

Cuban-Russian Relations in the 1990s. Negotiations in the Shadow of the Past

Abstract

This article will re-examine Cuban-Russian relations in the period in which Boris Yeltsin was Russian President using previously unseen documents housed in the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Cuba (MINREX) archive in Havana. A number of conclusions will be offered including that the relationship remained key for Havana throughout, despite a Cuban ideological aversion to the Russian reforms of the early to mid-1990s and the subsequent 'new realities' of Cuban-Russian relations. Cuba desired a relationship that preserved a number of features of Cuban-Soviet relations, which MINREX officials strove to achieve by purposefully creating a political legacy from the Soviet era, while also specifically lobbying members of the Russian political elite who had sympathies with the Soviet period. This has resonance for contemporary Cuban-Russian relations which are at their most robust politically since 1991. Consequently, the Soviet legacy is both much greater than previously thought and deliberately created by Cuba.

Shortened Title

Cuban-Russian Relations

In October 1995 world leaders converged on the United Nations (UN) headquarters in New York City to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the organisation's creation. In the 50 years that the UN had been in existence, global politics had changed dramatically not least that the Cold War had been consigned to history and in late 1991 the Soviet Union had disintegrated. This simultaneously ended Cuban-Soviet relations. In the period from the implosion of the Soviet Union to the festivities in New York City the relationship between Havana and Moscow had deteriorated so dramatically, politically but also economically resulting in acute problems for the Cuban economy, that observers wondered if the Cuban and Russian Presidents, Fidel Castro and Boris Yeltsin, respectively, would even acknowledge each other during the meeting.¹

Castro and Yeltsin did shake hands, but this was the extent of their pleasantries. However, in 1996 the Russian Federation was Cuba's chief trading partner. This appeared remarkable due to the situation that had unfolded in New York City a mere 12 months previously and experts had certainly not expected or predicted this in the early 1990s. Moreover, in December 2000 Vladimir

Putin, the new Russian President, visited the Caribbean island. Consequently, the years immediately after the implosion of the Soviet Union, during which Yeltsin was the President of the Russian Federation, were some of the most dramatic for the relationship between Havana and Moscow since the early 1960s.

The academic literature that focuses on Cuban-Russian relations in the Yeltsin period rationalises the decline in the relationship by both the disconnect which appeared between the two countries' internal and external policies, which subsequently removed many of the foundations of Cuban-Soviet relations, not least Marxist-Leninism, and also the pro-western Russian foreign policy of early to mid-1990s.² This will be examined more fully, but it negated cordial Cuban-Russian relations due to the continued strained nature of Havana's relationship with Washington. Academic attention has also concentrated on the vast legacy from the Soviet era, which has been contended was practical and economic and was the unintended consequence of the intertwined nature of the two countries' economies during the Soviet era. It has been argued that this legacy impacted the relationship throughout the 1990s.³ It has also been argued that changes to Russian foreign policy in the mid-1990s and unforeseen outcomes of Cuban economic reforms underpinned the improvement in the bilateral relationship.⁴ A precis of the academic literature is that events far removed from the Caribbean, and many being outwith the control of the Cuban administration, considerably impacted the bilateral relationship in the 1990s, not least the presence of the Soviet legacy, the existence of which was more fortuitous than by design.

This article will provide a detailed analysis of the Cuban perception of the Yeltsin era using previously unseen documents housed in the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Cuba (MINREX) archive in Havana.⁵ It will put forward the argument that Havana's relationship with Moscow remained crucial for Cuba throughout the duration of Yeltsin's premiership, despite a Cuban ideological dislike of the Russian reforms of the early 1990s. In this manner Cuba desired a relationship with Russia that preserved a number of features of Cuban-Soviet relations, while conversely in the immediate aftermath of the implosion of Cuban-Soviet relations Russia preferred

to foster a new relationship from its ashes. Consequently throughout this period MINREX officials consistently referred to the relationship's Soviet heritage in discussions with their Russian counterparts, while also specifically lobbying members of the Russian political elite who had sympathies with the Soviet era in general rather than Russian liberals in the changing Russian government of the 1990s. Subsequently, the article will argue that the impact of the Soviet legacy on Havana-Moscow relations in the 1990s was much greater than previously thought, contained a political aspect and was not merely practical and economic, and that this political legacy was intentionally pursued by MINREX officials during their diplomatic negotiations and interactions with Russia throughout the 1990s. Moreover, this is hugely important for understanding contemporary Cuban-Russian relations, which are at their most robust politically since the Soviet era, as the foundations of this rejuvenated relationship were created in the final years of Yeltsin's Presidency.

With the end of the Cold War the Cuban Revolution in the 1990s faced the emergence of the New World Order bereft of its socialist allies. On this, John Kirk has stated, "The greatest single task in terms of foreign policy facing the Cuban government in the early 1990s, however, was how to keep the traditional (self-declared) enemy at bay."⁶ Subsequently, the Cuban Revolution had to change to survive, with Michael Erisman writing that the island's foreign policy was diversified in an attempt to generate increased economic and political space.⁷ Additionally, Julie Feinsilver has written "...that Cuba's foreign policy initiatives have been geared toward ensuring Cuba's security in an adverse geopolitical situation through support of progressive governments and the creation of a Third World constituency, to gain not just diplomatic support in international organisations but also economic or trade benefits."⁸ Jorge Domínguez has noted that this entailed a four part strategy; 1) Cuba tried to balance the United States in the international community, 2) to avert forms of dependency appearing the island's economic policy was diversified, 3) with regards common security issues with the United States Havana strove to cooperate with Washington and 4) Havana utilized soft power to obtain a "constituency abroad."⁹

These changes in Cuban foreign policy were very different from the foreign policy pursued by Moscow in the immediate aftermath of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. At this time Russian foreign policy was designed to help facilitate improved relations with the West, partly in anticipation of receiving aid and assistance from Washington in the Russian economic transition which was designed to move the Russian economy from a planned economy to one based on the ideas of market economics as quickly as possible.¹⁰ Regarding foreign policy it appeared that the Liberal Westernizers were pre-eminent.¹¹ As detailed, these changes in Russia negatively impacted Cuban-Russian relations as many in Russia wished to see relations with Havana being vastly different from the Soviet era, or even terminated. This desire was intensified as the changes in Russia were designed to end the system which the Cuban government continued to pursue, or as Nadya Plankton, co-organiser of the cinema, video and graphic arts project entitled 'Days of the Russian contemporary culture in Havana' stated that after the implosion of the Soviet Union for Russia, "...Cuba was the first country that has been stroked off the friends' list, it was wiped out from the world's map."¹² Concerning the alterations in Russian foreign policy Professor Eugenio Larin, Director of Latin American Studies at the Institute of Cold War History of the Russian Academy of Sciences has written, "In order to improve political ties Washington demanded of B.H. Yeltsin that he must cut ties with Cuba. This course of action dominated the 1990s."¹³

The downturn in Cuban-Russian relations was both political and economic. In November 1992 the Russian Federation abstained in the United Nations (UN) vote which condemned the Cuban Democracy Act, or Torricelli Bill, that further tightened the United States economic embargo against Cuba. Moreover, from 1992 to 1994 Moscow no longer voted with Cuba at the UN Convention on Human Rights in Geneva.¹⁴ In 1992 bilateral Cuban-Russian trade crashed to 823 million pesos, or less than 25% of the 1991 level, or below 9% of trade conducted in 1988. In sum, the Yeltsin government ended economic and military aid to Cuba.¹⁵

However, Russian foreign policy underwent further change in the mid-1990s, underpinned by a Russian dislike of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) expansion to the east, and

unhappiness at Russia's treatment by the West in general. Many Russians believed both that Moscow's pro-western foreign policy of the early to mid-1990s had failed in its goals and also attributed Russia's ongoing economic problems on organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank.¹⁶ Anti-western sentiments intensified within Russian society, exacerbated by a disgust of NATO's treatment of their fellow Serbs in the former Yugoslavia. Yeltsin has described NATO bombing of Belgrade in March 1999 as "undisguised aggression" and regarding the impact of the Kosovo crisis on the Russian population, Yeltsin has written, "...the Kosovo crisis increased the anti-Western sentiment in society."¹⁷

The upshot was a surge in Russian nationalism and in December 1995 Andrei Kozyrev, who had been a strong advocate of the pro-western foreign policy, was replaced as Foreign Minister by Yevgeny Primakov. Significantly Primakov had a very different philosophy to foreign policy in comparison to Kozyrev, as Primakov believed much more in "spheres of influence," perceived the world in more multipolar terms and had sympathies for both Russia's Soviet past and even Cuba which he had visited in April 1981.¹⁸ When this is coupled with nationalistic tendencies within Russia the result was Moscow wanting to reassert itself in international relations, especially in a number of areas that the Kremlin had influence in during the Soviet era.¹⁹

Moscow desiring to reaffirm itself in global politics in this manner would be key for bilateral relations with Havana that began to improve from the mid-1990s onwards, evidenced by the return of visits by each country's political elite to the other country, the absence of such trips had been indicative of the downturn in relations in the early 1990s. For the Russian government, improved Cuban-Russian relations helped both to placate a resurgent nationalistic Duma and also demonstrated to Washington Moscow's increased global influence. Moreover, as Russia took growing interest in Latin America, Cuba became the conduit for improved Russian-Latin American relations.²⁰ In sum, Cuba became increasingly geostrategically significant for Russia, although not to the level of the Cold War period.

For Cuba an improved relationship with Russia was vital in a number of different ways, as Russia could be important for Cuba in “balancing” the United States, not least in various UN fora.²¹ This is in accordance with Dominguez’s ideas detailed above and also Feinsilver’s that Cuba attempted to create a “constituency abroad,” although Russia is not part of the Developing World.²² Bilateral trade also constituted a significant part of the upturn in relations with this being partly underpinned by a Russian desire to address the loss of their preeminent position in the Cuban economy resulting from unforeseen consequences of Cuban economic reforms. Moreover, as Bain has stated, Cuba required spare parts for Soviet era machinery which continued to be used on the island in this period and how it also quickly became apparent for both Cuba and Russia that it was easier and cheaper for sugar for oil swaps to continue.²³ This was important for Cuban-Russia trade, but it evidences the impact of the Soviet legacy on the bilateral relationship throughout the 1990s. Due to the nature of the relationship between Havana and Moscow from 1959 to 1991, some form of legacy could have been expected, but this article will argue that this legacy was much greater than previously believed, was purposely pursued by MINREX officials, contained a political aspect and was not solely practical and economic.

As detailed, the relationship between Havana and Moscow in the aftermath of the end of Cuban-Soviet relations dramatically deteriorated with Russia wishing to foster a new relationship with Cuba based on very different principles from its previous incarnation. These ‘new realities’ quickly became apparent for Havana, clearly evidenced in September 1992 when Fidel Castro announced that Cuba could not afford to remunerate the Russian specialists working on the joint project to complete the nuclear reactor at Juragua.²⁴ Such payments had never been made during the Soviet era of the relationship. The ‘new realities’ of the relationship will be returned to, but Fidel Castro also criticised the changes which were taking place in Russia at this time and its impact on Cuban-Russian relations. Castro’s disdain was most evident in his report to the 5th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC) in October 1997 when he highlighted the socio-economic problems that had engulfed Russia in the 1990s, and that Cuba was enduring a “double blockade,”

the consequence of the loss of trade with the socialist bloc and the continuing United States embargo.²⁵ An ideological dislike of the reforms implemented in Russia in the 1990s, which as detailed were designed to move the Russian economy to one based on market economics as quickly as possible, the antithesis of the Cuban planned economy, underpinned this antipathy.

This Cuban aversion to changes in Russia is also palatable within MINREX documents. On 24 April 1994 Rogelio Montenegro, Cuban ambassador to Russia, sent a report to Isabel Allende, MINREX expert on Eastern Europe and future Deputy Foreign Minister, which was a detailed analysis of Russian energy production. It begins by stating that "...a contraction in the Russian economy began in 1990 and was exacerbated by the reforms which commenced in 1992."²⁶

Moreover, in a MINREX document dated 20 May 1998 this was described as a "paralysis" of the Russian economy.²⁷ Furthermore, on 12 October 1994 Montenegro sent a very detailed report to Roberto Robaina, the Cuban Foreign Minister, which examined the Russian economy and began

...the Russian economy is in a dangerously exacerbated stage, with the crisis threatening to make irreversible damage to industry, which is only possible to overcome with a modification of the political economy ideas of the Russian government and massive financial support for production and the support of the internal financial market using a variety of different methods – regulation of the internal market, including indicative planning.²⁸

Montenegro criticises Yegor Gaidar, Minister of Economics and Finance, for this situation and then details that in the period from January to August 1994 industrial production fell by 24%, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 16%, energy production by 12%, metallurgy by 15% and food production by 23%.²⁹ In May 1996 a MINREX report exists which states "With regards commercial-economic Cuban-Russian relations there are difficulties and uncertainties arising, first of all from the acute economic crisis in that country, the change of economic model which they were not prepared for, as well as the disorder and lack of government authority in fulfilling the commitments of the bilateral agreements that have been agreed."³⁰

Economic problems continued to overwhelm Russia throughout the 1990s with Jorge Bolaños, MINREX personnel and future head of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, in a letter to Felipe Pérez Roque, Cuban Foreign Minister, and Carlos Lage, Secretary of the Council of Ministers, dated 28 August 1998 writing that due to the gravity of the financial crisis which hit Russia in early 1998, exacerbated by the involvement of the United States and International Monetary Fund (IMF), rumours abounded that Yeltsin was going to resign.³¹

The 'new realities' of Havana-Moscow relations are also evident in MINREX documents. In May 1995 Robaina travelled to Moscow, as detailed the recommencement of such high level visits was indicative of the upturn in the relationship in the mid-1990s, and the report on this visit refers to Robaina meeting with Russian businessmen.³² This is very different from the Soviet era, with the participation of private business in the relationship also noted in Robaina's letter of 9 September 1996 to Primakov when he mentions the involvement of the company ALFO-ECO in agreements regarding sugar for oil swaps.³³ However, Cuba was unhappy with ALFO-ECO's participation with Robaina later in this letter stating that ALFO-ECO had breached agreements regarding these exchanges.³⁴ ALFO-ECO was again the focus of a report sent to Robaina from Cabrisas on 10 September 1996 and how this company's decision to stop being involved in sugar for oil swaps had been taken unilaterally, was "surprising and unjustifiable" and contrary to the 1995 protocol on bilateral trade.³⁵ In May 1996 the report "Consideraciones sobre las relaciones económica-comerciales entre Cuba y Rusia y la Federación de Rusia", also states "The Cuban side has at all times expressed its willingness to respect the agreed agreements. The firm ALFO-ECO has only insisted on breaking these agreements."³⁶

Problems may have existed with ALFO-ECO, but this did not prevent other private Russian organisations becoming involved with the bilateral relationship. This included in June 1997 when various Russian banks, including Sberbank, displayed an interest in helping to underwrite both sugar for oil exchanges and also the completion of the Cuban sugar harvest.³⁷ Moreover, on 5 August 1997 Jesús Montané, MINREX official, sent a report to Fidel Castro about his recent

meetings with Alexei Mitrofanov, member of the Russian Duma and Vladimir Zhirinovski, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, and how the Bank of Russia may be interested in financing the completion of Juragua and refinancing part of the Cuban Soviet era debt.³⁸ Moreover, on 19 March 1998 Cabrisas wrote to Sergey Shoigu, President of Intergovernment Commission, regarding the meeting of this commission which had taken place on 19 to 20 February 1998 in Havana. At this it was agreed that the National Bank of Russia and Vnesheconombank would in principle liquidate Cuba's Soviet era debt.³⁹ This agreement did not come to fruition and in early 1999 Moscow attempted to move discussions regarding Cuba's debt to the Paris Club.⁴⁰ The ramifications of Russia trying to do this, and Cuba's Soviet era debt in general, will be returned to later in this article, but Russian banks being willing in principle to liquidate Cuba's Soviet era debt was indicative of the changed nature, or 'new realities,' of Cuban-Russian relations in the 1990s when compared to the Soviet period of the relationship. These 'new realities' were symptomatic of Moscow's wish to foster a new relationship with Havana, with significantly the 'new realities' remaining apparent even after the upturn in bilateral relations which occurred from the mid-1990s onwards.

Cuban aversion to the changes taking place in Russia, and the subsequent impact this had for Cuban-Russian relations in the 1990s is also apparent in MINREX reports concentrating on discussions between Cuban and Russian Foreign Ministry personnel. On reading the MINREX documents that focus on the discussions regarding sugar for oil exchanges it becomes clear that they had been problematic even before the issues which had arisen with ALFO-ECO's involvement in these exchanges, detailed above. A MINREX report, dated 5 March 1994 states

The Cuban government informed the Russia government that these irregularities in the agreements have already caused serious damage to Cuba's economy and if this situation continued it would mean that Cuba's traditional market for sugar for 30 years would disappear. This has left the Cuban government having to instigate emergency measures in the national economy, with this also affecting sugar production.⁴¹

Havana's anger was further evident during bilateral visits of one country's political elite to the other with Robaina's discussions with Kozyrev in May 1995 being described as "frank".⁴² The report continues that Robaina outlined the economic difficulties which the Cuban population were encountering due to the 80% fall in trade, which had previously been conducted with the socialist bloc.⁴³ Cuban dislike of the Russian economic reforms was also raised during Primakov's trip to Cuba in May 1996, when Primakov met Ricardo Alarcón, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and member of the Council of Ministers, Roberto Cabrisas, Minister of Foreign Trade, and Lage.⁴⁴ Additionally, the afore cited report 'Consideraciones sobre las relaciones económica-comerciales entre Cuba y Rusia y la Federación de Rusia' concludes 'Of course, Cuba has calculated the damages and losses caused by the abrupt and unilateral rupture of economic-commercial relations between the two countries, which the Russians are unaware of.'⁴⁵

Problems persisted throughout the decade with Jose Luis Rodríguez, Vice-President of the Council of Ministers and Economic and Planning Minister, sending a letter to I. Materov, Vice Minister of Economics on 28 October 1996, detailing problems with the financial frameworks and coefficient in calculating the price of goods in trade with Russia and how this had negatively impacted bilateral trade.⁴⁶ Additionally, on 10 January 1998 Robaina wrote to Ibrahim Ferradaz, Minister in the Ministerio de Inversión Extranjera y Cooperación Económica (MINVEC) and the future Cuban Tourist Minister, about the upcoming meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission and how contentious issues remained in Cuban-Russian trade, which Primakov was aware of. Robaina wrote that relations have improved but "In spite of the fact that the financial problems remain, in the first place the subject of "mutual obligations" which can become a real impasse to improving relations."⁴⁷ Moreover, on 15 December 1998 Robaina wrote to the then Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov about the agreement dated 15 October 1995 which stated that 4.7 million tons of sugar would be exchanged for 14.2 million tons of oil and was due to expire on 31 December 1998. However, this agreement had not been met, causing problems for Cuba. Robaina states that Russia's internal situation had been the cause of the failure to fulfil this arrangement.⁴⁸

Very quickly after December 1991 the ‘new realities’ of Cuban-Russian relations were made abundantly clear to Havana, with this demonstrating Moscow’s desire to foster a new relationship with Cuba from the ashes of Cuban-Soviet relations. The Cuban aversion to these ‘new realities,’ the unfolding situation in Russia and its subsequent impact on Havana-Moscow relations were apparent in Cuban government statements at the time. However, a reading of the MINREX documents evidence both the level of this displeasure and also that MINREX officials made their aversion to them apparent in their interactions with their Russian counterparts. This practice continued throughout the 1990s and even after the upturn in relations.

What becomes apparent very quickly after December 1991 was that MINREX officials constantly referred to the Soviet heritage of Cuban-Russian relations, thus purposefully cultivating a legacy in the relationship. This legacy was clearly explicated to the Russian government, when on 20 January 1992 Isidoro Malmierca, Cuban Foreign Minister, sent a telegram to Kozyrev, which stated

It is not enough to tell you that the Government of Cuba has recognised the Russian Federation’s independence and sovereignty, but we express our warmest congratulations.

On this significant occasion I am pleased to reiterate the feelings of friendship, respect and admiration which existed between our two peoples for three decades and hope that the relationship will develop and become consolidated in all fields.⁴⁹

Cuba acknowledging Russia as the legal successor to the Soviet Union was vital for the bilateral relationship in the 1990s, with MINREX officials also continually referring to the relationship’s heritage. In the afore cited document attached to the letter that Allende sent to Soto on 12 April 1994, Allende wrote, “Try to introduce a paragraph dedicated to the search for an agreement to the debt of the Republic of Cuba, coming from the credits previously granted.”⁵⁰ Allende’s instruction demonstrates both Cuba’s use of a Soviet era legacy and also that Havana was willing to negotiate about its Soviet era debt, a topic which will be returned to later in this article.

Moreover, this report attached to the letter Allende wrote to Soto on 12 April 1994 states, "...a renovation of bilateral relations is necessary, particularly in light of the historic, political, economic, social, religious and cultural links between the two peoples."⁵¹ Additionally, a memo dated 11 July 1997 exists that details bilateral discussions throughout 1997 and how Cuba persisted in speaking about the credits which the Soviet Union had given Cuba prior to its disintegration should be honoured.⁵² MINREX officials persistently raising the relationship's heritage throughout the Yeltsin period evidences both the significance of this legacy in their discussions with their Russian counterparts throughout the period of study of this article, and also that they deliberately cultivated this legacy.

A number of MINREX documents focused on the changes to Russian foreign policy in the mid-1990s, the reasons that underpinned this alteration and the subsequent increase in Cuba's geostrategic significance for Russia. On 30 March 1995 a MINREX report examines the article published in *Pravda* on 27 February 1995 detailing Yeltsin's wish to improve relations with Cuba and that Kozyrev and Viktor Chernomyrdin, Deputy Prime Minister, had been instructed to do this for "Russian national security."⁵³ Moreover, on 10 April 1996 a letter was sent to Rosa Elena Simeón, Minister of Science and Technology, that was also sent to Allende about the recent meeting with V.G. Kadishervsky of the Russia Nuclear Institute concerning the creation of an institute in Cuba which would help facilitate work of this nature with Latin America.⁵⁴ Furthermore, in November 1998 Luis García stated "Russia is starting an offensive in the region."⁵⁵ Moreover, on 4 February 1999 Marcelino Medina, MINREX official and future First Deputy of Foreign Affairs, wrote to Allende about his meeting with the new Russian ambassador to Cuba, Mijail Kaminin. In this it is reported that Kaminin said that it is a "... magnificent moment for relations between the two countries and...Cuba is the number one priority for Russia in Latin America and is a strategic worldwide ally."⁵⁶

An increase in Cuba's strategic importance for Moscow was significant for the upturn in the bilateral relationship, with, as detailed, Primakov replacing Kozyrev as Foreign Minister also being

important for this process. On 6 January 1996 Robaina sent a one-page report to Pérez Roque about Kozyrev's resignation, in which he details how pressure had been mounting on Kozyrev since October 1995, in part due to his very pro-Western policies.⁵⁷ Robaina then postulates that a change in Russian foreign policy, away from the pro-Western position, may result and that likely successors to Kozyrev were Vladimir Lukin, Russian ambassador to Washington and President of the Duma's Committee on Foreign Relations, Vitali Churkin, Ambassador to Belgium and the European Union, and Dimitri Riurikov, Presidential assessor of foreign relations.⁵⁸

Robaina's hypothesis about a change in Russian foreign policy due to the resignation of Kozyrev was correct even if he had not predicted that Primakov would become Russian Foreign Minister. However, the importance of both the alteration in Moscow's foreign policy and also Primakov's appointment for Cuban-Russian relations quickly became apparent due to his previously noted alternative approach to foreign policy in comparison to Kozyrev. MINREX officials were aware of this and on 12 February 1996 Carlos Fernández de Cossio, Director of Instituto Norteamericano in Havana, wrote a letter to Robaina, which was also sent to Allende that details his meeting with Mihail Orlovetz, charge de'affaires in the Russian embassy. The letter finishes, "...Chancellor Primakov conducts the work of the Russian Ministry with great dignity, and that every word of the Russian Minister has great meaning and weight, not as it had previously that things were said without meaning and significance. Furthermore Primakov believes that relations between Cuba and Russia should be strengthened."⁵⁹ Furthermore, on 14 October 1997 Robaina once again wrote to Primakov about sugar for oil swaps and despite Cuban efforts, there remained no resolution, which Robaina says is "regretful." Robaina concludes by pointedly highlighting that if sugar for oil exchanges are successfully resolved it will benefit both Cuba and Russia.⁶⁰

The involvement of both Foreign Ministers demonstrates the importance of this issue for both countries, but also MINREX personal petitioning a member of the Russian political elite who had sympathies for the Soviet era in general in an attempt to encourage closer relations with Russia. The Cuban need for oil in this period is also key for Cuban interest in this issue. Moreover, as

detailed, MINREX personnel repeatedly referred to the relationship's Soviet heritage in discussions with their Russian counterparts. It could therefore appear that Cuban thinking 'remained' in the past, but the relationship's history and Cuba acknowledging Russia as the legal successor to the Soviet Union was MINREX officials reminding their Russian counterparts of their moral and legal duty to respect the previously signed agreements. Additionally, these discussions also evidence a Cuban wish for a relationship with Russia to exist that contained a number of features of Cuban-Soviet relations.

The relationship's continuing significance for Cuba and desire for Soviet era features to remain functioning also extended to trade in general, and was not restricted to the aforementioned sugar for oil exchanges. On 18 February 1992 German Amado-Blanco, First Vice Minister and former Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, sent a report to Cabrisas who in 1992 was working in the Ministry of Foreign Trade, in which Amado-Blanco outlines that Cuba was "negotiating" with Russia, signalling that no actual trade had occurred by this time, but that discussions were ongoing in St Petersburg for the Cuban purchase of 2000 tonnes of detergent, 477 tonnes of ferrous metals, 100 tonnes of safety paper, 200 tonnes of quilts for sugar mills and 30 million razor blades.⁶¹ In the Soviet era Cuba had acquired such goods from the Soviet Union, but these are much reduced figures with as, previously noted, trade in 1992 being 823 million pesos or less than 25% of the 1991 level, or below 9% of trade conducted in 1988.⁶²

As detailed, MINREX documents also demonstrate that MINREX officials quickly attempted to utilise the change in Russian foreign policy in the mid-1990s and the subsequent increase in Cuba's geostrategic significance to Moscow for their own advantage. This may have been expected, but they endeavoured to do this by petitioning Russian officials who had sympathy for the Soviet era. The interactions with Primakov detailed above demonstrate this process. Furthermore, the high regard in which he was held within the Cuban ruling elite was further evidenced on 14 September 1998 when Fidel Castro wrote to Primakov congratulating him on his election as Russian Prime Minister. Castro wrote, "For all those who know him in Cuba, his

election is a source of satisfaction, because it renews our confidence in the future of Cuban-Russian relations.”⁶³

Primakov was not the only person who had significance for the upturn in relations. This was also evident in the changing nature of the composition of the Russian State Duma, which attracted much Cuban attention. On 25 January 1996 Allende sent a report to Robaina about the new configuration of the Russian Duma, headed by Gennady Selezinov, former *Pravda* journalist, and that this could result in a change to Russian foreign policy.⁶⁴ Consequently, in a letter to Alarcón dated 21 February 1997, Robaina commented that the result of the change in the Russian Duma was that it displayed more sympathy towards Cuba, apparent in Russia condemning the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Act, or Helms-Burton Act, which yet further tightened the United States embargo against Cuba.⁶⁵ A more sympathetic Duma was further demonstrated in a report regarding Primakov’s visit to Cuba in June 1996 which details that the result of the “new Duma” was Russia abstaining at the UN Convention on Human Rights rather than voting for the United States position as it had since 1992.⁶⁶

The importance of the Duma, and Cuba having good relations with key figures within it was noticeable on 4 November 1997 when Luis García wrote to Allende stating that two important members of the Russian Duma Alexey Podberezkin, co-President Patriotic and Popular Russian Union and Vice President Commission, and Mikhail Kalashnikov, Commission of Political Social, were due to privately visit Cuba in late November 1997. Both Podberezkin and Kalashnikov had empathy for Russia’s Soviet past with Kalashnikov being a famous former Soviet General and Podberezkin later becoming General Secretary of the United Party of Russia (SEPR), which had sympathies for Russia’s Soviet past and desired a revival of Russia’s global influence. Luis García organised for José Ramón Balaguer, former Cuban ambassador to Moscow, to meet them during their trip.⁶⁷ It appeared that MINREX were lobbying these key figures while on the island.

Cuban lobbying demonstrates both the significance of Cuban-Russian relations for Havana and also the Cuban government striving to cultivate good relations with key figures in Russian

politics. This can be perceived as part of the process of Havana endeavouring to develop a “constituency abroad,” in accordance with the ideas of Feinsilver, Domínguez, Erisman and Kirk noted previously. However, MINREX officials strove to achieve this by focusing on the heritage of the relationship and by lobbying key figures who had sympathy for Russia’s Soviet era past.

The importance for Cuba of an improved relationship with Russia in “balancing” the United States, is also apparent in MINREX documents. In relation to this, on 24 May 1994 Allende received a letter from Cabrisas which outlined that Montenegro had been lobbying sections of the Russian Duma regarding the United States embargo against the island.⁶⁸ This lobbying appears to have been successful because a document dated 18 October 1994 iterates Russian support for Cuba, calls for the embargo to be ended and describes it as a “relic of the cold war.”⁶⁹ Cuba lobbying Russia in this manner is highly significant as it demonstrates both the importance of the bilateral relationship for Cuba, and also the Cuban desire for the relationship to continue throughout the Yeltsin period. This Cuban desire was despite their dislike of Russian policies of the early 1990s, including the pro-Western foreign policy which Kozyrev had been fundamental in implementing. Importantly this Cuban lobbying occurred when Kozyrev was Russian Foreign Minister.

Moreover, many of the MINREX documents refer to Russian dislike of the extra-territorial nature of the Helms-Burton Act and the aftermath of the shooting down of the two “Brothers to the Rescue” planes by the Cuban air force in February 1996.⁷⁰ In the afore cited letter dated 12 February 1996 from Fernández de Cossio to Robaina, it is reported that Orlovetz had stated that Russia will lobby on Cuba’s behalf in Washington as they believe Helms-Burton to be anti-Cuban.⁷¹

Additionally, in March 1996 there was correspondence between Pérez Roque and Primakov in the aftermath of the “Brothers to Rescue” incident with Pérez Roque thanking Russia and Sergey Lavrov, Russian ambassador to the UN and future Russian Foreign Minister, for the support that Russia provided for Cuba in the subsequent discussions at the UN.⁷² On 18 November 1998 Bolaños wrote to General Antonio Concepción, Head Secretary of the Cuban Armed Forces (FAR),

on future Deputy Foreign Minister Georgy Mamedov's proposed visit to Cuba. In this Robaina writes "Russia is a faithful friend of Cuba," and that Russian support in Cuban-United States relations is important.⁷³

What becomes apparent on reading the MINREX documents from this time is of the continuing importance of the relationship with Russia for Cuba throughout the 1990s and even before the upturn in relations from the mid-1990s onwards. This importance was both political and economic with Havana desiring the relationship to have many features from the Soviet era of the relationship, very different from what Moscow proposed for the relationship in the immediate aftermath of the end of Cuban-Soviet relations. Cuba's aims are in agreement with the ideas of Feinsilver, Domínguez, Erisman and Kirk noted previously. However, the way in which MINREX officials attempted to achieve their goals was by referring to the relationship's heritage and by petitioning Russian personnel who had sympathies for the country's Soviet past. This highlighted the political aspect of the Soviet legacy which MINREX intentionally pursued in their negotiations and interactions with their Russian counterparts. Furthermore, documents evidence the success of Cuban lobbying with the subsequent support Russia provided for Cuba in various UN fora.

As noted, the Cuban debt to Moscow accrued during the Soviet era remained a contentious issue in bilateral relations throughout the 1990s, with, as previously detailed, Moscow's desire to link it to the Paris Club debt being indicative of the 'new realities' of the bilateral relationship.⁷⁴ Moreover, at first, negotiations regarding Cuba's debt appeared to follow a very different trend from other issues, with MINREX officials rebuffing Russian attempts to discuss it. This was acknowledged on 14 July 1992 when Amado-Blanco sent a memo to Cabrisas about the talks which had taken place with Kalinin. The memo states that Kalinin acknowledged problems within the relationship or more specifically, "It is the opinion of Kalinin that Cuba's refusal to discuss the debt problem is not helping talks about the future of commercial links between the two countries, and that a more flexible position would benefit the talks and give the parliament more understanding of the situation."⁷⁵ However, as detailed, over time this situation changed and on 10 August 1999

Allende wrote to Lage about a meeting which had taken place with Kalinin concerning Vice Minister of Finance Vadim Volkov's forthcoming trip to Cuba. Regarding this Allende wrote

I add that the objective of this trip is to seek mutually acceptable formulas with Cuba on the subject of its debt. He says that they must fulfil their obligations as members of the Paris Club, of which they depend greatly, but which also do not wish to affect other interests and is a juxtaposition in that context and we must wait for the Volokov's trip.

I note that they want to demonstrate to this institution, regardless of whether there are still outstanding problems, that they converse and negotiate with Cuba, and that both countries are trying to find solutions.⁷⁶

It appeared that Russia's own economic difficulties and need for good relations with the Paris Club were complicating the situation with Cuba.

Attempts to resolve this issue continued. On 17 August 1999 Cabrisas wrote to Shoigu about the Soviet era debt with the proposal that 7,380 million dollars of this debt be repaid in biotechnological goods, but in particular a vaccine against Hepatitis B.⁷⁷ In August 1999 Russia offered a further solution to the issue of Cuba's debt with the MINREX report also stating that the debt had been adversely affecting the bilateral relationship and that Cuba has accepted an invitation to send a delegation to Moscow to discuss it further.⁷⁸ Both Cuba and Russia offering solutions to resolve the issue of Cuba's Soviet era is important as it demonstrates a wish in both countries to remove this contentious issue from the relationship. For Cuba this is highly significant. Had Cuban-Russian relations been unimportant Havana would not have proposed a possible resolution to its Soviet era debt.

In this period, attempted solutions to Cuba's debt were ultimately unsuccessful, with Moscow's wish to link Cuba's debt to the Paris Club remaining contentious throughout 1999. On 5 October 1999 Francisco Soberon, President of the Cuban National Bank, wrote to Kaisanov, Russian Finance Minister, about the issue of Cuba's Soviet era debt. Soberon admits that finding a solution has been problematic, but "...more recently we discovered that Russia has the intention of

moving the discussion of Cuba's debt to the Paris Club. From the beginning we have explained that this procedure is absolutely unacceptable,"⁷⁹ Soberon then details the reasons why Cuba believes this to be the case which includes that the debt was never underwritten by the Paris Club and that it had denounced the characteristics of Cuban-Soviet relations as they had unfolded.⁸⁰ Soberon then states that Cuba has been negotiating with the Paris Club to renegotiate its own debt to this organisation and this Russian proposal would complicate these negotiations. Soberon concludes that bilateral talks between Cuba and Russia are their preferred option to find a solution to Cuba's Soviet era debt.⁸¹ Furthermore, four days later Pérez Roque wrote to Soberon, about Kaisanov's visit to Cuba. In this Pérez Roque refers to "mutual obligations" and writing about the involvement of the Paris Club, "Consequently their intervention in this subject would be serious, a source of confusion and procrastination."⁸² Pérez Roque then reminds Soberon that during his recent visit to Cuba, Ivanov had stated that it was for the two countries to decide this matter.⁸³

Since January 1959 Cuban nationalism and sovereignty have been of prime importance for the Cuban Revolution and Pérez Roque's letter evidences this. Simply, Havana did not want third-party involvement. Moreover, and highly importantly, Cuba's point of reference for the debt was once again the Soviet era of the relationship, further verifying the significance of the Soviet era legacy to MINREX officials in their discussions and interactions with Russian Foreign Ministry personnel.

The Cuban practice of continually raising the Soviet era heritage of Cuban-Russian relations could surmise that it appeared as if the Cuban officials were almost 'tied' to the past even as the New World Order of the 1990s evolved. However, MINREX personnel doing this also reminded Russia of its moral and legal duty to adhere to previously signed agreements. Russia had become the legal successor to the Soviet Union and could not simply choose to ignore aspects of this. Furthermore, the continual reference to the relationship's past also demonstrated a Cuban wish for Cuban-Russian relations to contain a number of Soviet era features, as does their previously detailed criticism of the relationship's 'new realities.' This Cuban desire is in accordance with the

ideas of Feinsilver, Domínguez, Erisman and Kirk noted previously that had aided the Cuban Revolution survive the great changes of the 1990s. Moreover, this Cuban behaviour also highlights the importance of the Soviet era legacy for the relationship in the 1990s. Moreover, this legacy was purposefully cultivated by MINREX officials and was not the result of a degree of serendipity as has been previously thought.

This legacy, and Cuban personnel lobbying members of the Russian political elite who had sympathies with the Soviet era in general, had significance for the relationship in the final years of Yeltsin's Presidency, but it also laid the groundwork for the rejuvenated relationship of the twenty-first century. In the period since 2009 Raúl Castro having visited Moscow three times and Putin and Dmitry Medvedev having travelled to Havana once and twice, respectively, demonstrates this revitalised relationship, the foundations of which are very much in its Soviet past with the relationship's heritage in general continuously being referenced by both governments.⁸⁴ In January 2009 when Raúl Castro travelled to Moscow he was interviewed by the Russian journal *America Latina* during which he stated that the two countries are "inextricably" linked.⁸⁵ Furthermore, in July 2012 when the Cuban Premier returned to Moscow, Putin commenting on the bilateral relationship stated "...all that we have achieved during these past years, it's our common treasure."⁸⁶ As detailed, MINREX personnel had continuously referred to the relationship's Soviet past throughout the years in which Yeltsin was the President of Russia.

A reading of the MINREX documents that have become available on Cuban-Russian relations in the period when Yeltsin was President of the Russian Federation demonstrates the level of the Cuban dislike of the Russian reforms of the early to mid-1990s, with ideological reasons underpinning this displeasure. Additionally, these documents also highlight the changed nature of Cuban-Russian relations or the 'new realities' of the bilateral relationship when compared to the Soviet era, most noticeable with the involvement of private Russian banks in various issues. These 'new realities' evidence the Russian desire for a relationship with Cuba in the immediate aftermath of the end of Cuban-Soviet relations to be based on very different foundations from the

relationship's previous incarnation. However, despite this Cuban aversion to the Russian reforms of the early 1990s and 'new realities' of the relationship, the MINREX documents also make it very clear that Havana's relationship with Moscow remained crucial for Cuba throughout the duration of Yeltsin's Premiership. This was both political and economic, with the Cuban government desiring it to function with a number of features of the Soviet era.

What also becomes apparent from the documents is that throughout the Yeltsin period in an attempt to achieve this, MINREX officials lobbied members of the Russian political elite who had sympathies for the Soviet era in general. Significantly Cuban lobbying is evident from as early as 1994, or before the changes in Russian foreign policy which have been highlighted as being key for the upturn in relations from the mid-1990s onwards. This practice evidences the importance of relations with Russia for Cuba throughout the Yeltsin period, partly aided the upturn in the relationship from the mid-1990s onwards and also helped create the groundwork of the rejuvenated Havana-Moscow relationship of the twenty-first century.

Additionally, the contemporary relationship is partially underpinned by its Soviet era heritage which increases the importance of the cultivation of a political legacy, achieved by MINREX officials constant referral to the relationship's Soviet heritage throughout the 1990s. The result is that the Soviet legacy has been much greater than previously thought, was not simply practical and economic, was purposefully advanced by MINREX officials throughout the post-Soviet era and did not result from a degree of serendipity as previously thought. Simply, this legacy is of fundamental importance in understanding the bilateral relationship during both the years in which Yeltsin was Russian President and also the contemporary relationship which is at its most robust politically since 1991.

Notes

- ¹ 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.
- ² Nicola Miller, "Trying to Stay Friends: Cuba's Relations with Russia and Eastern Europe in the Age of UNITED STATES Supremacy," in Morris Morley & Chris McGillion, eds., *Cuba, the United States, and the Post-Soviet Cold War World. The International Dimensions of the Washington-Havana Relationship*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 59-65; Mervyn J. Bain, "Gorbachev's Legacy for Russian/Cuban Relations Post 1991," in John M. Kirk and H. Michael Erisman, eds., *Redefining Cuban Foreign Policy. The Political Impact of the 'Special Period'*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), 217-220; Mervyn J. Bain, *Russian-Cuban Relations Since 1992. Continuing Camaraderie in a Post-Soviet World* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), 57-59; Mervyn J. Bain, "Back to the future. Cuban-Russian Relations under Raúl Castro?" *Journal of Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, vol 48, no. 2-3, (September 2015), 159-168.
- ³ Bain, 'Gorbachev's Legacy,' 223-225. Bain, *Russian-Cuban Relations*, 83-110. Bain, 'Back to the future,' 162-163.
- ⁴ Bain, 'Gorbachev's Legacy,' 222-226. Bain, *Russian-Cuban Relations*, 59-69, 83-110 and 114-123. Bain, 'Back to the future,' 163-166.
- ⁵ All the documents referenced are from MINREX Archivo Europa – Russia – Ordinario. The documents in the MINREX archive have been referenced in full as the information on the documents is not consistent throughout the archive.
- ⁶ John, H. Kirk, "Defying the Odds: Five Conclusions about Cuban Foreign Policy," in Erisman & Kirk, eds., *Redefining Cuban Foreign Policy*, 333-334.
- ⁷ H. Michael Erisman, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Survival Strategy in Cuba's New Foreign Policy," in Erisman & Kirk, eds., *Redefining Cuban Foreign Policy*, 3-5.
- ⁸ Julie M. Feinsilver, *Healing the Masses. Cuban Health Politics at Home and Abroad*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 13.
- ⁹ Jorge Domínguez, "Cuba and the Pax Americana." in Philip Brenner, Marguerite Jiménez, John. H. Kirk & William M. LeoGrande, eds., *A Contemporary Cuba Reader. Reinventing the Revolution*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2008), 203.
- ¹⁰ The Russian economic reforms were designed to create 'millions of owners, not hundreds of millionaires' with it being hoped that this prevent a return to communism. Stephen White, *Russia's New Politics. The Management of a Postcommunist Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 125.
- ¹¹ Margot Light, "Foreign Policy Thinking" in Alex Pravda, Roy Alison & Margot Light, eds., *Internal Factors in Russian Foreign Policy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p33-100; Neil Malcolm & Alex Pravda, "Democratization and Russian Foreign Policy," *International Affairs*, 72, 3, (1996), 537-552; Paul Kubicek, "Russian Foreign Policy and the West," *Political Science Journal*, Volume 114, Number 4, (1999-2000), 547-550.
- ¹² Nadya Plankton, "Inferiority complex of Post-pioneers." Paper presented at the Symposium "Cuba, Russia and the Post-Soviet Experience," the University of Connecticut, Conn, February 2007, 3.
- ¹³ E.A. Larin, *Politicheskaia istorii Kuba XX Veka* (Moscow: Visshaya shkola, 2007), 164.
- ¹⁴ *Granma* (8 September 1992), 3-6; *Izvestia* (9 March 1992), 7; *Izvestia* 12 March 1993.
- ¹⁵ *Vneshiaia Torgovliia v 1986*, (Moscow: mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1987), 259 & 265; *Vneshiaia Torgovliia v 1989-1990*, (Moscow: mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1991),5; *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) 1991*, (Santiago, Chile, United Nations, 1992), 135; Anuario Estadístico de Cuba 2000, <http://www.camaracuba.cu/TPHabana/Estadisticas2000/estadisticas2000.htm>., VI-5-VI-7. *Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook 1999*, (Washington: International Monetary Fund, 2000), 392. A. Ermakov, "Cuba desde la nueva perspectiva de Moscú" *Hispano Americano*, Numero 2599, 21 February 1992, 33.
- ¹⁶ Roger E. Kanet, "From 'New World Order' to 'Resetting Relations': Two Decades of UNITED STATES-Russian Relations" in Roger E. Kanet, ed., *Russian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 204-206.
- ¹⁷ *Rossiiskaya gazeta* (26 March 1999), 2. Boris Yeltsin, *Midnight Diaries*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2000), 207.
- ¹⁸ Yevgeny M. Primakov, *Minnoe pole politiki*, (Moscow: Molodai gvardii, 2006) 149-152.
- ¹⁹ Kanet, 'From 'New World Order', 204-227. Regarding Kozyrev's resignation and the changes in the Russian Duma due to an intensification of Russian nationalism Stephen White has written that "In the end he became a 'ritual sacrifice' to the new Duma." Stephen White, *Russia's New Politics*, 229. Bain, *Russian-Cuban Relations*, 114-115.
- ²⁰ Bain, *Russian-Cuban Relations*, 129 & 132.
- ²¹ *Ibid*, p.67, p.113 & pp.121-123; Bain 'Gorbachev's Legacy,' 223.
- ²² Bain, *Russian-Cuban Relations*, 145-152.
- ²³ *Ibid*, 88-89, 220 & 64-67; Bain 'Gorbachev's Legacy,' 119-220.
- ²⁴ *Granma* (8 September 1992), 3-6.

- ²⁵ Fidel Castro, "Main Report to the 5th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba," *Main Report. Speech at the Closing the 5th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba*, (Havana: Editora Política, 1998), pp.32-33. *Granma* published a number of articles that were highly critical of the Russian internal situation, please see *Granma* (2 January 1992), 4 & *Granma* (3 January 1992). Moreover, F. Laguera in *Bohemia* detailed the economic struggle that faced most Russians and that due to exorbitant prices state pensions were insufficient. F. Laguera, "Especulación callejera" *Bohemia* (31 July 1992), 15-17. Additionally, more recently Raúl Castro has described the effect of the end of Cuban-Soviet trade on the Cuban economy was "as if a nuclear bomb had exploded." Raúl Castro, "Raúl Castro: Reasons and Revelations," *Latinskaia Amerika*, No9 (1993), 22.
- ²⁶ Rogelio Montenegro, 'Memo sobre la situación y las perspectivas del complejo energético ruso,' 21 April 1994, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Cuba (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Cuba, Avenida de los Presidentes, Havana, Cuba) (.hereafter MINREX), 1.
- ²⁷ "Danos y perjuicios a la economía Cubana como consecuencia de la abrupta y unilateral interrupción de los vínculos económica-comerciales con la extinta URSS," 20 May 1994, MINREX, 6.
- ²⁸ Rogelio Montenegro "La Economía Rusa en el verano 1994: Nuevo punto de inflexión en la Crisis economía?" 12 October 1994, MINREX, 1.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1-2.
- ³⁰ "Consideraciones sobre las relaciones económica-comerciales entre Cuba y Rusia y la Federación de Rusia," May 1996, MINREX.
- ³¹ Jorge Bolaños to Felipe Pérez Roque, 28 August 1998, MINREX.
- ³² "Tienen conversaciones oficiales Robaina y Koziriev,' 23 May 1995, *Prensa Latina*, MINREX.
- ³³ Roberto Robaina to Evgeny Primakov, 9 September 1996, MINREX.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ Roberto Robaina to Evgeny Primakov, 9 September 1996, MINREX.
- ³⁶ 'Consideraciones sobre las relaciones económica-comerciales.' May 1996.
- ³⁷ Luis García to Isabel Allende, 24 June 1997, MINREX.
- ³⁸ Jesús Montané to Fidel Castro, 5 August 1997, MINREX.
- ³⁹ Ricardo Cabrisas to Sergey Shoigu, 19 March 1998, MINREX.
- ⁴⁰ Francisco Soberon to Kaisanov, 5 October 1999, MINREX, 1.
- ⁴¹ Memo from the Government of Cuba to the Government of Russia, 5 March 1994, MINREX, 2
- ⁴² "Tienen conversaciones oficiales Robaina y Koziriev,' 23 May 1995, *Prensa Latina*, MINREX.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ "Vista del Canciller Ruso Evgueni Primakov," Parte 4, 22 May 1996, MINREX.
- ⁴⁵ "Consideraciones sobre las relaciones económica-comerciales," May 1996, MINREX, 3.
- ⁴⁶ Jose Luis Rodríguez to I. Materov, 28 October 1996, MINREX.
- ⁴⁷ Roberto Robaina to Ibrahim Ferradaz, 10 January 1998, MINREX.
- ⁴⁸ Roberto Robaina to Sergey Ivanov, 15 December 1998, MINREX.
- ⁴⁹ Isidoro Malmierca to Dmitry Kozirev, 20 January 1992, MINREX, 1.
- ⁵⁰ "Análisis proyecto Ruso declaración sobre los principios de la Relaciones entre la Federación de Rusia y la Republica de Cuba," 11 April 1994, MINREX, 2.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1.
- ⁵² "Informe Sobre Reunión de Homólogos Efectuada el 10-7-97 en el Minvec en Relación con el Proyecto de Convenio Intergubernamental tal con Rusia Para Terminación y Puesta en exploración CEN 'Jaragua' 11 July 1997, MINREX.
- ⁵³ "Ordena Eltsin intensificar relaciones de Cuba," 30 March 1995, MINREX.
- ⁵⁴ Carlos Palmarola to Rosa Elena Simeón, 10 April 1996, MINREX.
- ⁵⁵ Luis García to Isable Allende, 27 November 1998, MINREX.
- ⁵⁶ Marcelino Medina to Isabel Allende, 4 February 1999, MINREX.
- ⁵⁷ Roberto Robaina, "Sobre la renuncia del canciller Kozirev," 6 January 1996, MINREX.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁹ Carlos Fernández de Cossio to Roberto Robaina, 12 February 1996, MINREX.
- ⁶⁰ Roberto Robaina to Evengeny Primakov, 14 October 1997, MINREX.
- ⁶¹ German Amado-Blanco to Ricardo Cabrisas 18 February 1992, MINREX, 7.
- ⁶² *Vneshiaia Torgovliia v 1986*, 259 & 265; *Vneshiaia Torgovliia v 1989-1990*, .5; CEPAL, 1992, 135; *Anuario Estadístico de Cuba 2000*, VI-5-VI-7; *International Trade Statistics Year Books*, 799-800
- ⁶³ Fidel Castro to Evgeny Primakov, 14 September 1998, MINREX.
- ⁶⁴ Isabel Allende, "La conformación de la nueva дума y la estrategia Eltsin," 25 January 1996, MINREX.
- ⁶⁵ Roberto Robaina to Ricardo Alarcón, 21 February 1997, MINREX.
- ⁶⁶ "Relaciones bilaterales," May 1996, MINREX.
- ⁶⁷ Luis García to Isabel Allende, 4 November 1997, MINREX.
- ⁶⁸ Roberto Cabrisas to Isabel Allende, 24 May 1994, MINREX.
- ⁶⁹ "Comunicado en la conferencia de prensa de MINREX de Rusia acerca del levatiemento del embargo contra Cuba," 18 October 1994, MINREX.

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- ⁷⁰ On 24 February 1996 two planes belonging to the Cuban American organisation ‘Brothers to the Rescue’ were shot down by the Cuban air force for entering Cuban air space.
- ⁷¹ Carlos Fernández de Cossio to Roberto Robaina, 12 February 1996, MINREX.
- ⁷² Felipe Pérez Roque to Evelyen Primalov, 8 March 1996, MINREX.
- ⁷³ Roberto Robaina to Antonio Concepción, 18 November 1998, MINREX.
- ⁷⁴ A final agreement on Cuba’s Soviet era debt was not reached until Vladimir Putin visited Cuba in July 2014. *Granma* (12 July 2014), 5.
- ⁷⁵ German Amado-Blanco memo to Ricardo Cabrisas, 14 July 1992, MINREX, 1.
- ⁷⁶ Isabel Allende to Carlos Lage, 10 August 1999, MINREX.
- ⁷⁷ Ricardo Cabrisas to Sergey Shoigu, 17 August 1999, MINREX. 2.
- ⁷⁸ “Principales Planteamientos Formulados por Vadim Volkov, Viceministerio del Ministerio de Finanzas de Rusia, de Compañero Carlos Lage, Vicepresidente Consejo de Estado, en Entrevista celebrada,” 24 August 1999, MINREX, 1.
- ⁷⁹ Francisco Soberon to Kaysanov, 5 October 1999, MINREX, 1.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid.
- ⁸¹ Ibid, 2-3.
- ⁸² Felipe Pérez Roque to Francisco Soberon, 9 October 1991, MINREX.
- ⁸³ Ibid.
- ⁸⁴ Bain, *Russian-Cuban Relations*, 83-110 & 143-152.
- ⁸⁵ Moreover, it is not just the 1959 to 1991 period of the relationship which has received much attention from the Cuban and Russian governments, but even the relationship that existed between the two countries prior to the Cuban Revolution. This was most evident in January 2009 when Raúl Castro visited the permanent exhibition at the Museum of the Great Patriotic War in Moscow to Jorge and Aldo Vivo and Enrique Vilar who fought for the Red Army during World War 2. Raúl Castro, “Hoy las relaciones entre Rusia y Cuba son excelente. Entrevista al Presidente del Consejo de Estado de Cuba,” *América Latina*, No3, (2009), 6.
- ⁸⁶ Yaima Meneses Puig, 2012, “Mañana de homenaje y recordación,” *Juventud Rebelde*, 12 July, www.juventudrebelde.cu/internacionales/2012/07/-12. Accessed 14 July 2012.