Preliminary Report

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El Caribe en Su Inserción Internacional
(Cuba Today and the Road Ahead)

Conference Organized by:
Center for Inter-American Policy and Research (CIPR), Tulane University
Centro de Investigación y Adiestramiento Político Administrativo (CIAPA)

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Introduction

This was a conference on the current situation of the Cuban economy and its future challenges, Raúl Castro’s reforms and other domestic dynamics, integration issues, and U.S.-Cuba relations. In essence, the conference mainly focused on economic themes because reforms in Cuba have been limited so far to the economic realm. Political reforms are not on the agenda. It also explored Cuba’s foreign policy and its closer ties to Venezuela and China. Finally, U.S. policy toward Cuba received special attention because important changes could be fostered under the new administration of Barack Obama and larger Democratic majorities in both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The Center of Inter-American Policy and Research (CIPR), a collaboration between Tulane University and Centro de Investigación y Adiestramiento Político Administrativo (CIAPA), was the principal sponsor of the two-day conference that was held at CIAPA’s facilities in San Jose, Costa Rica. The main objectives of the event were the following:

- Promoting thoughtful debates about the latest economic and political developments in Cuba, the achievements and limitations of the island’s current economic strategies, and the future of U.S.-Cuba relations;
- Providing a forum in which academics and professionals from Cuba and other countries could engage in discussion of these issues and increase their mutual understanding;
- Laying the ground for future academic collaborations and facilitating the publication of a volume drawn from the conference submissions.

More than twenty experts from Cuba, the United States, Canada, and Latin America were invited to present their work at the conference in seven panels dealing with macroeconomic, integration, migration, and foreign policy issues. While a few selected observers were allowed to attend, the event remained purposely closed to the general public to promote an unofficial, frank, and constructive discussion. It should be noted that five of the eight invited Cuban scholars could not attend the conference as their institution withdrew its authorization at the last minute after we did everything possible to secure their presence and make sure that something like this (though not uncommon) would not happen. We did receive papers and presentations from at least three of them that were discussed in their respective panels. Furthermore, two additional participants coming from Brazil and Colombia were unable to travel to Costa Rica due to the lack of a yellow fever vaccine certificate that has to be administered ten days prior to the entry into the country. Their travel agent, responsible for advising them of all visa and other international travel regulations, was apparently unaware that such a requirement was in place.

This report summarizes the principal arguments made by the participants without mentioning the specific source. It follows the same organization of the panels according to themes, which began with an overview of the Cuban economy and continued with debates on a number of key issues and challenges. The concluding section identifies the main areas of consensus and disagreement among the participants and provides a general assessment of the event.
Overview of the Cuban Economy

The Cuban economy has recovered substantially from the deep recession of the early 1990s following the demise of the former Soviet Union and witnessed notable expansion in recent years, at least until 2007. Cuba’s GDP growth and remarkable macroeconomic performance was mainly triggered by exports of professional services (medical ones to a large degree) under an oil-for-doctors barter arrangement with Venezuela and, to a lower extent, soft credits from China and growing nickel revenues. It was pointed out that services currently account for the largest share of Cuba’s GDP while the contribution of agriculture and manufacturing is relatively small. However, the Cuban economy suffered a deceleration in 2008 and still faces chronic problems and major challenges. Cuban officials said that three hurricanes and the world economic crisis were the main causes of economic deterioration, but participants identified additional contributing factors. One presenter observed that a GDP slowdown was projected even before the hurricanes hit the island.

The list of problems that negatively affect the Cuban economy and represent key challenges for the future includes the following:

- A growing fiscal deficit;
- A sizable foreign debt in hard currency that exclude the unresolved issue of the huge accumulated debt with the former Soviet Union;
- Productive sectors show little growth, with agriculture emerging as the weakest area of the Cuban economy;
- Trade of goods and services has a positive balance but the commercial deficit is on the rise; the most worrying development is that in 2008 exports of goods were 30% below the 1989 level while imports were 79% above the 1989 level.
- Trade is heavily concentrated with China and Venezuela; Russia and Brazil declared they want to increase trade with Cuba but a major upward trend has yet to concretize;
- The existence of a dual exchange rate system stimulates perverse incentives and creates obstacles to greater economic efficiency;
- Living standards for ordinary Cubans have contracted with respect to 1989 as underscored by a much lower average real wage;
- Transportation and housing are in precarious conditions; there were nonetheless some improvements in electricity services, urban transportation, and infrastructure renewal;
- The national industry is undercapitalized while internal restrictions on the hard currency operations of state enterprises and additional restrictions on the activities of joint ventures continue to hamper growth;
- Cuba’s macroeconomic performance is also subject to external factors that cannot be easily controlled.

Overall, the reactivation of the Cuban economy is far from being irreversible despite recent improvements. One participant noticed that time works against Cuba, suggesting that the island’s special agreements with Venezuela and the expansion of professional services abroad, albeit very profitable, might not be sustainable in the long run. Cuba’s new President Raúl Castro has vowed to remove some of Cuba’s too many regulations and limitations that stifle economic growth and promote “structural changes” to strengthen the national economy and its productive base and improve living standards. A line of argument that emerged in the discussion
is that Raúl’s recent reforms are positive but not structural. Most measures introduced tend to favor a restricted group of upper-middle income Cubans while remaining inaccessible to the majority of Cuban citizens. The main structural reform is giving state land in usufruct to individuals, cooperatives, and other entities, but serious problems continue to plague the agricultural sector. In general, there is a wide gap between Raúl’s actual measures and those proposed by Cubans in the national debate launched by the island’s authorities after Fidel Castro fell ill in July 2006. Another participant suggested that the ailing Fidel Castro might still be very much in charge of major policy decisions in Cuba.

**Cuba in the International System**

Presentations in this panel focused on Cuba’s main development challenges and opportunities resulting from its condition of a small insular economy of the Caribbean and how the roles, structures, and ways of seeing themselves of Cuba’s military forces have changed over the years, especially since the beginning of the Special Period in the early 1990s.

As a small insular economy, Cuba faces a number of specific problems and challenges in devising an effective strategy of economic development. Both its international insertion and regional integration are affected by this singular condition. Regarding the potential type of international specialization, Cuba must take into account that its economy is not as small as others in the Caribbean region (it can achieve a higher degree of diversification), but possibilities are limited. As for development within a strategy of regional integration, Cuba is linked to a process of “Caribbeanization” that will intensify with the future normalization or improvement of relations with the United States.

Overall, Cuba’s singular condition offers possibilities for future economic growth but several factors might complicate development and prospects are moderate. Cuban authorities should consider the following:

- The international specialization of a small insular economy like that of Cuba is inevitably based on a limited number of products and services; for this reason, it is vital to identify the specific activities that could provide long-term benefits and their potential contribution to the development process; today, there are many products that Caribbean countries want to buy but Cuba cannot produce;
- The Cuban economy must be able to combine adequately a successful international insertion based on export promotion with an import substitution strategy aimed to stimulate the internal market;
- With a larger economy than most of its Caribbean neighbors, Cuba has a greater potential to substitute imports (including in the production of capital goods); again, this would also depend on the expansion of the internal market;
- The promotion of international tourism and other services is not incompatible with a process of industrialization; the combination of tourism growth and industrialization is a viable development strategy for Cuba, although industrial expansion would be limited to specific sectors of the economy.

One participant pointed out that tourism could be the most important factor in the reorganization of the Cuban economy. The main problem is that Cuba still relies too much on “sun and beach”
tourism. The latter is very attractive for all Caribbean countries because of its ability to generate substantial hard currency revenues. However, Cuba has the potential to develop other kinds of tourism, especially cultural and patrimonial (quite underdeveloped in the Caribbean) as well as real estate tourism like in the Dominican Republic. Furthermore, the lifting of the U.S. travel ban with respect to Cuba would certainly provide a significant boost for the island’s tourism industry and negatively affect other popular U.S. destinations in the Caribbean.

Regarding the military, some say it is today the most important institution in Cuba. Cuba’s Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR), despite a massive downsizing in the early 1990s, have been and to a large degree still are a “revolutionary” force that remains loyal to a revolutionary project. The number of deserters to the “enemy” has remained small and the level of corruption is lower than in other sectors. Underscoring a clear link with the past, Cuba’s armed forces continue to exhibit a strong discipline and a firm belief in that revolutionary tradition which they trace back to the wars for independence in the 19th century and the political, social and economic thinking of José Marti. It is worth emphasizing that Cuba’s military has increased its role in the economy over the past two decades. Although the actual extent of such role remains unknown, the military is believed to control many of the island’s most important sectors including tourism, certain areas of agriculture, mining, and even parts of the retail sector. One participant observed that Cuba and the United States still maintain regular military meetings and that the two countries should take advantage of such contacts to expand cooperation to other areas.

**Migration Issues and Transnational Networks**

Presenters in this panel examined the Cuban ethnic policy cycle in the United States linked to the presidential electoral cycle and the importance of transnational actors (especially migrant entrepreneurs) that sustain hard currency flows from the United States into the Cuban economy and undermine the main goal of the U.S. economic sanctions against Cuba.

In the post-Cold War era, Washington reinforced the embargo against Cuba even though the latter ceased to represent a national security threat. Between 1992 and 2004, a Cuban foreign policy tied to the presidential electoral cycle and politically rational for presidential contenders prevailed in the United States. Except in 2000, when Al Gore broke with Clinton over the Elián González issue, incumbents (Bush I, Clinton, and Bush II) tightened U.S. policy toward Cuba in (re)election years. In non-election years, however, U.S. presidents reversed or left unenforced the election year policies when they conflicted with other concerns of state (especially family values and the right to travel).

The principal factors contributing to the Cuban ethnic policy cycle are the following:

- An incumbent running for reelection who feels it is in his short-term political interests to implement the policy;
- An ethnic group that need to have votes to “deliver” in key states; Washington’s Cuba policy was to a great extent linked to partisan bidding for Cuban-American votes in the pivotal state of Florida, where most Cuban exiles live;
- The importance of political contributions (PACs)
The year 2008, when there was no embargo tightening and no incumbent running for reelection, represented the breakdown of the aforementioned policy cycle. Barack Obama was the first presidential candidate since 1959 to campaign on a promise to loosen U.S. sanctions against Cuba. He received no PACs, attracted new voters, and took advantage of changing Cuban-American views over the embargo (more favorable to a relaxation) and a leadership divide in the Cuban exile community.

Although one of the stated goals of additional sanctions against Cuba in the post-Cold War era was to offer positive inducements to democratic reforms in Cuba, the key objective of U.S. policy was to intensify economic pressure on the Castro government (and eventually hasten its collapse) by curtailing the flow of hard currency to the communist island. The United States, instead, has not only been unable to foster fundamental political reforms in Cuba, but actually has contributed significantly to the recovery of the island’s economy from the deep recession of the early 1990s.

Despite the tightening of the embargo, significant amounts of hard currency have been channeled into the Cuban economy through U.S. visitors (mainly Cuban-Americans), remittances sent by Cuban exiles to their families on the island, U.S. telecommunications payments to Cuba, American food exports (sold in government-owned dollar stores), and U.S. investors who hold shares of foreign companies doing business with the Castro government. In short, the United States has played and continues to play quite an important role in the Cuban economy and a substantial portion of hard currency reaching Cuba is in violation of U.S. regulations. Washington’s policy toward Havana ended up throwing a lifeline to the same government it was supposed to undermine.

**External Sector**

Presenters in this panel analyzed the behavior of the external sector of the Cuban economy during the last decade and the effects of remittances and migration on Cuban recipients based on a survey of Cubans in Cuba and the United States.

Cuba’s balance of payments (BOP) statistics and estimates from official and unofficial sources indicate an extraordinary turnaround in the balance of trade in recent years. Although Cuban external sector statistics are sparse and of questionable consistency and reliability, huge gains in exports of goods and services (the balance of trade swung from a deficit of 916 million pesos in 2001 to a surplus of 1,647 million pesos in 2007) would represent a remarkable achievement for an economy that has traditionally faced foreign exchange shortages. Furthermore, if grounded on market reality and sustainable, these gains might bode well for the future of the Cuban economy whose growth rates have suffered from underperformance in external markets.

With the merchandise trade account chronically in deficit, exports of services (professional services and, to a lower degree, tourism and transportation) are primarily responsible for the astonishing turnaround mentioned above. Despite an increase of imports of food and consumer goods, the latter most likely because of soft credits from China, exports of services ballooned after 2004 under special agreements with Venezuela. One participant, again, stressed that windfall revenues from services offered by Cuban doctors and medical technicians stationed
abroad are a key factor for the recent pattern of service trade but wondered whether it is a sustainable model.

Based on two random surveys of 500 Cubans in the United States and Cuba conducted between December 2008 and January 2009, another participant argued that Cuban migration has continued to rise in recent years (especially to Spain) and that Cubans in the United States keep sending remittances to the island despite difficulties at hand. The main results of these surveys include the following:

- Migration from Cuba has increased and expanded to countries other than the United States, Spain (23% of total) in particular;
- Economic reasons are a key rationale for departure;
- Nearly 40% of Cubans say they are planning to leave the country in the next two years;
- Remittance recipients are receiving relatively similar amounts of money compared to four years ago, but do so increasingly from informal means; however, the majority of migrants agree that U.S. and Cuban restrictions have diminished their ability to remit to relatives, and in fact 36% says they are remitting less than in 2007;
- The rest of the world is becoming more formal in sending remittances, not Cuba;
- The cost of remitting to Cuba is among the most expensive in Latin America;
- The average length of time receiving money is eight years;
- Over half of Cubans who left have visited the island, 20% in 2008;
- Over one third of remittance recipients are saving, and they save a median of US$500 (among the lowest in the region);
- Their method of savings often involves investing in some small economic activity.

### Agricultural Sector

The Cuban government has put agriculture at the top of its agenda because domestic production is far from satisfying the needs of the Cuban population, prices of imported food continue to rise, and large plots of land across the island are fallow or underused. Meanwhile, sales of U.S. food and agricultural products to Cuba under the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act, or TSRA (signed by President Clinton in October 2000), reached a record level of $710 million in 2008 after a virtual stagnation in the 2005-2006 period.

To fully understand the contribution of the existing agricultural organization to the recovery of Cuba’s agricultural sector it is important to recall the situation before 1989. At that time, the sector was characterized by a great concentration of productive resources and large-scale operations. In 1993, Cuba did implement reforms that included the breakup of the state monopoly on land to establish agricultural cooperatives and the creation of free farmers markets. However, the agricultural sector suffered a massive decapitalization in the 2002-2006 period and reforms came to a halt. Like in the early 1990s, a new agricultural model is now emerging in Cuba but with significant differences from the past. The current organization tends to favor a declining role of the state in direct production and more autonomy but, paradoxically, the number of entities in the cooperative sector has diminished, the scale of their operations has grown, and greater autonomy is needed. Moreover, the financial model presents a high degree of centralization, the available workforce is insufficient, and the presence of foreign investment is relevant only in commercialization activities but not in production.
On a positive note, Cuban authorities are promoting some decentralization in agriculture by establishing the subordination of productive units to municipal organizations that did not exist a few years ago. The “municipalization” process and Raúl Castro’s recent decision to allow direct sales of milk to the population are two steps that can break traditional patterns. Yet, the removal of key restrictions is necessary to fully exploit the potential of Cuba’s agricultural sector. In particular, the market should play a greater role in the main economic activities of the sector and all intermediary structures should be dissolved.

The United States has become a very important trading partner for Cuba, ranking first among the island’s sources of imported food since 2002, the first full year of U.S. sales under TSRA. American food sales to Cuba, which consist primarily of corn, chicken, wheat, soybean products, and rice, grew by 61% in 2008 mainly as a result of high global commodity prices, the negative effects of three hurricanes, and the Cuban government’s policies and constraints. Indeed, Raúl Castro has placed increasing emphasis on improving agricultural productivity and output but hurricanes have done extensive damage to agriculture across the island and boosted imports. As U.S. companies attempt to increase their sales to Cuba (with cash payment required by U.S. law), other nations and foreign companies are expanding offers of credit sales to Havana, some with extended payment terms. Brazil, above all, has emerged as a key competitor to U.S. food sales to Cuba, especially for soybean products.

**Monetary Duality**

Raúl Castro said that Cuba is studying ways to promote the gradual and prudent revaluation of the Cuban peso or CUP vis-à-vis the convertible peso or CUC, a local currency that was pegged with the dollar since its introduction in 1994 but has no value outside the country. Monetary duality in Cuba is a root cause of growing income inequalities, inefficiencies, and corruption. Presenters in this panel analyzed the recent developments in the Cuban monetary system and the shortcomings of the current exchange regime.

Although the CUP/CUC exchange rate has remained stable in recent years, there is consensus within and outside Cuba that monetary duality is a problem. Since the launch of a process of recentralization of the Cuban economy in 2004 there has been a movement toward monetary convergence through the centralization of operations in hard currency, restrictions on purchases of imported goods, and a greater presence of Cuban products and subsidized Chinese appliances in the internal market. One participant, however, noticed that some of Raúl’s measures such as the lifting of restrictions on sales of computers, DVD players, air conditioners, and cellular phones have actually strengthened dollarization in Cuba. According to him, dollarization persists fundamentally because of the unchallenged monopoly power of the Cuban government over the economy. The government has little incentive to eliminate the dual currency system because it is the owner of retail hard currency stores, can minimize exchange rate risks, and pays workers in CUPs rather than CUCs. In addition, considering the fragile situation of the economy and the extreme dependence on Venezuela, further artificial appreciation of the Cuban peso does not seem an appropriate action. The time for monetary independence in Cuba is still far away.

Another participant agreed that the CUC should be eliminated but pointed out that the main problem with the current exchange regime is the existence of an overvalued fixed exchange rate
between the non-convertible Cuban peso and the U.S. dollar, backed by a system of exchange controls. He argued that the best strategy for policymakers dealing with Cuba’s fiscal and monetary policies would be to get rid of price controls and fixed exchange rates for the CUP. It would be better to do it at once and for both given that such combination in Cuba lowers output and employment, reduces domestic saving and investment, and hinders the efficacy of macroeconomic policies. In contrast, full exchange rate and price liberalization would increase national income and eliminate rationing in all markets, thus putting an end to shortages, corruption, political arbitrariness associated with government controls, and discrimination against exports resulting from exchange controls.

**U.S.-Cuba Relations**

The election of Barack Obama as the new U.S. President has raised hopes for improved relations between Cuba and the United States. Presenters in this panel analyzed the prospects for change in U.S. policy toward Cuba under an Obama administration focusing on both Cuban and U.S. perceptions of such change.

From a Cuban standpoint, it is important to recognize the fact that the U.S. threat has been a domestic factor in Cuba for at least half a century and triggered a defensive stance that has affected and will continue to affect Cuba’s political agenda, ideological climate, internal debates, and foreign policy decisions. Albeit a U.S. military attack against the island is very unlikely, the U.S. meddling in Cuban internal affairs facilitates neither the debate on possible reforms nor the promotion of democracy. Washington’s criticism of human rights and democracy in Cuba is illegitimate in the eyes of the Cuban people. Furthermore, Cuba is less isolated than ever before and its relations with almost every Latin American country are good. Finally, the Obama administration has vowed to close the prison for terror suspects at Guantanamo Bay but it does seem to favor the return of the actual base to Cuba as demanded by the Castro government.

The Cuban government should nonetheless demonstrate its willingness to improve relations with the United States. Despite the lack of bilateral agreements and the legacy of distrust linked to power asymmetry (Cuba cannot afford to make mistakes), the quarrel with the United States has changed and some cooperation remains in the areas of migration and anti-drug trafficking. Cuban citizens are quite informed about American life and culture and U.S. travelers feel safer in Cuba than in the Middle East or some Latin American countries. While it remains to be seen whether the island is prepared to accommodate millions of U.S. tourists once the travel ban is lifted, a rapprochement between the two countries would be beneficial for Cuba as it would open access to the U.S. market and create favorable conditions for deeper and friendlier ties. In any case, Cuba believes it should approach the United States with a dose of realism and without illusions, claim exclusive right to decide possible transformations to its political and economic systems, avoid self-criticism that could be exploited by Washington, call for no preconditions and no double standard, and demand that Cuban socialism be treated as an adversary and not as an enemy.

As for the Obama administration, a clear policy toward Cuba has yet to be formulated. The new U.S. president stated that his Cuba policy will be guided by one word: libertad (freedom). He added that he intends to maintain the embargo, lift restrictions on Cuban-American travel and
remittances to the island, and promote a dialogue with Havana but without defining how he is going to do that. And it remains to be seen whether the influence of hardliners in South Florida will decline. Two main options are available to the United States: 1) make unilateral changes toward the easing of the embargo and see how Cuba reacts; 2) change the policy only if Cuba changes first.

Obama, at a minimum, should keep his promise to Cuban-Americans. He could also retain Bush’s overall approach with some punctual decisions or modify entirely the current U.S. policy toward Cuba whose main assumption is that change on the island is more likely if Cubans remain poor. Obama will have to review every piece of that policy, including the role of diplomacy, contact levels, migration agreements, and what to do with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Radio and TV Marti, Cuba’s designation as a terrorist country, and the U.S. transition coordinator for Cuba. There is little doubt that the political weight of Miami’s hardliners would be reduced by the lifting of the travel ban. Various segments of the U.S. travel and agricultural industries are participating this year in the debate about the removal of travel restrictions with respect to Cuba. Besides, the Obama administration should begin focusing on problems that can realistically be solved in the short-term, using diplomatic practices to address migration, environmental, and other issues that affect the United States as a neighbor. More complicated issues such as that of property settlements should be left for future discussions.

**Conclusion**

Participants considered the conference a success. The key challenges of today’s Cuban economy and the main obstacles and opportunities for the improvement of U.S.-Cuba relations were identified and debated extensively to increase knowledge and understanding. Exchanges between Cuban and non-Cuban scholars and professionals greatly enriched the level of the debates and the overall quality of the event, highlighting the importance of multi-country academic cooperation and the need for future collaborations with Cuban institutions.

Four main areas of agreement clearly emerged during the presentation and discussion sessions. First, the Cuban economy has grown substantially in recent years but strong macroeconomic growth has yet to translate into major benefits for the Cuban population. Economic recovery, in particular, has yet to overcome the notable contraction of consumption levels and living standards experienced after 1989. Second, the Cuban economy suffered a slowdown in 2008 that was only partially caused by three hurricanes and the global crisis. The meager performance of Cuba’s productive sectors (especially agriculture), mounting commercial and fiscal deficits, the negative effects of monetary duality, and chronic problems with public transportation and housing are among the most pressing challenges. Third, unprecedented revenues from exports of professional services under special deals with Venezuela have boosted the island’s economy but also raised external dependency and closely tied future economic progress to developments in Venezuela and the price of oil. Fourth, changes in Washington’s Cuba policy will most likely be gradual (the removal of the whole embargo is unlikely in the short-term) even though President Obama has assumed a more conciliatory stance toward Cuba than his predecessor.

On the other hand, there were a few areas that either remained unclear or provoked some disagreement among the participants. While there was a general consensus that the economic
reforms implemented by Raúl Castro so far are not structural (except for the distribution of idle land to Cuban farmers), great uncertainty lingers over the future direction of the reform process. Cuban scholars revealed that the Chinese model, often identified by foreign observers as an attractive model to Raúl Castro, has little influence on the island. Different views about the nature and scope of reforms have emerged in Cuba, but the internal debate (at least within the “accepted mainstream”) is focusing on how to improve the current socialist system rather than questioning the actual system. The issue of whether economic deterioration and the impact of three hurricanes will facilitate reforms in Cuba also sparked some disagreement. Although one participant pointed out that periods of economic crisis in Cuba were usually followed by important market-oriented reforms, a Cuban scholar raised doubts about the argument that extensive economic damage from hurricanes should speed up reforms and favor decentralization of Cuba’s state-controlled economy. Finally, moderate optimism transpired concerning positive changes to U.S. policy toward Cuba under the new Obama administration. One participant went as far as saying that the United States should not even see Cuba as an adversary (which implies traditional security concerns) but rather as an ideological competitor and live with that. However, it is evident that Cuba’s strong position on negotiations with the United States laid out before might complicate Obama’s attempt to begin a dialogue with Havana and improve relations between the two countries.

List of Participants (*not present)

Dr. Antonio Aja Díaz* (Centro de Estudios Demográficos)
Dr. Carlos Alzugaray* (Centro de Estudios sobre Estados Unidos)
Dr. Rodolfo Cerdas (CIAPA)
Dr. Susan Eckstein (Boston University)
Dr. Ludovico Feoli (CIPR/CIAPA)
Dr. Rafael Hernández (Revista Temas)
Dr. Ernesto Hernández Catá (International Monetary Fund, Ret.)
Dr. Hal Klepak (Royal Military College of Canada)
Dr. Ana M. López (Tulane University)
Dr. Carmelo Mesa-Lago (University of Pittsburgh)
Mr. William A. Messina (University of Florida)
Dr. Mauricio de Miranda Parrondo* (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana Cali)
Dr. Pedro Monreal (Economista y Autor)
Dr. Armando Nova González* (Centro de Estudios de la Economía Cubana)
Dr. Manuel Orozco (Inter-American Dialogue)
Mr. Roberto Orro Fernández (Independent Economic Consultant)
Dr. Alejandro Pavel Vidal* (Centro de Estudios de la Economía Cubana)
Dr. Jorge Pérez-López (International Economist)
Dr. Omar Everleny Pérez Villanueva* (Centro de Estudios de la Economía Cubana)
Mr. Philip Peters (Lexington Institute)
Dr. Thomas F. Reese (Tulane University)
Dr. Archibald Ritter (Carleton University)
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Dr. Julia Sweig* (Council on Foreign Relations)
Dr. Constantino Urcuyo (CIAPA)
Dr. Juan Valdes Paz (Unión de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba)