**TRANSCEND PEACE UNIVERSITY | PACS6922 University of Sydney | Advanced Conflict Transformation** | Collective Assgt 2 | DPT/PEMC | Cuba/US

DIAGNOSIS: Structural violence enacted on global scale with the United States leading sustained and widespread embargo severely impairing economic development of Cuba. Cultural violence rampant throughout the six decades of conflict with the US mounting propaganda campaign casting ordinary Cubans as direct and intrinsic threats to the US’ “symbolic sphere of existence”. Direct violence manifested in Cuban revolutionary violence/US-led counter-revolutionary onslaughts.

PROGNOSIS: Trauma from decades of revolutionary/counter-revolutionary violence remains raw. Impossible to achieve genuine reciprocity/harmony without conciliation/healing. Legacy of US imperialism not addressed. Little or no US recognition of Cuba’s achievements. Rapprochement thus far only aimed at opening Cuba to neoliberal economic colonisation. Sought-after ‘pattern of interaction’ does not seek genuine equity. Without therapy, contradictions will sustain underlying conflict.

THERAPY: *Political* – Increases in participatory democracy in Cuba are desirable but must be balanced with the maintenance of ‘basic needs for all’. Political therapies should aim at nurturing robust national political discourse and deeper civic participation in Cuba. These could include a two-party system (Galtung, 2008), press freedom and more opportunities for public engagement in debates. This political landscape must be reflective of the Cuban population, not class-based or exclusionary. Bilaterally, Cuba and US must seek to understand each other’s respective position on civil and human rights through their different conceptions of freedom and wellbeing. Looking beyond ideological limitations and seeing the other’s perspective will assist understanding and nurture acceptance/empathy.

President Obama to conclude the embargo on Cuba and support Cuba’s return to a full membership in the Organization of American States (OAS). Such action would have a positive effect for OAS members at a regional level (Ciurlizza, 2014) and would help Cuba cultivate more varied diplomatic and trade relations in Latin America. It would also provide scope for discussion in the OAS supporting Cuba’s potential inclusion in the Security Council.

Formal integration into a pan-American regional institution could further promote democracy and human rights in Cuba by involving new actors in a *South-South* cooperation supporting Cuba’s eventual ratification of international Human Rights treaties. Possible scope for ‘truth commissions’ supporting conciliation/healing.

President Obama to issue an official apology for harmful effects of the Monroe Doctrine (US neo-colonialism expansion policy of the Americas beginning in 1823) and Platt Amendment (1901 US conditions of withdrawal from Cuba), which saw the US brutalise Cuba and the hemisphere (Rodriguez and Targ, 2015). Expressing regret and acknowledging the damage caused by these policies will assist US and Canada re-enter dialogue through OAS and LAC while underscoring Latin American independence from past imperialist powers.

*Economics* **–** Resolving the economic embargo would be a homerun; expediting the path toward it would also be a commendable effort in the count down of Obama’s administration. An alternative to lobbying the congress to lift the embargo is inclusive of, but not limited to, developing mutually respectful and beneficial economic projects in the Special Economic Zone of Maribel Bay (Arsenault, 2013) (Grogg, 2014) (Martinez, 2015). Respectful in a way that USA is mindful of the role of Brazil as the original sponsor, Cuba as the host and other Latin American countries as collective solidarity nations in the region. Beneficial in a way that USA is improving its relation with Cuba (and other Latin American nations) by show of goodwill through mutually profitable economic engagement; all the while persuasively convincing US Congress the economic benefits of engaging Cuba as economic partner. Threading mindfully as not to repeat history and undo the recent years milestone, joint economic ventures need to start with two priorities: developing industries that would support Cuban economic empowerment and a complete write-off of past debts and lost properties during revolution.

Cuba happens to excel at agro-ecology, green energy and health as evidenced by its service in those fields to Latin America and Caribbean nations (Patel, 2016) (Weissenstein, 2016). Furthermore, given Cuban exemplary action during the Ebola crisis in the West African nations (Taylor, 2014), opening clinics for doctors without border and health research center in Maribel could also be considered as sound economic investment to encourage the thrives of other local and regional businesses in other industries such as tourism and education.

*Military* – The current make-up of the Cuban military is a result of sustained conflict. Ending the embargo will remove the last pretext for keeping Cuban society militarized through mass militias and alleviate social anxiety stemming from ever-impending violence (Global Security). It will also assist Cuba to recalibrate its force posture and provide a degree of normalcy in relation to its military affairs, including building scope to engage in internationally-endorsed peace keeping and humanitarian operations. Increased Cuban military participation in UN peacekeeping will also increase revenue of military (UN, 2008), thus strengthening Cuba’s economic self-reliance.

President Obama could accept Cuban demands for the return of Guantanamo Bay. Closing Guantanamo’s detention facility and naval base would be a powerful indicator of a willingness to pursue non-violent means for resolving conflict. Although closing Guantanamo’s detention facility depends on US Congressional approval, it presents a unique opportunity to open a dialogue, including the 1934 US-Cuba treaty that the Cuban government perceives as invalid/obtained under duress. US withdrawal from Cuban soil could be coupled with a proposal for a Cuban presence in UN peacekeeping operations. Solutions include the transformation of the site into a peace zone, (such as a US-Cuba research center dedicated to protecting the environment – Roman and Kraska 2016), the creation of a memorial site acknowledging the six invasions of Cuban land by US forces or an international centre for peace and conflict studies.

President Obama to facilitate dialogue between US and Cuba through the OAS seeking agreement to work cooperate on shared security concerns. Dialogue should be conducted through the OAS; CELAC countries (including Argentina, Brazil, Cuba and Nicaragua) in 2014 negotiated for Russia to install its Glonass global positioning system within their borders. Cuba’s agreement saw 90 per cent of its unpaid Soviet-era debts (US$32 billion) forgiven on the condition Russia be allowed to reopen the Lourdes Signal Intelligence Station (Luhn 2014). Nonviolent military therapies should be conducted through the OAS to account for shifting alliances bringing Russia and China into the hemisphere as providers of economic and military support.

*Cultural* – The recognition of Cuban achievements and history is a key step to a cultural reconciliation between the two nations. The regime’s laudable successes in key sectors such as health and education need to become internationally recognised. US acknowledgment of Cuba’s progresses in health and education and of the trauma caused by Cuba’s isolation is key to an inclusive dialogue with Cuban leaders, including with Fidel Castro, who still plays a strong symbolic role in Cuba (CNN, 2016).

Notwithstanding the positive effect of the current rapprochement, such dialogue must be equitable and US expressions of reconciliation must steer clear of neo-colonialism and asymmetric relations. Re-cast the US profile in the region as culturally rich, racially accepting and socially and economically enabling. Position the US to lead by example in the application of skills and resources to protect and preserve threatened cultures and environments of the region. States should jointly herald Cuba’s attainment of ‘basic needs for all’ and permit the achievement to endure and proliferate. Such statements must be undergirded by a complete halt in US propaganda campaigns. Utilising their proximity, allow citizens on both sides to share cultural, artistic and sporting experiences while leveraging similarities over differences. This would reduce conflict, heal trauma and increase equity and harmony.

Possible role for ‘American Catholic’ mediators in transforming US-Cuban relations, with the Pope invited to visit Cuba for this purpose rather than focusing mediation towards Europe. Mediation on Cuban soil is a restorative gesture offsetting a previous power imbalance (Dwight, 2015). Cuban Press should be free to cover and highlight US efforts to build a ‘positive peace’ without fear of censorship.

US to resist the imperative of outright cultural colonisation and open multiple dialogues for mutual learning and enrichment. Engage processes for greater freedom of expression and human rights safeguards in Cuba but ensure they are not tainted by self-serving Western conceptions. Preserve Cuba’s hard-won ‘basic needs for all’.

CONCLUSION: The key perspective for the drafting team in developing the therapies has been empathy-nonviolence-creativity. Utilising the TRANSCEND approach, we would employ one-on-one dialogue seeking transcendence of the hitherto constraining ideologies of either party. In addition, building on the established TRANSCEND process (including detailed conflict mapping-legitimation-bridging), we would seek to provide a constructive-concrete-creative mediation. We assess transformation of the underlying conflict is possible but building genuine empathy and emotional resonance (in both suffering and fulfillment) remains the most significant hurdle.

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