of the Soviet Union. Moreover, in the aftermath of Yeltsin's victory in the Russian Presidential elections in June 1991, *Granma* reprinted the *Pravda* article 'What winds now?' which disparaged Yeltsin's policies.⁴⁶ Furthermore, on 23 August 1991 *Granma* conveyed the failure of the coup in Moscow by printing Yeltsin's report of these events.⁴⁷ Again, no official Cuban government statement was made when in the aftermath of the coup the CPSU itself was suspended. Instead, *Granma* printed an article that focused on Gennady Zyuganov's (leader of the Communist Party of Russia) reaction. This article stated, 'The suspension of the activities of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was considered here arbitrary and illegal by Gennady Zyuganov'.⁴⁸

Significant change occurred in Cuban-Soviet relations during Gorbachev's tenure as General Secretary of the CPSU. Change resulted primarily from Cuba's decreasing geostrategic significance for Moscow and adverse effects, several of which were unanticipated, of the reforms Gorbachev instigated within the Soviet Union in the mid-1980s. The bilateral relationship was radically altered, but crucially it continued to function. Consequently, Cuban government's public displeasure was kept to a minimum. Moreover, the Cuban press did not print analysis on Soviet events. However, the Cuban media did publish negative Soviet press reports of events in the Soviet Union (they were particularly scathing of Yeltsin). Due to the state-run nature of the island's press further evidencing Cuban government unhappiness at these events whilst providing the Cuban population with awareness of them.

MINREX and January to mid-August 1991

As detailed, *glasnost* introduced a new dynamic within Cuban-Soviet relations with Soviet media reporting of both the bilateral relationship and Cuban Revolution becoming increasingly negative. Throughout 1991 several documents within the MINREX archive noted Cuban disapproval. On

29 January 1991 Alfonso Fraga, Deputy Foreign Minister, sent a letter marked 'secret' to Isidoro Malmierca, Cuban Foreign Minister, in which he described the meeting that had taken place the previous day in Havana with Nikolai Paltychev, President of the Supreme Soviet Subcommittee on Education, Yanenko Petrovich, Director of the Institute of Construction, and V. Grigorivich, Vice-President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences of Education. In this meeting the Cuban participants raised the issue of 'The hostile reporting of Cuba amongst various publications'.⁴⁹ Furthermore, on 14 February 1991 Ambassador Balaguer sent a report classified as 'secret' on the Soviet internal situation to Malmierca that was also sent to Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, member of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party, and Carlos Aldana, Head of the Department of Ideology and the Department of International Relations. This report included seven pages detailing Soviet print, radio and television media reporting of Cuba and joint press collaborations between the two countries. The report stated, '*Komsomolskaya Pravda* is now critical of our Revolution, with on this occasion the Managua correspondent A. Teplink heading a group of counterrevolutionaries who are working against our country'.⁵⁰ Highly significantly, the report also suggested that it was important for Cuban journalists in the Soviet Union to ask questions about the visit of the 'Mas Canosa group' to Moscow.⁵¹ Jorge Mas Canosa, leader of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), was due to visit Moscow in 1991 in an attempt to cultivate links with the Soviet and Russian leaderships and lobby for further reform in Havana-Moscow relations. This visit was momentous as it was the first time that a Cuban-American, or Cuban opposition leader, had visited Moscow.

On 19 February 1991 a memorandum classified as 'confidential' was sent to Fraga from Jorge Martí Martínez, MINREX personnel and future Cuban ambassador to the Russian Federation, which focused on Cuban-Soviet relations in the period from 1988 to 1992. This memorandum outlined changes in Soviet foreign policy but highlighted that sections of the Soviet ruling elite continued to defend the Cuban Revolution within the Soviet political system. Significantly, the report then stated that MINREX officials should utilise the opportunity of Soviet Foreign Ministry officials being in Cuba to make them aware of the Cuban situation. The report detailed that these endeavours would increase the number of 'friends' which the Cuban Revolution had in prominent positions in Moscow.⁵² In short, Cuban attempts to lobby Soviet officials.

As detailed, throughout 1991 MINREX officials received documents focusing on the Soviet internal situation with several reports concentrating on the 17 March 1991 referendum on the future of the Soviet Union. These reports concluded that several Soviet republics, including the Baltic States, boycotting the referendum would prevent issues within the Soviet Union being resolved.⁵³ Moreover, on 18 April 1991 the first of a series of reports entitled 'Sobre La Situación en la Unión Soviética' arrived in Havana. The

18 April 1991 report stated that the deteriorating Soviet internal situation was causing a 'paralysis of central power' and that rumours abounded that the position of the General Secretary of the CPSU could be abolished.⁵⁴ Interestingly, the report also noted the interest which the United States was taking in these events, Yeltsin's role within them and how Yeltsin agitated for further change.⁵⁵

In the spring/summer of 1991 Martin Mora, Director of the Cuban Press Department, sent two memorandums to Fraga detailing individual meetings which had taken place with Sergei Kutikov and Alexandr Moiseev, the TASS and Pravda correspondents in Cuba, respectively. At both meetings Cuban displeasure at Soviet media reporting of the Cuban Revolution was articulated. Moreover, at the meeting with Moiseev, Mora complained vehemently about the journalist Manuel Peñalver's 26 July 1991 *Pravda* article which 'offered reflections that were divergent from the Cuban situation'.⁵⁶

Further evidence of the altered Soviet internal situation was apparent with Yeltsin's election as the President of the Russian Federation in June 1991. In a note of congratulations sent to Yeltsin, Castro stated, 'I express to you the Cuban hope of continuing to work in strengthening ties with Russia', but pointedly added that Russia was 'an integral part of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics' with which Cuba had longstanding links.⁵⁷ Moreover, Mario Rodríguez Martínez, MINREX personnel, sent a letter dated 13 August 1991 to Malmierca. The letter further detailed change within the Soviet political system, tension between various Soviet republics and that a resolution to this political situation was expected when Gorbachev returned from holiday and met Yeltsin.⁵⁸ Malmierca received this letter six days prior to the coup in Moscow. However, the coup prevented Gorbachev and Yeltsin from meeting.

The documents in the MIREX archive that are available for January to mid-August 1991 illuminate the complex and fast-changing nature of events in the Soviet Union. The documents also demonstrate that Cuban officials attempted to affect the relationship. Firstly, by lobbying Soviet officials while in Cuba. Secondly, MINREX personnel proposed to utilise the new openness within Soviet society to champion Cuba's own position, achieved by Cuban media asking questions about Mas Canosa's trip to Moscow. The proposed use of the Cuban media in such a way was despite a Cuban government dislike of *glasnost*. Moreover, the documents include detail on Yeltsin's role in the changing Soviet internal situation which are in accordance with the Cuban media reporting, conducted via publishing negative Soviet press reports of the Russian leader. However, the note of congratulations sent from Castro to Yeltsin on becoming the Russian President would suppose a Cuban desire to strengthen relations with Russia. Diplomatic protocol may be important in Castro's sentiments, but the congratulatory note pointedly stated that Russia was an integral part of

the Soviet Union. Yeltsin's importance in Soviet/Russian politics was further highlighted by the report that MINREX personnel expected a resolution to the August 1991 Soviet political situation when Gorbachev returned from holiday and met Yeltsin. As noted, the coup prevented this meeting taking place.

19 to 29 August 1991

On 19 August 1991 Alcibíades Hidalgo, First Vice-Foreign Minister, received the first report focusing on the coup in Moscow. It was marked 'confidential' and stated that the preservation of Soviet security was the driving force behind the coup. The report also listed the members of the junta, their political position and if they had visited Cuba in the months preceding the coup, which could suggest a degree of empathy with the Cuban Revolution. Regarding Oleg Baklanov, First Vice-President of Defense, the report described him as, 'First Vice-President of Defense, former member of the Central Committee of the CPSU for the military industrial complex, visited Cuba last winter as part of the Soviet delegation celebrating the 30th anniversary of bilateral relations'.⁵⁹ As noted previously the eight members of the Emergency Committee were some of the most prominent members of the 'Cuban lobby'. Additionally, the report stated, 'The reaction of Yeltsin was to start civil disobedience and call for insubordination against the new authorities, and to contact the Lithuanian leader Lamberguis to demand further reform'.⁶⁰ These proposals were the Lithuanian declaration of independence. The report's conclusion on the coup was, 'For Cuba these events should not lead to a change in the political situation, and in the future should stabilise relations, because the forces which have taken control are in favour of the traditional position with our country'.⁶¹ However, the report also suggested that bilateral trade could be negatively affected by the degree of uncertainty which surrounded the Soviet situation.⁶²

Hidalgo received a second confidential report dated 19 August 1991 which primarily provided an update on events in Moscow and how the Emergency Committee were restoring order. The report concluded

In the current situation two possible scenarios are possible

- (1) Due to the seriousness of the situation, and public opinion, we have to be prepared for the subsequent disappearance, either physically or in reality, of the current political model.
- (2) If the present situation continues, a leader sympathetic to the Emergency Committee may emerge, but it is not impossible that they may also have some ideas that are contrary to the Committee.⁶³

The two reports that MINREX officials received on 19 August 1991 demonstrated the uncertainty surrounding the situation in Moscow as the second report was more circumspect in content than the first.

On 26 August 1991 Part 9 of these reports was sent to the Cuban Foreign Ministry and was also marked 'confidential'. It focused on the extraordinary session of the Supreme Soviet which met as a result of the coup and how Gorbachev wished to implement a number of reforms. These reforms included using a floating exchange rate regime for the rouble. The report concluded, 'However, it appears that the session of the Soviet was not examining core issues facing the country, those which are contrary to Yeltsin's, whose absence from the debates in the Soviet complicated the decisions made'.⁶⁴

The following day, 27 August 1991, part 10 of this series of reports was received which examined in more detail the Supreme Soviet meeting. This report outlined how various Russian and Soviet institutions would interact with each other.⁶⁵ The report also detailed that Soviet republics had continued to declare independence (including the Ukraine and Moldova) and that 'Apparently, to save the Treaty of the Union, Gorbachev has agreed to the independence of the republics'.⁶⁶ The Treaty of Union was the document that underpinned the Soviet Union's existence. Moreover, the report declared,

the remodeling of the parliament, has serious implications and the potential to produce new [political] figures in a distinctly reconfigured political arena. Moreover, the abolition of the special powers granted against the President of the country, which reduced Gorbachev's power, was likely the work of the Russian President Yeltsin.

The approval of the suspension of the CPSU's activities endorses the actual situation in the country. The final outcome will depend on how the matter of the constitution is presented and analysed.⁶⁷

The report also noted that the Kazakh President was using Gorbachev and Yeltsin's different political positions to demand further reform. The report then detailed further change taking place in various republics including how the Ukraine planned to create its own armed forces and that the Lithuanian Ministry of Interior were '... ordering the KGB to disarm'.⁶⁸

The complex situation in Moscow was further evident in part 11 of the reports entitled 'Sobre La Situación en la Unión Soviética', dated 28 August 1991. This report noted that the result of the coup was that 'the anti-communist hysteria has continued', apparent in television news reporting. However, notably the report added that several people had criticised the perceived opportunist nature of Yeltsin's activities. These people believed that Yeltsin had attempted to increase his own power by undermining the Soviet Union's existence.⁶⁹

The available documents which MINREX officials received during the 10-day period between the two Cuban government statements noted at the start of this article contain great detail on the tumultuous events unfolding in the

Soviet Union. Additionally, these documents theorised possible scenarios concerning the internal Soviet situation, but with one exception did not offer opinions on the outcome of the coup. This exception was the first report which MINREX officials received on 19 August 1991 which stated that the events in Moscow could stabilise Cuban-Soviet relations due to the members of the coup's likely sympathy towards the Cuban Revolution. Nonetheless, the documents are highly critical of Yeltsin, which will be discussed below, but supportive of Gorbachev. Moreover, despite key members of the coup having longstanding links to the Cuban Revolution (these links are recorded in the MINREX documents) there is no evidence of Cuban endeavours to affect the bilateral relationship during this period. Such a scenario is not unexpected because the coup was underpinned by a desire to preserve Soviet security. Simply, a resolution to the internal Soviet political situation was required before changes in foreign policy could materialise.

The coup's aftermath

In early to mid-September 1991 the complicated and conflicting situation which MINREX officials faced during 1991 concerning Cuban-Soviet relations was further apparent. On 3 September 1991 MINREX officials received part 15 of the reports on the Soviet internal situation, which predominantly focused on changes in the Soviet Foreign Ministry. Most notably Boris Pankin's appointment as Soviet Foreign Minister; on taking office he immediately refuted the rumour that 30 Soviet ambassadors would be recalled to Moscow. The report then annotated personnel changes before concentrating on the promotion of Vladimir Petrovski to Deputy Foreign Minister, stating that this was '... positive in regard to the viable continuation of our links and inter-ministerial collaborations'.⁷⁰ The report then detailed Petrovski's links to Cuba dated to his involvement in the Soviet delegation to the United Nations in 1960, at which Castro had famously met Khrushchev for the first time.⁷¹ However, contrary to Soviet personnel in prominent political positions in Moscow with long-term links to the Cuban Revolution was the information contained within Part 17 of the reports on the Soviet internal situation, dated 16 September 1991. This report primarily concentrated on Soviet media reporting of Cuba's reaction to Gorbachev's 11 September 1991 announcement to remove the final Soviet troops from Cuba. The Soviet media believed Havana's response had 'shown the best of Cuba's propaganda "enemies search" policy, referring to the allusion of North American hostility for Cuban security'.⁷² This both directly criticised Havana's fear of a US threat to Cuban national security, and that this concern was constructed by the Cuban government for its own political purposes.

On 7 October 1991 Raúl Castro received a memo from Hidalgo which detailed a recent meeting with Boris Kolomyakov, the KGB's representative

in Cuba. Much of this report focused on an appraisal of the Soviet/Russian political situation and Yeltsin's role within it. The report noted the increasing influence of capitalist tendencies within Soviet/Russian politics with Yeltsin being described as a politician of the 'West'. Furthermore, it was believed that Yeltsin had become surrounded by a small group of associates from his home region of Sverdlovsk who are referred to as 'the Sverdlovsk mafia'.⁷³

On 8 October 1991 Ambassador Balaguer sent a 12-page 'confidential' report to Raúl Castro that summarised the post-coup Soviet situation. Due to its content and Raúl Castro's status within the Cuban government, it will be quoted at length. It began, 'The intention of the senior members of the CPSU, Armed Forces and KGB was to attempt to "democratise" these institutions but in reality they eliminated or neutralised these institutions'.⁷⁴ Balaguer described Yeltsin as the real victor of the August coup and Gorbachev as the 'victim'.⁷⁵ Balaguer also outlined changes in the Soviet economy before focusing on Havana-Moscow relations and how further change in the relationship was expected. The report continued,

The immediate results of the failure of the aforementioned Committee was the dismemberment of a weak Union; the acceleration and radicalization of processes that perhaps were inevitable in the country, but would normally have taken years to materialize; and to legitimize the process called 'perestroika', with Soviet society suffering its final few hours of transformation – mirroring the processes in Eastern Europe –, all the evidence suggests this process is irreversible, at least in the immediate future.

Meanwhile, Gorbachev has ultimately been forced to stipulate the shape of the political reforms which have taken place over the last six months, and our country has sporadically criticised the continued devious manoeuvrings and manipulations which were evident during the final sessions of the Extraordinary Congress of the People's Deputies.⁷⁶

Again, Gorbachev was absolved of blame for the turn of events in the Soviet Union. Moreover, Balaguer continued 'An unfavourable situation has arisen in the contemporary Soviet press regarding Cuba and the events of 19 August. Given the close relations between Cuba and members of the ex-Emergency Committee, Cuba is portrayed as displaying support for the coup and its followers'.⁷⁷

On 6 November 1991 MINREX received a short memo detailing that Yeltsin had outlawed the CPSU in Russia; a truly momentous decision. The memo described Yeltsin's actions as 'anti-popular' and 'anti-constitutional', but the 'logical outcome of the political activities of the anti-constitutional coup of 19 to 21 August'.⁷⁸ As noted, *Granma* printed Zyuganov's reaction with the leader of the Communist Party of Russia describing the suspension of the CPSU as 'arbitrary and illegal'. Notwithstanding this, no Cuban government commentary on the outlawing of the CPSU was published.

As previously detailed, on 15 November 1991 Hidalgo received a report from Carlos Trejo Sosa, MINREX personnel, on the meeting which had taken place on the previous day with Guerman Belevitin, Minister Council in the Soviet embassy in Havana. One of the key objectives of the appointment was to facilitate a meeting between a Cuban representative and Andrei Kozyrev, Russian Foreign Minister. Such Cuban endeavours are highly significant as it demonstrated MINREX personnel attempting to cultivate links with the top echelons of the Russian Federation foreign policy making apparatus even while the Soviet Union continued to exist.⁷⁹ In June 1991 Fidel Castro met A. Krivenk, chairperson of the 'prodintorg' association, which comprised members from the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belorussia and Kazakhstan. Moreover, in November 1991 Ricardo Cabrisas, Cuban trade minister, visited the Russian Federation, the Baltic States and Kazakhstan.⁸⁰ Due to the dire internal Soviet situation, and its impact on Cuba, Havana was striving to foster relations with Soviet republics. However, the available MINREX documents illuminate that MINREX officials attempted to cultivate relations with the pinnacle of the foreign policy making elite of the Russian Federation even while the Soviet Union remained in existence.

MINREX officials endeavours to facilitate a meeting with Kozyrev are remarkable due the dislike of Yeltsin's actions and policies, evident both in the Cuban media printing negative Soviet press reports of the Russian leader and in the available MINREX documents. Throughout 1991 the MINREX documents detail Yeltsin advocating and agitating for further change within the Soviet system. Contrariwise, Gorbachev was continually supported. Simply, the Cuban government realised that Gorbachev's motivation was to improve socialism rather than destroy it.⁸¹ However, Havana's opportunity to lobby key Soviet officials was reduced by unforeseen knock-on effects for Cuba of the changed Soviet situation and the diminished power of the 'Cuban lobby' after the August 1991 coup. Subsequently, MINREX attempted to expedite a meeting with Yeltsin's foreign minister, Kozyrev.

What is also unexpected in the MINREX documents that were viewed for 1991 is that in the main the documents make no reference to events in Eastern Europe. The exception was Balaguer's above-cited report dated 8 October 1991. However, the United States, and the interest it had shown in the unfolding Soviet internal situation, are recorded. In sum, the documents chiefly refer to the Soviet internal situation and its potential impact on Havana's relationship with Moscow. The absence of comparisons between the events in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is surprising because (1) several of the processes that had occurred in the Soviet Union had also taken place in Eastern Europe; and (2) Cuba had attempted to cultivate relations with the new governments in Eastern Europe. Consequently, the documents do not demonstrate MINREX officials applying the lessons they had learnt from their limited experiences of the new administrations in Eastern Europe to

inform their interactions with their Soviet/Russian counterparts.⁸² As noted, MINREX officials did attempt to facilitate a meeting with Kozyrev, but due to both Cuba's experiences of the new governments in Eastern Europe and the gravity of the Soviet situation, it is surprising that the lessons of these encounters are not more apparent in the MINREX documents that focused on Havana-Moscow relations.

Conclusions

A rigorous qualitative historical analysis of the documents in the MINREX archive that are available on Havana-Moscow relations throughout 1991 illuminates (1) the complex and conflicting nature of the internal Soviet situation and subsequent impact on the bilateral relationship, and (2) the granular details of the workings of MINREX personnel. Specifically, it highlights attempts to influence the relationship, primarily via lobbying and the proposed use of *glasnost* which is unexpected due to the Cuban government's aversion to *glasnost*. These Cuban attempts were despite the relationship undergoing significant change with Havana's ability to affect it being reduced with the shrinking influence of the previously powerful 'Cuban lobby'. As noted, MINREX personnel subsequently attempted to expedite a meeting with the Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev. These MINREX endeavours are remarkable due to the way in which Yeltsin and his actions throughout 1991 are detailed in the documents when compared to Gorbachev. Apart from his 11 September 1991 announcement to remove the final Soviet troops from Cuba, Gorbachev was not criticised in a similar manner to Yeltsin. The language in the documents concerning Yeltsin is in accordance with the Cuban media's continued practice of printing Soviet press reports that were critical of the Russian President, while no Cuban analysis was offered.

What is also unexpected on reading the MINREX documents is that with one exception (Balaguer's report dated 8 October 1991) the documents do not contain comparisons or analysis of the Soviet situation with the Eastern European one from 1989 onwards. It could be presumed that MINREX officials would apply the lessons they had learnt from their limited experiences of the new governments in Eastern Europe to inform their interactions with the Soviet Union. However, such comparisons are absent from the documents.

In sum, the available MINREX documents concerning Havana-Moscow relations in 1991 provide new insights into MINREX practices, especially lobbying (including attempting to arrange a meeting with Kozyrev while the Soviet Union still existed) and the suggested use of *glasnost* for their own purposes. This original contribution has significance for our understanding of the end of close Havana-Moscow relations, and the Cold War in Latin America, because it has become clear that MINREX personnel attempted to affect the relationship throughout 1991. Moreover, it would be incongruous to

think that such MINREX processes were exclusive to Havana-Moscow relations. Therefore, a new dimension concerning other bilateral relations (e.g. Cuban-Chinese relations and Cuban-Venezuelan relations, amongst others) that Cuba attempted to develop both as Soviet-US rivalry in the region waned and in the immediate post-Cold War period has started to materialise. However, these potential new areas of study may only become possible in the future as further MINREX documents become available to researchers.

Notes

- 1 *Granma*, August 19, 1991, 1.
- 2 *Granma*, August 29, 1991, 1. A second Cuban government statement was published in *Granma* on 21 August 1991 which updated Cuban citizens on the changing Soviet situation. Again, it passed no comment or analysis, except for criticising U.S. influence within events. *Granma*, August 21, 1991, 1. The Cuban government statement of 29 August 1991 mirrored the speeches which Fidel Castro had made on 5 April 1989 and 26 July 1989 when Castro was highly critical of the political reforms that were sweeping Eastern Europe and theorised that they could lead to the break-up of the Soviet Union. *Granma*, April 5, 1989, 2. *Granma* August 29, 1991, 1. Such public criticism deviated from the Cuban government's 'wait and see policy', making these two speeches exceptional and removed from the norm.
- 3 Mervyn J. Bain, *Soviet-Cuban Relations 1985 to 1991. Changing Perceptions in Moscow and Havana* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), 112. On the coup in Moscow, Yuri Pavlov has written, 'During the coup, Castro cautiously abstained from welcoming it publicly'. Yuri Pavlov, *Cuban-Soviet Alliance 1959–1991* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 227.
- 4 This lobby had quickly materialised after the initiation of Cuban-Soviet relations in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution. Its members were strongly pro-Cuban and advocated on Cuba's behalf amongst the Soviet political elite. Members of the lobby included politicians, military personnel, diplomats, academics and members of the press. Cole Blasier, 'The End of the Cuban-Soviet Partnership' in *Cuba After the Cold War*, ed. Carmelo Mesa-Lago, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), 88–90. Cole Blasier, "Moscow's Retreat from Cuba", *Problems of Communism*, 40, no. 6, (1991): 91 & 97.
- 5 *Izvestia*, September 12, 1991, 1.
- 6 Damián J. Fernández, "Continuity and Change in Cuba's International Relations in the 1990s", in *Cuba at a Crossroads. Politics and Economics after the Fourth Party Congress*, ed. Jorge F. Pérez-López, (Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1994), 41.
- 7 In 1989 64.7% of Cuba's global trade turnover comprised trade with the Soviet Union. This had fallen from 70.5% in 1985. Carmelo Mesa-Lago, 'The Economic Effects on Cuba of the Downfall of Socialism in the USSR and Eastern Europe' in *Cuba After the Cold War*, 139. Nicola Miller, "Trying to Stay Friends: Cuba's Relations with Russia and Eastern Europe in the Age of U.S. Supremacy", in *Cuba, the United States and the Post-Cold War World. The International Dimensions of Washington-Havana Relationship*, ed. Morris Morley & Chris McGillon, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 69–70. Yuri Pavlov, 'Russian Policy Toward Latin America and Cuba', in *Russian Foreign Policy Since 1990*, ed. Peter Shearman, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 257–261. Radoslav Yordanov, "Cuba and the Soviet Bloc: Searching for the Last Guardians of Socialism", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 2021, 56 no. 4, 1191.

- 8 "Virtual Special Issue: The Cold War in Latin America", *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 2019, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-latin-american-studies/virtual-special-issue-the-cold-war-in-latin-america>. Mark William, "Revisiting the Cold War in Latin America", *Latin American Research Review*, December (2017), <https://larlrasa.org/articles/10.25222/larr.229/>.
- 9 Mervyn J. Bain, "Cuban-Soviet Relations in the Gorbachev Era", *The Journal of Latin American Studies*, Volume 27: Part 4: (November 2005): 769–791. Bain, *Soviet-Cuban Relations*. Blasier, "The End of the Cuban-Soviet Partnership", 59–98. Blasier, 'Moscow's Retreat from Cuba'. Mesa-Lago, 'The Economic Effects on Cuba', 133–196. Miller, 'Trying to Stay Friends', 59–96. Pavlov, *Cuban-Soviet Alliance*. Yuri Pavlov, "The End of the Road," in *Cuban Communism*, ed. I.L. Horowitz, I.L. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994). Rhoda Rabkin, 'Implications of the Gorbachev Era for Cuban Socialism', *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Vol.XXIII, No 1, Spring 1990, 23–46. In "Cuba and the Soviet Bloc," Radoslav Yordanov has used documents from Germany and the Cold War International History Project in the article to examine Cuban-Soviet relations from 1959 to 1991. Hideaki Kami has examined Gorbachev's 11 September 1991 announcement to remove the final Soviet troops from Cuba using documents from MINREX's Cuba-US archive, but not the Archivo Europa – Russia–Ordinario which this article utilises. Hideaki Kami, *Diplomacy Meets Migration. US Relations with Cuba During the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
- 10 Regarding Gorbachev and the reforms that he implemented in the Soviet Union Fidel Castro has commented 'Listen, at one point of his leadership I had a terrible opinion of everything Gorbachev was doing', before praising his attempts to improve the socialist system. Fidel Castro and Ignacio Ramonet, *My Life*, (London: Allen Lane, 2007), 360–361 & 364.
- 11 Blasier, 'The End of the Cuban-Soviet Partnership', 88–90. Domínguez, 'The Political Impact on Cuba', 99–109. Miller, 'Trying to Stay Friends', 69–70. Rabkin, 'Implications', 24–46. Yordanov. 'Cuba and the Soviet Bloc', 1191–1192.
- 12 Rabkin, 'Implications', 24.
- 13 Blasier, "The End of the Cuban-Soviet Partnership", 88–90. Pavlov, *Soviet-Cuban Alliance*, 227–228.
- 14 On 15 November 1991 Alcibiades Hidalgo, First Vice-Foreign Minister, received a report detailing a meeting with Guerman Belevitin, Minister Council in the Soviet embassy in Havana, which stated, '... when examining the Cuban press about events in the USSR, only the facts are presented but no comment or evaluation of them is provided'. Report from Carlos Trejo Sosa to Alcibiades Hidalgo, 14 November 1991, MINREX, 1. Moreover, writing about the August 1991 coup Pavlov has written, '... *Granma* published, without any commentary, an official Soviet TASS report under the heading: 'Yanayev Assumes Presidential Functions in the USSR'. Pavlov, *Soviet-Cuban Alliance*, 228. Domínguez, 'The Political Impact on Cuba', 111–117.
- 15 On 12 June 1991 Yeltsin was elected the President of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) and subsequently became the President of the Russian Federation with the dissolution of the Soviet Union on 25 December 1991.
- 16 Domínguez, "The Political Impact on Cuba," 99–125.
- 17 Blasier, "The End of the Cuban-Soviet Partnership", 88–90. Blasier, "Moscow's Retreat from Cuba," 91 & 97. Miller, "Trying to Stay Friends", 68. Pavlov, "Russian Polic," 250–251.
- 18 All the documents referenced are from MINREX Archivo Europa – Russia–Ordinario. The documents in the MINREX archive are referenced in full as the information on the documents is not consistent throughout the archive. Additionally, as these are MINREX documents they focus exclusively on bilateral Cuban-Soviet relations and their impact

- on Cuba in general but offer no comment on how the Cuban government attempted to mitigate the effect of the changes in the relationship for their own population.
- 19 Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy*. (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 2003) 145–236. Hugh Thomas, *Cuba or the Pursuit of Freedom*, (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1971), 417–1034.
 - 20 Wayne Smith, *The Closest of Enemies. A Personal and Diplomatic Account of U.S.-Cuban Relations Since 1957*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), 144.
 - 21 Pérez, *Cuba and the United States*, 237–265. Peter Shearman, *The Soviet Union and Cuba*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 7–9. Thomas, *Cuba*, 1037–1371.
 - 22 Shearman, *The Soviet Union and Cuba*, 11. W. Raymond Duncan, “Russian-American Cooperation in Latin America Since Gorbachev”, in *The End of Superpower Conflict in the Third World*, ed. Melvin A. Goodman, (London: Routledge, 1992), 50.
 - 23 Bain, *Soviet-Cuban Relations*, 21.
 - 24 Margot Light, *The Soviet Theory of International Relations*, (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1988) 99–124.
 - 25 Bain, *Soviet-Cuban Relations*, 18–21.
 - 26 Thomas, *Cuba*, 400.
 - 27 V. Lavrentyev, “USSR-Cuban Brotherhood and Cooperation,” (FBIS LD182341 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 0615 18 April 1985).
 - 28 Shearman, *The Soviet Union and Cuba*, 15–56.
 - 29 Raúl Castro, ‘Entrevista e Raúl’, *El Sol de México*, 23 April, 1993, 6. Boris Yopo, *La Unión Soviética y la crisis centroamericana: la asistencia militar a Cuba y Nicaragua*, (Santiago de Chile: Documento de trabajo PROSPEL; no.6, 1986), 29–34.
 - 30 *Vneshniaia torgovlia SSSR statisticheskii sbornik v 1989–1990*, Moscow: mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1991), 5. *Anuario Estadístico de Cuba 1985, 1986*, (Havana: Comité Estatal de Estadísticas, 1986).
 - 31 Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford, Oxford University Press), 89–154. Mark Galeotti, *Gorbachev and his Revolution* (London, Palgrave Macmillan), 1–83. Richard Sakwa, *Gorbachev and his Reforms 1985 to 1990* (New York: Philip Allan, 1990), 1–15. Stephen White, *Gorbachev and After* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 8–23. Vladislav M. Zubok, *Collapse. The Fall of the Soviet Union*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2021), 17–69.
 - 32 Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, 247–251. William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth – Century World. An International History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 454–455. Geoffrey Hosking, *A History of the Soviet Union 1917–1991* (London: Fontana Press, 1992), 464–466. George Schopflin, ‘The End of Communism in Eastern Europe’, *International Affairs*, Vol 66, No1, (January 1990): 3–16. Peter Shearman, *Rethinking Soviet Communism* (London: Palgrave, 2015), 117–119. Zubok, *Collapse*, 70–97.
 - 33 Zubok, *Collapse*, 98–178.
 - 34 Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, 207–211. White, *Russia’s New Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 16–24. Galeotti, *Gorbachev and his Revolution*, 105–124. Zubok, *Collapse*.181–426.
 - 35 The Cuban economy was also slowing down, but Cuba also faced issues of increased bureaucracy and overstaffing with Castro believing that the Cuban Revolution was undergoing degeneration due the existence of forms of private enterprises. *Supplement to Granma*, April 21, 1986. Antoni Kapcia, *The Cuban Revolution in Crisis*, (Research Institute for Study of Conflict and Terrorism, Conflict Studies, 1992), 256. Antoni Kapcia, *Political Change in Cuba: Before and After the Exodus* (Institute of Latin American Studies, Occasional Papers No 19, University of London). Antoni Kapcia, ‘Political Change in Cuba: The Domestic Context for Foreign Policy’ in *Redefining*

- Cuban Foreign Policy. The Impact of the 'special Period'*, ed., H. Michael Erisman & John M. Kirk, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), 27–28. Domínguez, 'The Political Impact on Cuba', 104–117. Marifeli Pérez -Stable, *The Cuban Revolution. Origins, Course and Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 154. Andrew Zimbalist. 'Cuban Political Economy and Cubanology: An Overview' in *Cuban Political Economy. Controversies in Cubanology*, ed., Andrew Zimbalist, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988.), 72.
- 36 Domínguez, "The Political Impact on Cuba," 99.
- 37 José Ramon Balaguer, 'Lies and Insults', *Pravda*, October 26, 1990, 5. Similarly, in October 1987, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, member of the politburo of the Communist Party of Cuba and the Island's leading economist, provided a repost of Vladislav Chirkov, 'An Uphill Task' *New Times*, 33, (17 August 1987): 16–17, which was highly critical of the Cuban economy.
- 38 *Izvestia*, 9 June 1989, 10. Miller, "Trying to Stay Friends", 69–70. Pavlov, *Soviet-Cuban Alliance*, 166–170. Rabkin, 'Implications', 25–29.
- 39 *Granma*, December 31, 1990, 1.
- 40 Blasier, "The End of the Cuban-Soviet Partnership", 88.
- 41 *Granma*, October 23, 1991, 2–3. Mesa- Lago, "The Economic Effects on Cuba," 133–196. Pavlov, *Soviet-Cuban Alliance*, 240. Duncan, "Russian-American Cooperation," 65–66.
- 42 *Izvestia*, September 12, 1991, 1. Cuban indignation was intensified by the fact that Jorge Mas Canosa, leader of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) had arrived in Moscow the week before Gorbachev made this announcement and had met Boris Pankin, Soviet Foreign Minister. Moscow Central Television First Program Network 2055 GMT September 6, 1991. FBIS 10 September 1991, 13. LD0609223691. *Granma*, September 14, 1991, 4. Moreover, due to the writing style, Pavlov has suggested that this statement was written by Fidel Castro himself. Pavlov, *Soviet-Cuban Alliance*, 233. Zubok, *Collapse*, 344–345.
- 43 "Declaración del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 11 Septiembre 1991, MINREX, 1.
- 44 *Granma*, October 23, 1991, 6. In December 1991 during an interview with the Mexican paper *El Sol* Castro described the Soviet Union as undergoing 'chaos and disorganisation' while Cuba still enjoyed 'order and discipline'. Later Castro poignantly said, 'I don't deny that they wanted to improve their system, but managed only to destroy it'. Moscow TASS in English 1206 GMT 3 December 1991 (FBIS-SOV, December 4, 1991, 12, LD0412051391).
- 45 *Granma*, December 8, 1989, 4.
- 46 *Granma*, February 8, 1991, 7 & *Granma*, February 27, 1991, 5. *Granma*, June 15, 1991, 7.
- 47 *Granma*, August 23, 1991, 1.
- 48 *Granma*, September 18, 1991, 5.
- 49 Alfonso Fraga Perez to Isidoro Malmierca, January 29, 1991, 1.3.14.754, MINREX.
- 50 José Ramón Balaguer to Isidoro Malmierca, February 14, 1991, 108/1590, MINREX, 12–13.
- 51 *Ibid.*
- 52 Jorge Martí Martínez, 'Propuesta para Celebrar Consultas Bilaterales sobre temas Políticos con la Cancillería Soviética' February 19, 1991, MINREX.
- 53 Alfonso Fraga, Director of the Europe Del Este, to Alcibiades Hidalgo 'En Relación con el Referéndum en la URSS. Parte 2', 1.2.49 2092, MINREX.
- 54 "Parte No 1. Sobre La Situación en la Unión Soviética (semana del 10 al 17 Abril) 1.1.090, 3077, MINREX, 1. These reports do not contain details of the author and it must therefore be assumed that they were authored by personnel in the Cuban embassy in Moscow.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 2–3.

- 56 Martin Mora, Director of the Press Department, sent a memorandum to Alfonso Fraga, May 23, 1991, RS/25–1096, MINREX. Memorandum from Mora to Alcibíades Hidalgo, July 31, 1991 I.8.4.073, MINREX.
- 57 Fidel Castro, "Proyecto de Mensaje. Felicitación con motivo de la Elección del Presidente de La RSFSR", MINREX.
- 58 Letter from Mario Rodríguez Martínez to Isidor Malmierca, August 13, 1991, MINREX, 1.
- 59 "Parte No. 1 Sobre La Situación en la Unión Soviética," August 19, 1991, RDI 1.1.242. 7526, MINREX, 2.
- 60 Ibid., 3.
- 61 Ibid., 4.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 "Parte No. 1 Sobre La Situación en la Unión Soviética," August 19, 1991, 1.1.24. RS7528, MINREX, 2.
- 64 'Parte 9 sobre la situación en la Unión Soviética. Sesión extraordinaria del Soviet Supéreme de la URSS. Breve Resume', August 26, 1991, 1.1.251. 7701, MINREX. For more analysis on this meeting please see White, *Russia's New Politics*, 28–33. Brown, *Seven years that changed the World*, 208–210. Galeotti, *Gorbachev and his Revolution*, 115–119.
- 65 "Parte 10 sobre la situación en la Unión Soviética. Sesión extraordinaria del Soviet Supéreme de la URSS. Breve Resume," August 27, 1991, 1.1.254 7804, MINREX, 10.
- 66 Ibid., 2.
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 Ibid., 2–4.
- 69 Parte No. 11 'sobre la Situación el La Unión Socialista' 27 August 1991, 1.1.256, 7806, MINREX, 2.
- 70 Parte No. 15 'sobre la Situación el La Unión Socialista' (Segundo día de sesiones del Congreso Disputado", August 27, 1991, 1.1.268, 7919, MINREX, 1–2.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 Parte No. 17 'sobre la Situación el La Unión Socialista', September 16, 1991, 1.1.287, 8221, MINREX, 1.
- 73 Letter from Alcibíades Hidalgo to Raúl Castro, October 7, 1991, MINREX, 1.
- 74 José Ramón Balaguer Cabrera, 'Los Consideraciones sobre La Evolucion de los Acontecimientos en la URSS partir de los sucesos del 19 Agosto de 1991', RS/8711. RDI.344, MINREX, 1.
- 75 Ibid. Moreover, this negative Cuban perception of Yeltsin was repeated in a report written by Barbara Sarabia Martínez and Sofia Hernández Marmó, researchers at the Centro de Estudios Europeos in Havana, which was sent to Aldana on 29 August 1991. The report stated, 'Yeltsin used the situation to emit truly anti-constitutional directives which exceeded the Republics (Russian Federation) remit to arrogate federal powers which usurped Gorbachev's power, who as the solitary person on the committee had no option but to secede power to Yeltsin. We are therefore in the presence of another coup against the state, but one which did not require the use of force'. Barbara Sarabia Martínez and Sofia Hernández Marmó, 'La URSS entre Dos Gopos: Tragica Realidad y Futuro Incienito' August 29, 1991, 7987/378, MINREX, 2–4.
- 76 Ibid.,
- 77 Ibid., 10.
- 78 MINREX report, November 6, 1991, MINREX.
- 79 Report from Carlos Trejo Sosa to Alcibíades Hidalgo, November 14, 1991, MINREX, 1.

80 Moscow TASS International Service 2136 GMT June 6, 1991 (FBIS-SOV June 11, 1991, 38–39, LD0706101891). INTERFAX in English 0743 GMT November 25, 1991 (FBIS-SOV 2 November 26, 1991, p.19, OW2511114891).

81 Please see footnotes 10 and 44.

82 For Cuban attempts to create relations with the new governments in Eastern Europe please see Mesa-Lago, 'The Economic Effects on Cuba', 168–176.

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