The Future of Cuba: Scenario Analysis (2026–2027)

RINT - RENOVATIO IMPERII INTELLIGENCE

RENOVATIO IMPERII

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GEOPOLITICA IMPERII

"Renovatio Imperii" is a cultural association engaged in historical research and international political analysis. "**Renovatio Imperii Intelligence**" [RINT] represents the intelligence studies subsection of the International Political Analysis Department, named "**Geopolitica Imperii**."

1. Summary (1/2)

Purpose and Findings of the Analysis

Renovatio Imperii Intelligence ("RINT") has conducted a forward-looking analysis aimed at identifying the geopolitical scenarios that could emerge from shifts in the internal political balance of the Republic of Cuba and its relations with the United States of America. The analysis considers a time horizon of approximately two years, taking as its starting point the current state of isolation of the last socialist country in the Western Hemisphere. In particular, four alternative scenarios have been identified based on the intersection of two dimensions: the first concerning the resilience or, conversely, the disintegration of the Cuban regime, and the second concerning the degree of U.S. pressure exerted on the island.

More specifically, the following scenarios have been identified through this analytical matrix:

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- **Scenario A**: Pro-American Transitional Government;
- **Scenario B**: Transitional Government with Uncertain International Alignment;
- **Scenario C**: Deterioration of Relations with the United States;
- **Scenario D:** Consolidation and Diplomatic Triumph of Cuba.

Each scenario has been subjected to an in-depth analysis, with particular attention to four dimensions deemed crucial: the political and diplomatic dimension, the domestic political dimension, the economic and energy dimension, and the humanitarian dimension.

A comparative assessment of the four scenarios indicates that the effectiveness of U.S. coercive pressure is contingent, to a significant extent, upon the political and institutional cohesion of the Cuban regime. The intensification of restrictive measures would not necessarily precipitate regime collapse, just as bilateral détente would not automatically translate into political liberalization. The resilience of Cuba's political, military, and security apparatuses therefore emerges as a key determinant of the island's geopolitical trajectory.

Under Scenarios A and B, regime destabilization would yield divergent outcomes depending on Washington's strategic posture. In the former, political and institutional collapse would facilitate the establishment of a pro-American transitional government and Cuba's subsequent strategic realignment, albeit at the risk of significant domestic instability and economic-energy dependence. In the latter, an at least partially controlled transformation of the regime would usher in a period of institutional and geopolitical uncertainty, during which the transitional government would face a trade-off between normalization with Washington and the preservation of strategic autonomy.

Under Scenarios C and D, conversely, regime resilience would generate different strategic outcomes depending on the intensity of U.S. pressure. In the former, intensified coercive measures would reinforce the concentration of power within the military and security apparatuses, deepen Cuba's alignment with Russia and China, and contribute to the entrenchment of the humanitarian crisis. In the latter, bilateral détente would facilitate political and economic stabilization while delivering a diplomatic victory for Havana, without necessarily restoring the regime's political legitimacy.

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1. Summary (2/2)

Purpose and Findings of the Analysis

(follows)

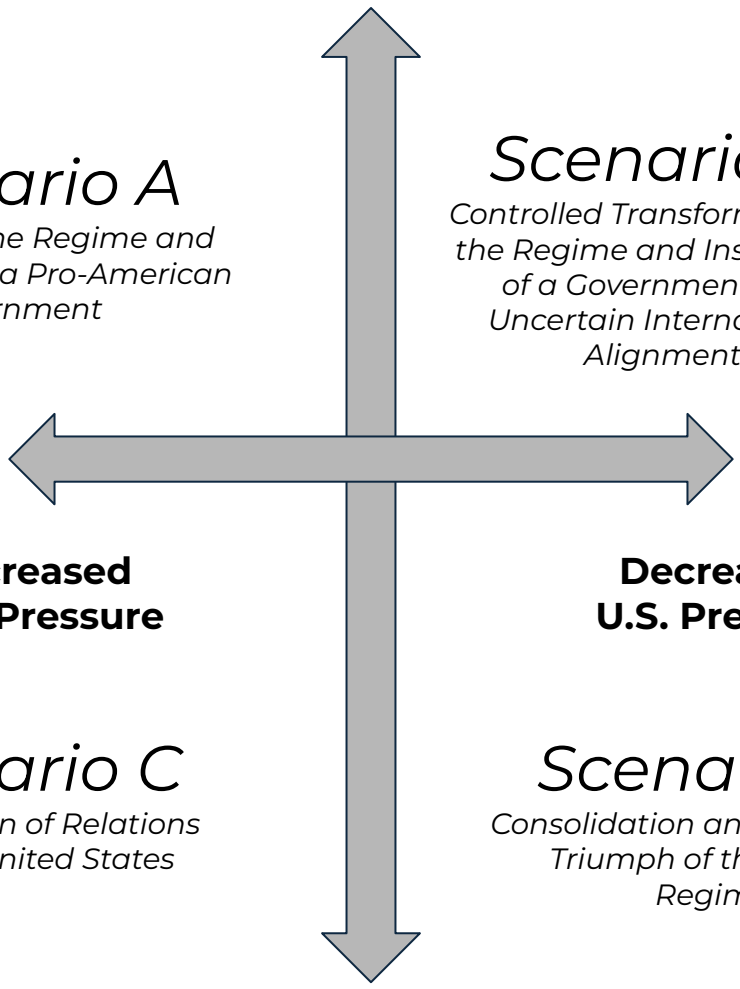
Economic and energy vulnerabilities constitute a structural constraint across all four scenarios. Foreign-exchange shortages, systemic inefficiencies, and dependence on external supplies would continue to undermine recovery prospects, irrespective of the island's political and institutional trajectory. **Likewise, neither regime transformation nor consolidation would necessarily produce an immediate reduction in humanitarian distress and migratory pressures**.

RINT also conducted a SWOT analysis to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with each scenario for the principal stakeholders in the Cuban geopolitical landscape: the United States of America, the Republic of Cuba, the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, and the European Union.

The findings indicate that Washington could expand its regional influence, albeit at potentially significant stabilization costs. Moscow and Beijing would retain substantial leverage over Havana, particularly under scenarios characterized by regime resilience, while European economic opportunities would remain contingent upon developments in the U.S. sanctions regime. Most notably, **the SWOT analysis identifies a near-complete convergence of Russian and Chinese foreign policy interests in Cuba, contrasting with the considerably more fragmented strategic objectives and interests of the United States and the European Union in the region**.

2. Scenarios (1/12)

Scenario Quadrant



2. Scenarios (2/12)

Scenario A

Early Warning Indicators:

- introduction of new sanctions against Cuba (inclusion of Cuban individuals and/or legal entities on OFAC sanctions lists, introduction of restrictive measures targeting imports of technologies essential for energy production);
- opening of negotiations between the United States and third countries (e.g., Russia, China, etc.) aimed at increasing Cuba's international isolation;
- U.S. support for UN resolutions condemning the Cuban regime;
- conduct of U.S. military operations on Cuban territory;
- social, institutional, and political disintegration of the Cuban regime (collapse of the national power grid, migration waves toward the United States, humanitarian crises, internal conflicts within the Cuban state, intensification of social and political repression, increasing domestic unrest).

This scenario envisages the establishment of a pro-American transitional government in Cuba following i) increased pressure exerted by the United States of America and ii) the disintegration of the Cuban regime. In essence, it envisages Cuba's formal or informal integration into the U.S. regional political architecture and its disengagement from traditional anti-American alliances. The end of Cuba's socialist/anti-Western orientation would be accompanied by a drastic realignment of its foreign policy, followed by the deterioration of privileged relations with its historical allies.

Political-Diplomatic Dimension

From a political and diplomatic perspective, this scenario is characterized by increased U.S. pressure on the Cuban regime, aimed at deepening its international isolation or even causing its collapse. In particular, heightened U.S. pressure on Cuba would likely take the form of new and stricter sanctions and restrictive measures targeting various aspects of the local regime. For example, Cuban individuals and legal entities, including those operating outside Cuba, could be included on the sanctions lists of the Office of Foreign Assets Control ("OFAC"), thereby restricting their political and economic activities. The United States could also introduce further measures targeting Cuban imports of technologies essential for energy production, as well as strategically important raw materials. Such measures could also involve negotiations with third countries producing and/or exporting technologies and raw materials, aimed at excluding Cuba from their potential customer base. At the diplomatic level, statements condemning Cuba, whether unilateral or multilateral, including the submission of specific resolutions to the United Nations, would also indicate increasing U.S. pressure. The possibility of U.S. military intervention within the framework outlined above cannot be excluded. Under this scenario, increased U.S. pressure on Cuba would ultimately lead to the disintegration of its regime, although the manner in which this occurs falls outside the scope of this report.

Should this scenario materialize, the existing sanctions framework would likely be eased and/or gradually dismantled, alongside a potential normalization of Cuba-U.S. bilateral relations and the resumption of sector-specific negotiations between the two countries. The new Cuban government, presumably pro-American in orientation, would lead Cuba toward a repositioning on the international stage, distancing the country from its traditional network of alliances hostile to the United States.

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2. Scenarios (3/12)

Scenario A

(follows)

The establishment of a de facto U.S. protectorate is also considered possible, particularly given that Marco Rubio, the current Secretary of State, is of Cuban descent and has repeatedly adopted an uncompromising stance on the need to uphold the rights of exiles whose properties were expropriated after 1959. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Rubio has effectively established a protectorate over Venezuela, based on his personal relationship with President Delcy Rodríguez.

Domestic Political Dimension

At the domestic political level, this scenario envisages a complete or partial collapse of the Cuban political system, characterized by the general disintegration of Cuba's social, institutional, and political order. In particular, migration waves toward the United States would occur alongside recurring humanitarian crises and intensified domestic repression, amid a general deterioration of public order. The risk of armed clashes between loyalist and dissident factions cannot be excluded. A period of inherent instability would follow, potentially allowing power groups linked to the previous regime to reorganize and continue influencing the political system, insofar as the United States permits. Nevertheless, the absence of significant societal cleavages (racial, tribal, cultural, etc.) within Cuban society would limit the potential outbreak of civil war. However, growing discontent could lead to increasingly turbulent street demonstrations and even localized uprisings. Should this scenario materialize, the disintegration of the Castroist Cuban state would lead to the emergence of a new political entity, albeit not entirely distinct from its predecessor in substantive terms. A broad drive toward institutional and constitutional reform is therefore expected, alongside the introduction of multiparty elections and the removal of the Communist Party's constitutional primacy.

The preceding period of instability and domestic unrest would likely be followed by a reorganization of the armed forces and security apparatus. Nevertheless, the inherent weakness of the new state entity could favor the consolidation of informal power groups competing with the newly established authorities. The restructuring of the Cuban state under U.S. auspices would also likely encourage the return of part of the Cuban diaspora, following the restoration of exiles' political and property rights.

Economic-Energy Dimension

Scenario A is particularly complex given Cuba's already severe macroeconomic, structural, and infrastructural conditions. On the one hand, economic sanctions have already paralyzed the island, with only residual economic activity surviving the embargo; on the other, the country's economic conditions appear to be deteriorating further (crisis of private savings, proliferation of the black market, etc.). The increased U.S. pressure on the Cuban regime envisaged in this section would therefore aim to accelerate its collapse from a macroeconomic perspective as well. As previously argued, the regime's collapse would be followed by the gradual removal of most sanctions against Cuba. A recovery of the Cuban economy appears unlikely in the short term. Progressive depopulation (both through emigration and the abandonment of cities in favor of rural areas) would be a clear symptom. Added to this would be the crisis of private savings, the entrenchment of smuggling and black-market activities, the emergence of criminal groups, and the infiltration of foreign cartels through smuggling networks.

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2. Scenarios (4/12)

Scenario A

(follows)

The energy issue is also noteworthy: the lifting of sanctions would not resolve the problem of imports. Since its establishment, the Cuban socialist regime has always depended on imports from friendly countries willing to supply resources at below-market prices, if not free of charge. Sustaining energy supplies at market prices would be particularly difficult during a period of acute crisis. Economic and infrastructural support from foreign powers (primarily China, which has so far supplied substantial quantities of solar panels) would remain insufficient. Specifically, the new Cuban state's ability to secure energy resources and raw materials would depend largely on U.S. willingness to facilitate such supplies. The establishment of a pro-American government receiving substantial U.S. economic support could also i) meet the basic needs of the Cuban population; ii) facilitate structural and infrastructural improvements in Cuba, enabling renewed economic growth in the medium to long term.

Under Scenario A, therefore, Cuba would not achieve economic and energy autonomy; rather, the source of its political and economic support would change.

Humanitarian Dimension

Regarding the humanitarian dimension, the collapse of the regime represents one of the most disruptive scenarios. As the crisis persists, conditions on the island would continue to deteriorate in the absence of any prospect of an agreement between the parties. Although large numbers of Cubans have already left the island, a prolonged stalemate would trigger an increasingly large exodus of people unable to sustain themselves: workers, political cadres and state officials, public employees, and particularly young people. These masses would inevitably make their way toward U.S. shores through improvised means. Even under a regime such as Cuba's, the prolonged crisis would cause growing suffering among the population, reflected in the progressive erosion of the most fundamental human rights, from access to food and water to the inability to obtain basic education. Added to these factors are the island's healthcare vulnerabilities, further aggravated by the U.S. embargo, and infrastructural weaknesses, including the inefficiency of the national power grid, with inevitable negative repercussions at both the economic and humanitarian levels.

In the aftermath of the Cuban regime's disintegration envisaged under Scenario A, the overall humanitarian situation would remain largely unchanged. At worst, it could deteriorate further due to state failure, the disintegration of its bureaucracy, and the collapse of the redistributive welfare system that had previously guaranteed at least minimal socioeconomic assistance. Conversely, should the new national government, internationally supported by the United States, succeed in launching a lasting reform process consistent with the need to restructure the national socioeconomic system, living conditions in Cuba could improve considerably. In any case, the end of Castroist authoritarianism could lead to greater openness regarding civil and political rights.

2. Scenarios (5/12)

Scenario B

Early Warning Indicators:

- easing of the U.S. sanctions regime against Cuba (e.g., removal of Cuba from the U.S. State Sponsors of Terrorism list, authorization of imports of raw materials, including hydrocarbons and other energy products, from the United States and Latin America; relaxation of OFAC-administered travel restrictions);
- conclusion of international agreements between the United States and third countries (e.g., Russia, China, Iran, etc.) regulating their international relations, including those concerning Cuba;
- reopening of the Cuban economy to foreign capital invested in previously liberalized sectors (tourism, small businesses) in Cuba;
- conduct of bilateral negotiations between the United States and Cuba concerning the regulation and/or normalization of their relations;
- formal and/or informal U.S. statements expressing a willingness to reduce tensions with Cuba;
- disintegration and/or profound transformation of the Cuban regime (internal conflicts within the regime, increasing domestic unrest, formation of a post-Castroist coalition government, partial reform of national institutions).

This scenario envisages the establishment of a transitional government with uncertain international alignment in the context of i) reduced pressure exerted on Cuba by the United States of America and ii) the disintegration of the Cuban regime. In essence, it envisages the end of Cuba's socialist ideological orientation, accompanied by a pragmatic realignment of its foreign relations. At the same time, the end of Castroism on the island would be followed by an uncertain political and institutional configuration of the new Cuban state, inherently shaped by the instability of the transitional period and persistent economic difficulties.

Political-Diplomatic Dimension

From a political and diplomatic perspective, this scenario is characterized by a reduction in U.S. pressure on the Cuban regime, driven either by the need for the United States to allocate greater resources and attention to other international issues or by the perceived failure of the containment strategy pursued since the beginning of Trump's second term. A reduction in U.S. pressure on Cuba would primarily take the form of an easing of the U.S. sanctions regime against the island. In particular, consideration should be given to Cuba's removal from the U.S. State Sponsors of Terrorism list. This designation, rescinded by the Biden administration in January 2025, was reinstated by the current administration. At the same time, other sanctions or comparable restrictive measures would be lifted, including the effective erga omnes restrictions on energy supplies to the island, travel restrictions administered by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) under the Cuban Assets Control Regulations (CACR), and so forth. The easing of tensions between the United States and Cuba would also involve bilateral negotiations between the parties and negotiations between the United States and third countries concerning relations with Havana.

Should this scenario materialize, the new Cuban government would need to establish its credibility with the major powers that have historically maintained interests in Cuba. Consequently, a renewed Cuban diplomatic initiative would lead to contacts with its principal partners, both regional and international, as part of a broader restructuring of diplomatic relations. Relations with China and Russia would therefore be reestablished, most likely alongside those with Iran and other European countries interested in expanding their influence on the island.

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2. Scenarios (6/12)

Scenario B

(follows)

In this context, the United States would likely adopt a cautious approach toward the new government, making the normalization of relations conditional upon a demonstrated willingness to implement political, economic, and trade reforms. At the same time, Cuba would pursue a foreign policy aimed at preserving its strategic autonomy.

Domestic Political Dimension

At the domestic political level, this scenario envisages the partial disintegration of the Castroist regime and its overall institutional restructuring. In stark contrast to Scenario A, which envisages a radical collapse of the existing political order, Scenario B assumes a more controlled, gradual, and ultimately less disruptive institutional transition. In particular, this transformation would unfold through i) internal conflicts within Castroist institutions, ii) the spread of growing domestic unrest, iii) the formation of a post-Castroist national coalition government, and finally, iv) the initiation of a process of partial reform of national institutions. Regarding the composition of the transitional government, it could broadly represent Cuban society and the power groups of the previous regime, including reformist elements of civil society, former communists, and opponents of the Castroist regime.

The social and political environment would be further complicated by other destabilizing factors, such as the possible return of the Cuban diaspora or the role of the armed forces in the transition process, which could either support the new government or emerge as centers of opposition. The transition could therefore face various obstacles, prolonging the stabilization phase following the regime's transformation.

Economic-Energy Dimension

The economic-energy dimension is characterized by the inherent uncertainty of the transitional phase envisaged under this scenario. On the one hand, Scenario B assumes a reduction in U.S. sanctions pressure; on the other, the quality of the new government's relations with the international community—and consequently the island's economic future—would depend on its political and international orientation.

Unlike Scenario A, which envisages a decisive pro-American realignment accompanied by the gradual lifting of sanctions and substantial U.S. economic support, Scenario B offers no comparable certainty of economic normalization. Should the crisis nevertheless lead to a pro-American government, its effects could resemble those of Scenario A. The crucial distinction, however, would remain Washington's posture toward the island, envisaged here as more restrained, if not outright disengaged. Conversely, should the regime's crisis produce a government with uncertain international alignment, reduced U.S. pressure would not necessarily entail an immediate easing of the sanctions regime.

In the latter case, economic, energy, and trade relations, particularly with the United States, would depend on selective concessions by Washington, conditional upon guarantees concerning domestic reforms and Cuba's international orientation. Whereas Scenario A envisages economic recovery supported by a clear geopolitical realignment, Scenario B would leave Cuba's access to external resources dependent on an uncertain and potentially prolonged bargaining process. U.S. economic restrictions would therefore be eased only in accordance with domestic political developments. Meanwhile, the structural deficiencies of the Cuban economy would persist, alongside fiscal and monetary difficulties. Private savings and public investment would also suffer setbacks amid the continuing crisis.

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2. Scenarios (7/12)

Scenario B

(follows)

From an energy perspective, the aforementioned economic difficulties would continue to undermine Cuba's position in energy markets. As in Scenario A, the absence of partners willing to supply raw materials at preferential prices, coupled with a shortage of hard currency needed to access international markets, would hamper the island's economic recovery. The difference lies in the path toward recovery: Scenario A envisages substantial U.S. assistance following a decisive pro-American realignment, whereas Scenario B makes economic normalization contingent upon negotiations with Washington, without guaranteeing comparable financial or energy support.

Under Scenario B, Cuba would therefore face two alternative recovery paths: accommodating U.S. political and economic demands to secure sanctions relief, external assistance, and renewed market access; or preserving strategic autonomy by diversifying international partnerships, potentially at the cost of a slower and more uncertain economic recovery.

Humanitarian Dimension

Regarding the humanitarian dimension, the regime's crisis would be equally consequential, as already examined under Scenario A. The transition toward a government of uncertain political orientation would also affect humanitarian conditions on the island. In the short term, a relative easing of U.S. economic pressure would have limited effects on the new government's ability to revive the national economy, particularly given the aforementioned destabilizing factors. Meanwhile, conditions on the island would continue to deteriorate, with consequences similar to those outlined under Scenario A.

Following the regime change, the overall humanitarian situation would remain largely unchanged. Living conditions would continue to deteriorate due to institutional uncertainty, the dismantling of the administrative apparatus, and the disappearance of the redistributive welfare system that, despite its limited standards, had provided some degree of socioeconomic protection. Social tensions would lack democratic channels of expression; consequently, protests and manifestations of popular discontent would likely be suppressed no less harshly than under the Castroist regime.

2. Scenarios (8/12)

Scenario C

Early Warning Indicators:

- intensification of U.S. political and economic pressure through new sanctions (designation of Cuban individuals and/or legal entities under OFAC-administered sanctions programs, restrictions on imports of energy-production technologies), tighter financial and trade restrictions, and reduced diplomatic dialogue;
- escalation of U.S.-Cuban military tensions, including an increased U.S. military presence in the region, threats of strikes against Cuban territory, and possible Cuban deterrence or retaliatory measures;
- strengthening of Cuba's political, military, and economic ties with Russia and China to counter U.S. pressure, alongside growing diplomatic polarization;
- rising popular discontent and anti-government protests, without significant defections within the political and military apparatus or loss of the regime's ability to contain dissent;
- persistence or worsening of Cuba's economic crisis, characterized by high inflation, productive inefficiencies, and fuel shortages, without a corresponding collapse of institutional control.

This scenario envisages a deterioration of relations between the United States of America and Cuba resulting from the interaction of i) intensified U.S. pressure on the island and ii) the continued resilience of the Cuban regime. Unlike Scenario A, in which mounting U.S. pressure ultimately contributes to regime collapse, Scenario C assumes that the Cuban authorities retain sufficient political and institutional control to withstand external pressure, thereby prolonging the confrontation.

Political-Diplomatic Dimension

From a political and diplomatic perspective, this scenario is characterized by a further tightening of the U.S. sanctions regime and increasing restrictions on Cuba's room for maneuver through indirect U.S. pressure on third countries. U.S. pressure would aim to deepen Cuba's international isolation, weaken its economy, and potentially induce regime collapse. However, under Scenario C, these measures would fail to undermine the regime's institutional control, instead reinforcing bilateral confrontation. In particular, increased pressure would involve stricter sanctions and restrictive measures targeting multiple aspects of the Cuban regime. Cuban individuals and legal entities, including those operating abroad, could be designated under OFAC-administered sanctions programs, restricting their political and economic activities. The United States could also target Cuban imports of energy-production technologies and strategic raw materials, including through negotiations with third-country suppliers aimed at excluding Cuba from their markets.

Diplomatic pressure could include unilateral or multilateral condemnations of Cuba and specific resolutions submitted to the United Nations. U.S. military intervention cannot be excluded. Ultimately, the regime's continued resilience despite mounting pressure would contribute to deteriorating bilateral relations, heightened international tensions, and an increased risk of military escalation.

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2. Scenarios (9/12)

Scenario C

(follows)

Should this scenario materialize, U.S. pressure would intensify further, alongside a deterioration of relations between the two countries. Meanwhile, the Cuban regime would consolidate its stability, reaffirming its international position and strengthening its traditional alliances, particularly with the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China. From a political-diplomatic perspective, the combination of mounting U.S. pressure and the consolidation of the Cuban regime would constitute a diplomatic victory for the latter. Simultaneously, Havana's need to protect itself against U.S.-driven escalation, coupled with deeper extra-hemispheric ties with Moscow and Beijing, could contribute to deteriorating relations between Washington and these powers.

Domestic Political Dimension

At the domestic political level, this scenario envisages the continuation of the Cuban political regime in its current form. Hardline and extremist figures would likely be appointed to key positions, replacing more moderate officials and political cadres. Intensified domestic repression, amid deteriorating public order driven by mounting economic pressures on Cuba, would fail to eliminate discontent or prevent localized uprisings. Nevertheless, dissent would remain fragmented and unable to challenge the regime's control over the population. Conversely, the regime could initiate broader mobilization of Cuban society, including militarily.

Should this scenario materialize, the consolidation of the Cuban regime would result in ideological hardening, with mounting U.S. pressure providing justification for increasingly severe repression of dissent and the neutralization of political opposition. Such an institutional environment would also favor further concentration of power within the military and security apparatus, confirming the failure of Washington's maximum pressure strategy.

Economic-Energy Dimension

Scenario C is particularly sensitive given Cuba's already precarious macroeconomic, structural, and infrastructural conditions. On the one hand, economic restrictions have already severely constrained the island's productive activity, leaving only residual productive capacity. On the other, the country's economic situation appears to be deteriorating further, as reflected in the crisis of private savings and the expansion of the informal economy. In this context, intensified U.S. pressure on the Cuban regime would aim to accelerate its collapse from a macroeconomic perspective. The energy dimension is also particularly significant under Scenario C, as difficulties concerning imports would remain unresolved. Since its establishment, the Cuban socialist regime has relied on supplies from allied countries willing to provide resources at preferential prices, if not free of charge. Amid intensifying U.S. pressure on Cuba, securing adequate energy supplies—and consequently achieving economic recovery—would become virtually impossible. Economic and infrastructural support from foreign powers—primarily China, which has so far supplied substantial quantities of solar panels—would remain insufficient. In practice, Cuba's ability to secure access to energy resources and raw materials would depend largely on Russia's and China's willingness to provide them, notwithstanding the restrictions on imports already imposed by the United States.

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2. Scenarios (10/12)

Scenario C

(follows)

Humanitarian Dimension

From a humanitarian perspective, increased U.S. pressure alongside the survival and consolidation of the Cuban regime represents one of the potentially most complex scenarios. A prolonged crisis, without prospects for an agreement between the parties, would further deteriorate living conditions on the island. Despite already substantial emigration, population outflows would continue under this scenario, involving workers, political figures and public officials, state employees, and young people more generally. These migration flows would be directed toward U.S. shores. Even under a regime such as Cuba's, a prolonged crisis would intensify the population's suffering, progressively restricting the exercise of fundamental rights, from access to food and water to the inability to obtain basic education. Added to these factors are the island's healthcare vulnerabilities, further exacerbated by the U.S. embargo, and infrastructural weaknesses, including the inefficiency of the national power grid, with inevitable negative repercussions at both the economic and humanitarian levels.

Following the materialization of this scenario, the overall humanitarian situation would remain largely unchanged. At worst, it could deteriorate further as U.S. pressure on the island persists. Tightening sanctions, combined with the inefficiency of a centralized and militarized economy, would accelerate the collapse of certain public services, including the national healthcare system and food distribution network. In this context, mass emigration would become one of the few viable options for young Cubans. The regime would likely encourage or tolerate this demographic exodus to ease domestic pressure and reduce the risk of social unrest. Under Scenario C, despite regime consolidation, the crisis would evolve into a chronic and structural emergency, with citizens increasingly dependent on diaspora remittances and international aid, both of which would face obstacles imposed by the United States. Meanwhile, the need to contain the humanitarian emergency would strengthen the position of foreign powers providing assistance on the ground, including Russia and China.

2. Scenarios (11/12)

Scenario D

Early Warning Indicators:

- Suspension or lifting of major U.S. sanctions and restrictions, including possible removal of Cuba from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list, facilitating the movement of goods, people, and capital;
- Restoration of authorizations for remittances, travel, and bilateral trade, signaling a practical easing of U.S. economic pressure;
- Resumption of Venezuelan oil supplies to Cuba with U.S. acquiescence, improving the island's energy security and economic stability;
- Adoption of less confrontational rhetoric by Washington and Havana, accompanied by renewed sector-specific negotiations and reduced bilateral tensions;
- Formal and/or informal statements by Cuban authorities expressing willingness to undertake limited institutional reforms while preserving the regime's political continuity;
- Resumption of diplomatic cooperation involving Moscow, Beijing, and Washington on Cuban affairs, reflecting greater international acceptance of the regime's continued survival.

This scenario envisages the consolidation and diplomatic triumph of Cuba through i) a reduction in pressure exerted by the United States of America and ii) continued regime resilience.

Political-Diplomatic Dimension
Scenario D envisages a return of U.S.–Cuba relations to conditions previously experienced, particularly during the administrations of Barack Obama (2009–2016) and Joe Biden (2021–2025). The combination of the two variables presented in the “Scenario Matrix”—reduced U.S. pressure and Cuban regime resilience—would make bilateral relations between Washington and Havana more predictable and considerably less confrontational. A natural political-diplomatic consequence of Scenario D would be the resumption of bilateral negotiations on migration, maritime security, drug trafficking, and consular services (i.e., the legal status of Cuban citizens in the United States). Internationally, the resilience of the Cuban regime and Washington's abandonment of its maximum pressure strategy toward Havana would generate diplomatic dividends for Russia and China. With the prospect of regime collapse averted, Moscow and Beijing could reassert themselves as mediators in U.S.–Cuba relations and as Havana's political, military, economic, energy, and technological partners.

Even partial normalization of Washington–Havana relations would allow other regional and international actors (Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, Spain, the European Union, etc.) to restore and/or strengthen their diplomatic and consular relations with Cuba, thereby avoiding punitive measures under the sanctions regime currently in force. Such diplomatic cooperation would nevertheless remain fragile and subject to U.S. electoral cycles.

Domestic Political Dimension
Under Scenario D, the stabilization of diplomatic relations with the United States and Washington's softer stance toward Havana would be portrayed by the regime as a victory of resistance. The Communist Party would use the increased resources available to rebuild support for the regime, sustain the public apparatus, and contain protests. Improved access to fuel, food, and hard currency (e.g., U.S. dollars and euros) would enable the Cuban state to recover part of its redistributive and welfare capacity, raising living standards among the less affluent segments of the population.

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2. Scenarios (12/12)

Scenario D

(follows)

It should be noted that Scenario D would not entail substantial changes in the distribution of power within the regime. On the contrary, improved access to economic resources and reduced external pressure would allow the Cuban government to strengthen its control over public affairs and the population, while diminishing incentives to undertake far-reaching reforms. Scenario D would therefore result in regime stabilization, rather than a renewal of its legitimacy.

Economic-Energy Dimension

Under Scenario D, the easing of U.S. sanctions and restrictive measures against Cuba would improve Havana's macroeconomic and financial conditions by facilitating remittance flows, tourism, foreign currency inflows, and access to energy resources. Increased energy supplies would, in turn, enable the island's power plants to resume operations, reducing the frequency of blackouts affecting Cuba's electricity grid. In the short term, improved energy availability and foreign currency inflows would support a partial recovery of productive activity, reducing the risk of financial collapse. However, in the medium to long term, beyond the timeframe considered in this report, the economy would remain characterized by low productivity, inefficiency, and structural weaknesses. Economic stabilization would therefore not necessarily translate into sustained development. Regarding international trade, the easing of the U.S. sanctions regime would enable Havana to finance increased imports through foreign currency obtained from remittances, tourism, and foreign direct investment. Improved market access could subsequently encourage limited foreign investment (e.g., from the European Union, European countries, Canada, and Latin American countries), potentially accompanied by liberalization in selected economic sectors and the introduction of elements of state capitalism. Nevertheless, the economy would remain highly volatile and exposed to significant credit risk.

Humanitarian Dimension

Under Scenario D, the easing of the U.S. sanctions regime would facilitate the restoration of flows of goods and services to Cuba, contributing to improved humanitarian conditions. Greater availability of imported supplies and energy would support the recovery of essential infrastructure and public services, particularly healthcare, water distribution, and electricity.
In particular, improved access to medicines could reduce mortality rates associated with readily treatable diseases and medical conditions. Similarly, the restoration of drinking water distribution systems would improve water security and agricultural production, making subsistence farming, prevalent across much of Cuba, more sustainable. These improvements would be reinforced by the recovery of the national transport system, which would restore territorial coverage and logistical capacity, facilitating the distribution of food, medicines, and other essential goods. Improved access to water and electricity would also enhance housing conditions across the island. Overall, the resulting improvement in living standards would reduce, but not eliminate, migration flows toward the American mainland.

3. SWOT Analysis (1/4)

SCENARIO A

Pro-American Transitional Government

ACTOR	SWOT ANALYSIS
United States of America	S Ability to exert influence over the new government W High economic, political, and reputational costs O Cuba's disengagement from the anti-American bloc T Frictions with Russia and China; hostile sentiment among the local population
Republic of Cuba	S Prospects for socioeconomic development and institutional reform W Fragility of the new political and institutional framework O U.S. support and normalization of its international relations T Degeneration of the relationship with the United States into a quasi-colonial arrangement
Russian Federation	S Ability to exert influence over the Cuban population W Limited resources available to oppose regime change; domestic reputational costs O - T Loss of its principal ally in the region
People's Republic of China	S Substantial resources available to oppose regime change; influence among the local population W Limited operational capabilities on the ground; domestic reputational costs O - T Limited loss of influence in the region
European Union	S Availability of resources to support U.S. action W Internal divisions and limited geopolitical capital O Economic, financial, and commercial penetration of Cuba T -

3. SWOT Analysis (2/4)

SCENARIO B

Transitional Government with Uncertain International Alignment

ACTOR	SWOT ANALYSIS
United States of America	**S** Coercive leverage over the new government **W** Imperial overstretch; political cost of an intervention **O** Neutralization of the Castroist threat **T** Spread of uncertainty and instability throughout the region
Republic of Cuba	**S** Strategic and foreign policy flexibility **W** Internal factionalism; fragility and vulnerability during the political transition **O** Strategic opportunism; political and international reset, bargaining leverage with major powers; renewed popular legitimacy and opportunities for economic development **T** Political and economic default
Russian Federation	**S** Ability to exert influence over local political factions (government, armed forces, Castroist elites) **W** Limited resources to influence political developments on the ground **O** Preservation and/or expansion of its influence over Cuba **T** Consolidation of a hostile and/or unfriendly government
People's Republic of China	**S** Substantial resources available to influence the political orientation of the new government **W** Limited influence over political factions and the local population **O** Expansion of its geoeconomic influence in Cuba **T** Consolidation of a hostile and/or unfriendly government
European Union	**S** Moderate resources available to influence the political orientation of the new government **W** Internal divisions and limited geopolitical capital **O** Investment opportunities in the Cuban economy **T** Divergence of interests with the United States; diversion of U.S. attention away from the European theater

3. SWOT Analysis (3/4)

SCENARIO C

Deterioration of Relations with the United States

ACTOR	SWOT ANALYSIS
United States of America	**S** Kinetic capabilities and coercive leverage over Cuba **W** High political, economic, military, and human costs of an intervention in Cuba **O** Annihilation of the Castroist regime **T** Becoming bogged down in a hypothetical war in Cuba; rising international tensions; migration crisis
Republic of Cuba	**S** Ability to mobilize the local population; existing diplomatic support from the anti-American bloc **W** Limited economic and military resources; widespread discontent among the population **O** Domestic ideological consolidation **T** Existential war; collapse of the Castroist regime
Russian Federation	**S** Moderate bargaining leverage with the United States; diplomatic mediation capabilities **W** Limited available resources; military commitment in Ukraine **O** Reassertion of its diplomatic position in the region; proxy war against the United States **T** Loss of its principal ally in the region
People's Republic of China	**S** Moderate bargaining leverage with the United States; diplomatic mediation capabilities **W** Limited influence over the Cuban government and population **O** Reassertion of its diplomatic position in the region; proxy war against the United States **T** Political and reputational setback; deterioration of relations and escalation with the United States
European Union	**S** - **W** Subordination to U.S. foreign policy **O** - **T** Tensions with the United States, Russia, and China

3. SWOT Analysis (4/4)

SCENARIO D

Consolidation and Diplomatic Triumph of Cuba

ACTOR	SWOT ANALYSIS
United States of America	S - W Ineffectiveness of foreign policy measures against Cuba; domestic institutional crisis; negative public opinion O - T Erosion of its reputation; consolidation of the anti-American bloc in Cuba; loss of influence throughout the Western Hemisphere
Republic of Cuba	S Political and international stability; domestic stability W Political, economic, and social costs of resistance; persistent vulnerability of the Cuban state O Beginning of a new political and diplomatic phase; reconsolidation of its relations with the anti-American bloc; increased popular legitimacy; international diplomatic success; survival of the Castroist regime T Nadir of bilateral relations with the United States; volatility of the position achieved; widespread regional and global tensions
Russian Federation	S Ability to exert influence over the Cuban government W - O Domestic political success; international diplomatic success; expansion of its influence over Cuba; acquisition of bargaining leverage with the United States; increased military and intelligence presence in Cuba T -
People's Republic of China	S Ability to exert influence over the Cuban government W - O Domestic political success; international diplomatic success; expansion of its influence over Cuba; acquisition of bargaining leverage with the United States; increased geoeconomic influence in Cuba T -
European Union	S - W Diplomatic inertia and inaction O Avoidance of international political responsibilities (buck-passing) and separate normalization of relations with Cuba T -

4. Methodology (1/2)

How to Conduct a Scenario Analysis

Scenario analysis helps reduce uncertainty and manage various types of risk—above all geopolitical—for both public and private decision-makers. By developing alternative scenarios, analysts identify how a situation may evolve. This process enables decision-makers to plan either to seize future opportunities or to mitigate risks. Monitoring indicators associated with each scenario also provides early warning signals regarding the likely direction of future developments.

Scenarios do not predict the future; however, a robust set of scenarios helps narrow the range of possible outcomes for which decision-makers must prepare. Scenario analysis also serves as an effective strategic planning tool, fostering dialogue among decision-makers, stakeholders, and experts to anticipate alternative futures and design appropriate strategies.

In general terms, conducting a scenario analysis such as this involves the following steps:

- clearly defining the central issue and specific objectives of the analysis;
- conducting brainstorming to identify key drivers, factors, or events most likely to shape developments over a given time horizon;
- identifying the two most relevant political trajectories and deriving a 2×2 scenario matrix;
- once the four scenarios are defined, carrying out in-depth analysis of the driving forces that could enable them, and assessing their macro-level implications across the most relevant domains (here: political-diplomatic, security-military, economic-energy, and hybrid);
- providing a detailed description of each scenario, identifying associated risks and opportunities in order to inform decision-making.

4. Methodology (2/2)

How to Conduct a SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) is a strategic planning tool that enables public- and private-sector decision-makers to identify the main factors that facilitate or hinder the achievement of specific objectives. The methodology is based on the distinction between internal factors, namely strengths and weaknesses, and external factors, namely opportunities and threats. SWOT analysis is not a forecasting tool in the strict sense; nevertheless, it allows analysts to assess an actor's position within its operating environment, identifying vulnerabilities, competitive advantages, and potential strategic courses of action.

In particular, conducting a SWOT analysis generally involves the following steps:

- Clearly define the subject of the analysis, its strategic objectives, and the relevant time horizon;
- Gather the information necessary to assess the characteristics of the actor under consideration and its operating environment;
- Identify strengths (Strengths) and weaknesses (Weaknesses), namely internal resources, capabilities, and vulnerabilities;
- Identify opportunities (Opportunities) and threats (Threats) arising from the external environment;
- Organize the identified factors into a 2 × 2 SWOT matrix, prioritizing those of greatest relevance;
- Examine the interactions between internal and external factors, developing potential strategic courses of action aimed at leveraging strengths, addressing weaknesses, capitalizing on opportunities, and mitigating threats.

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