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Cuba: From Columbus to Castro

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tary events: the outbreak of World War I; the German decision to launch Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union in 1941; the Korean War up to the Chinese intervention; Vietnam from 1950 to the decision to implement Vietnamization; the three confessional wars between India and Pakistan between 1948 and 1971; the Arab-Israeli crisis from 1947 to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982; and the crisis in the Persian Gulf from 1979 to the present. Each of these subjects can and has been treated in numerous books of greater breadth and depth than *Why Nations Go To War*. In condensing them into a single slim volume, something had to get left out.

Several examples of omissions stand out. His discussion of Korea stops at the point the United States and its allies were stopped and forced to retreat by the Chinese intervention. Some of the most interesting and instructive aspects of Korea are found when the Chinese were stopped and routed, sending the U.N. forces to the 38th Parallel a second time and having to decide whether to cross the line again. In a more minor vein, his brief section on Israel's invasion of Lebanon and the subsequent involvement of the U.S. Marines fails to mention either that there were two Gemayel brothers (Bashir and Amin) who were presidents of that country or that the United States deployed and withdrew from Lebanon twice during the crisis.

The least satisfying chapter, as has been the case in all editions, is the chapter on Vietnam, which is very

critical of American involvement. There is nothing wrong in criticizing our intervention; what is troubling is that the critical points all reflect the same arguments he made in the first edition. On the basis of the material presented, it is not at all clear that the author is even aware of some of the more subtle arguments and interpretations that have been made in the last 5 to 10 years.

Why Nations Go To War has obviously been a durable book, or it would not be in its fourth edition. As an introduction to the study of why wars occur or as a textbook in a relatively low-level college course, it maintains its value. It does have warts, however, and those blemishes reduce its value to the serious student.

DONALD M. SNOW
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Suchlicki, Jaime. *Cuba: From Columbus to Castro*. 2nd ed. rev. New York: Pergamon Press, 1985. 260pp. \$19.95 paper \$12.95

Pergamon-Brassey, the publishers of defense related material with offices in eight nations, have done us a service with this softbound, second edition short history of Cuba by Jaime Suchlicki. Recently this reviewer heard a serving four-star officer declare he had had little experience in the Caribbean area. This volume is designed to fill precisely such a basic information gap. In this case, it deals with a major player in

the area; and the author succeeds in his task most admirably.

In truth, Mr. Suchlicki has given us what can roughly be described as four short histories: the colonial years, the movement toward independence, the revolution, and Castro's Cuba. For a reader whose attention is focused on contemporary problems, the last two segments may suffice. But they then miss such *curiosa* as the origin of the name of that pleasurable Cuban beer, Hatuey, a favorite of Navy shakedown sailors at Guantanamo in pre-Castro days; the surprisingly late end of slavery in Cuba, as well as substantive issues such as the beginnings of U.S. interest in the island and the rise of Cuban national consciousness.

The book's final two segments present the major events of the Castro revolution including his assumption of power, the restructuring of the economy, destruction of ties to the United States, linkage to the U.S.S.R., programs to create a new socialist man, selective support of revolutionary movements, and overt military action in the African Continent.

Mr. Suchlicki concludes his smoothly written volume with a short chapter he titles the "Balance Sheet." In it he recasts the continuing question of the American political left, "is Castro willing to negotiate with the U.S." into, is Castro ready "to render the kinds of meaningful concessions that he has barred in the past, concessions concerning Cuba's relationship with the Soviet Union." Mr. Suchlicki answers that it is unlikely "Fidel will abandon world

center stage to become simply another friendly authoritarian/paternalistic caudillo."

What about after Fidel? There are indications that Castro's energies are slackening and speculation that he is seriously ill. His brother Raul, supported by his raulistas, is the leader of a powerful, well-equipped, and increasingly experienced military. He is Castro's logical successor. Behind the phalanx of its military power Cuba now behaves abroad as a big power. Tens of thousands of Cuban soldiers, teachers, and advisers are serving in dozens of countries.

One is forced to ask: Does this global activity express a burgeoning sense of Cuban nationalistic pride? Is it a manifestation of Fidel's sense of self? Can Raul, lacking his brother's charisma, sustain the enthusiasms of the revolution? Would defeat of Cuban military adventurism deflate the Cuban people's support of the external activity or the revolution? Does not the global extent of the damage done by Cuban activity invite, as Secretary of State Alexander Haig once suggested, more direct action against the source? Will domestic economic imperatives ever temper Cuban zeal for international adventure? (*Per capita* debt is four times that of Brazil and three times that of Mexico but the economy does grow.) Such questions invite study and consideration by policymakers.

The book literature on Cuba is expanding but those who have an interest in this Caribbean state now playing on a global scale, could well

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begin with Mr. Suchlicki's excellent short history.

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Bittman, Ladislav. *The KGB and Soviet Disinformation: An Insider's View*. Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassey, 1985. 226pp. \$16.95

This "insider" is a 54-year-old onetime Czech intelligence officer of relatively high status who defected to the West following Russian invasion of his homeland in 1968. He has also written *The Deception Game* (1972) and figures in Richard H. Shultz' and Roy Godson's *Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy* (1984). The present volume has no illustrations or bibliography, a very skimpy index, and is most pedestrianly written. The chapter notes are all from open sources. In sum, the book will have almost nothing to offer the specialist.

Having said all that, let the reviewer also say that, in his humble opinion, too many volumes analyzing with sophistication the Soviet potential for global villainy cannot be put on the market. In defining "active measures" as "clandestine operations designed to extend Soviet influence and power around the world," Mr. Bittman breaks the concept down into component activities; these most definitely including the fostering of terrorism, also assassination: "The hunting season is open all year," and in its pursuit the Bulgarian "is one of the most brutal of all espionage ser-

vices." Militarily the most effective active measure orchestrated by the Kremlin are the "wars of liberation" in developing countries, and the KGB has mastered the techniques thereof "to a degree unparalleled in modern history." Disinformation as a phase of active measures "is a carefully constructed false message leaked into an opponent's information system" and "has clearly malicious intent—it implies deception." Any given theme is aided by utilization of such front groups or liberal think tanks as the well-known International Union of Students, the World Peace Council, and the Institute for Policy Studies or such relatively unknown outfits as the International Information Department, founded at Moscow in 1978.

From the beginning, *i.e.*, 1917, the United States has been an important target, and since the close of World War II has become the main enemy. The Central Intelligence Agency is the most enticing goal for penetration or otherwise sullyng, aided in part by that "contagious disease," the publication of memoirs by disgruntled former employees. (There is an interesting analysis of the motivation driving these scribblers on p. 188.) Since 1975 the Soviets have "substantially increased their efforts on Capitol Hill" and the most sought-after booty is scientific and technical.

This dispiriting recitation could go on and on, and the author's epilogue "What We Must Do," is much too cursorily pondered. Nevertheless Mr. Bittman's opus should find a