

“Democracy Promotion” Through U.S. Military Intervention

By Arnold August, April 2012

Washington always counts on the blockade to provoke “*hunger, desperation and overthrow of government*” (in their own words).¹

However, it also has never given up its policy of military intervention. As we can see in Chapters 4 and 5 of my book, and in this article, the U.S. intruded militarily in 1898 under the USS *Maine* pretext. The CIA orchestrated an invasion at Playa Girón in 1961. In 1962, the U.S. explicitly raised the spectre of other incidents such as “Remember the *Maine*.” To this day, the U.S. counts on this type of adventure as an alternative. One of the overall expressed goals is democracy promotion.

It would be fruitless for the U.S. to conjure up such subterfuges for military intervention without the confidence that it could rely on the monopoly press and the dissident bloggers. For example, one of the main Cuban hard-line dissidents currently is Ernesto Hernández Busto, presently living in Spain. His August 29, 2008, post entitled “¿Victoria?” and signed by Hernández Busto states, “My very personal opinion on the situation in Cuba is that a military intervention by the U.S. would be the most rapid and productive manner to do away with Castroism.”² Among the wide variety of dissident bloggers, there exists open complicity between, on the right alone, moderates and hard-liners. This connivance further blurs any fundamental differences that may exist between all of them. On hard-liner Hernández Busto’s blog, the individual who has the most posts (496) is the moderate dissident blogger Yoani Sánchez. This amounts to more than three times the number (160) entered by Hernández Busto himself.³ He also recommends Sanchez’s blog. Reciprocally, Sánchez’s website recommends, among other blogs, Hernández Busto’s *Penúltimos Días* and carries a number of his articles.

One of the main hopes for creating incidents in Cuba as a pretext for U.S. involvement on the island is the group Damas de Blanco. Irrespectively of how they may have originated in 2003, they have been for some time directly linked to the U.S. Interests Section in Havana as well as the Miami and Spanish right-wing anti-Castro agencies. Hernández Busto’s blog is one of the main sponsors and promoters of the Damas de Blanco’s activities. *Penúltimos Días*, when accessed last on July 31, 2012, had approximately 380 articles since 2006 promoting the Damas de Blanco in one way or another. They serve in this way as the modern-day mobile USS *Maine*, attempting to provoke incidents to justify U.S. intervention, going as far as military.

Of importance to our focus is the role of the U.S. press from 1959 to date, including the contemporary role of dissident bloggers and writers. Their trademark is to spread the notion that there is no democracy in Cuba.

Freedom of the press is considered a cornerstone of democracy. There are thus important considerations to take into account as to how this operates in the U.S. regarding Cuba. A series of former Top Secret Operation Cuba (Mongoose) documents has since become unclassified and involves the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, L.L. Lemnitzer. The subject of these documents is “Justification for U.S. Military Intervention in Cuba,” dated March 13, 1962. They cover several formerly secret documents, including the following possible justifications for U.S. military intervention in Cuba:

“Remember the *Maine*” incident could be arranged in several forms:

- a. We could blow up a US ship in Guantanamo Bay and blame Cuba.
- b. We could blow up a drone (unmanned) vessel anywhere in the Cuban waters....
4. We could develop a Communist Cuba terror campaign in the Miami area, in other Florida cities and even in Washington.
8. It is possible to create an incident which will demonstrate convincingly that a Cuban aircraft has attacked and shot down a chartered civil airliner enroute from the United States to Jamaica, Guatemala, Panama or Venezuela.... The passengers could be a group of college students off on a holiday.⁴

The same series of declassified documents contains comments on the need to shape public opinion. For example, it is stated that “world opinion ... should be favorably affected by developing the international image of the Cuban government as rash and irresponsible.” The documents also stress the need “to develop an international image of a Cuban threat.” This is combined with references to the use of “friendly” Cubans in Cuba or to be sent to Cuba in order to assist in creating “incidents.”⁵

Above, we have the evidence of dissident Hernández Busto’s invitation to the U.S. to invade Cuba. Other opposition leaders do the same. One such dissident is Óscar Elías Biscet. He actually

addressed the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs on February 16, 2012, by telephone from Havana. He suggested that the U.S. use its tradition of military invasions to invade Cuba. Elías Biscet in his testimony referred to Kosovo (the 1999 U.S.-led NATO air strikes in that region) as the example to follow.⁶ This appeal was publicized by dissident left websites such as Cuba Encuentro.⁷ When accessed on February 22, 2012, the Cuba Encuentro website had 164 results on the topic of Elías Biscet.

All of the above dissidents have in common their opposition to the “Castro regime” expressed in various shades of authoritarianism or dictatorship. They see the solution in different hues of democracy being inspired, whether they admit it or not, by U.S. democracy promotion. The dissidents comprise what the above-cited 1962 U.S. Operation Mongoose declassified document refers to as “friendly” Cubans in Cuba or to be sent to Cuba.

¹ Foreign Relations of the United States, Document 499. 1960. “Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Mallory) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rubottom).” United States Government Printing Office, (April 6) (1958–60), Vol. VI, Washington, 1991.

² Hernández Busto, Ernesto. 2008. “¿Victoria?” Penúltimos Días (August 29). At <<http://www.penultimosdias.com/2008/08/29/%c2%bfvicto/>>.

³ Penúltimos Días. 2011. Data retrieved online. (September 10). At <<http://www.penultimosdias.com/>>.

⁴ George Washington University. 1962. “Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, Subject: Justification for US Military Intervention in Cuba.” (March 13). At <<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/news/20010430/doc1.pdf>>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Elías Biscet, Óscar. 2012. “House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health and Human Rights.” Washington, DC. (February 16). At <<http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/112/HHRG-112-FA-WState-OBiscet-20120216.pdf>>.

⁷ Cuba Encuentro. 2012, “Biscet: ‘La Cuba en que vivo es una sociedad llena de miedo.’” (February 16). At <<http://www.cubaencuentro.com/cuba/noticias/biscet-la-cuba-en-que-vivo-es-una-sociedad-llena-de-miedo-274022>>.