

**Hearing before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere
“Cuba’s Global Network of Terrorism, Intelligence and Warfare”**

**Statement submitted by
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Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on a subject too often overlooked in otherwise thoughtful and thorough discussions of U.S. foreign relations. As the United States considers future policy and strategy in relation to Cuba, Cuban intelligence activities directed against the United States and our interests, as well as our efforts to counter them, warrant careful review and debate.

I had the privilege of serving as the National Counterintelligence Executive¹ under President George W. Bush. As head of U.S. counterintelligence, I was responsible for integrating and providing strategic direction to all U.S. counterintelligence activities. The statutory office of the NCIX, as it is known, was established by Congress in 2002 in the wake of the Aldrich Ames espionage case. Congress was concerned that foreign intelligence services were exploiting seams among our several counterintelligence agencies, to the serious detriment of our Nation’s security, and that the whole of our counterintelligence enterprise suffered from a lack of cohesion and strategic direction. That concern was – and remains -- more than justified.

The growth and pervasiveness of hostile intelligence operations is a striking and largely unappreciated feature of the modern international security environment. Foreign adversaries including the Russians, the Chinese, the Cubans, and many others use intelligence as an effective instrument of asymmetric power to advance their strategic objectives, exploiting U.S. vulnerabilities to their collection and other intelligence activities.

In recent history, the United States has sustained stunning losses to foreign intelligence services, which penetrated through espionage and other means virtually every one of the most secret, highly guarded institutions of our national security apparatus. Any one of these major compromises

¹ Under the *Counterintelligence Enhancement Act of 2002* as amended, the NCIX is the head of U.S. counterintelligence, subject to the direction and control of the Director of National Intelligence. The NCIX chairs the National CI Policy Board, and heads the Office of the NCIX. The statutory functions of that office include *inter alia* the annual production of the national CI strategy, the identification and prioritization of foreign intelligence threats, the review of all CI budgets and programs against strategic objectives, and the evaluation and professionalization of community performance. The Office is also responsible for damage assessments of espionage cases and other compromises of US national security information.

could have had devastating consequences in war. Thankfully, the Cold War ended, as President Reagan said, without either side firing a shot.

Yet for the past decade, our Nation has been at war, engaged in a conflict different in kind and scope than any in our past. Because we are at war, the potential consequences of intelligence and other critical information compromises are more immediate, placing in jeopardy U.S. operations, deployed forces and our citizenry. And the foreign intelligence threat is on the rise.

Intelligence operations against the United States are now more diffuse, more aggressive, more technologically sophisticated, and potentially more successful than ever before. In recent years we have seen increasing intelligence operations within our borders facilitated by an extensive foreign presence that provides cover for intelligence services and their agents. Traditional foes, building on past successes, are continuing their efforts to penetrate the U.S. Government, while waves of computer intrusions into sensitive U.S. government information systems have confounded efforts to identify their source. We have also seen apparent attempts by foreign partners to exploit cooperative endeavors against terrorist groups to learn essential secrets about U.S. intelligence and military operations, along with an emerging “market” in U.S. national security secrets, which among other things enables foreign practices of deception and denial to impair U.S. intelligence collection. And perhaps most troubling, growing foreign capabilities to conduct influence and other covert operations threaten to undermine U.S. allies and national security interests.

I think most Americans would be astonished by the extent to which foreign intelligence services have been able to steal our Nation’s national security secrets, often with impunity. The former Soviet Union was especially successful in stealing U.S. secrets, a tradition that continues unabated under Vladimir Putin’s Russia. But the Russians are far from alone, especially as other hostile services have literally gone to school on the practices of the old KGB. Their star pupil is the DGI, Cuba’s General Directorate for Intelligence.

Now some people may ask, how can the intelligence services of a small country like Cuba be a serious threat to the United States? When the Soviet Union was still using Cuba to stage SIGINT collection against the United States, and using the Cubans as proxy intelligence services doing its bidding around the world, the answer perhaps was more obvious. Now that the Cold War is over, conditions have changed. Does that mean we no longer have to be concerned about Cuba’s intelligence operations? Unfortunately, the answer is no.

Hostile Intelligence Activities: the Cuban example

The work of clandestine services, engaged in intelligence collection and other activities, is an arena of international competition where the advantage does not necessarily go to the rich or the otherwise powerful. The use of intelligence operations by weaker powers to achieve advantage is a classic “asymmetric strategy” of applying one’s strength against another’s weakness. For the United States and other democratic countries, clearly our relative “weakness” is the openness of our society and our people. The opportunity for intelligence officers and their agents to move about freely, develop contacts, and operate in the dark is no more lost on foreign intelligence adversaries than it was on the nineteen hijackers.

Foreign emphasis on human collectors (HUMINT) over other means of collection is the single most distinctive asymmetry in modern intelligence structures. Foreign adversaries may not have a prayer of fielding costly and technologically demanding technical collection suites (and we have worked hard to keep it that way); but they can organize, train, equip, sustain and deploy impressive numbers of case officers, agents of influence, saboteurs, and spies. Cuban operations are a case in point.

As the Defense Intelligence Agency Director told the Senate Armed Services Committee earlier this year, “Cuba remains the predominant foreign intelligence threat to the United States emanating from Latin America.” I would add that measured by its reach, history, objectives and successes against us, Cuba is easily within the Top Ten list worldwide. I would like to give you some thoughts on why that is the case.

First, Cuba’s old patron Russia is still very much in business against us. The Russian intelligence presence in the United States is now at or above its Cold War levels, a sizing decision presumably indicative of the return on investment. They are actively embedded in U.S. society, as the 2010 exposure and deportation of ten Russian so-called “illegals” – a spy logistics support network – made clear. While Moscow’s intelligence liaison relationships with Cuba may have waxed and waned, it is prudent to assume they haven’t gone away. Especially when they can be so useful.

Cuban intelligence operations in the United States have been enduring, aggressive and painfully successful. The United States is far and away Cuba’s number one intelligence target. High on their list is the large Cuban exile community in the United States, but equally traditional national security targets such as American military and intelligence plans, intentions and capabilities. For example:

- Seven Cuban spies, the so-called Wasp Network, were convicted of or confessed to espionage or related crimes in June and September 2001. The group sought to infiltrate U.S. Southern Command headquarters. One was convicted for delivering a message to the Cuban Government that contributed to the death of four fliers from Brothers to the Rescue who were shot down in 1996 by Cuban MiGs in international airspace.
- An INS official, provided information in 2000 in a sting operation, thereafter passed the information to a business associate with ties to Cuban intelligence. As a corollary to this case, two Cuban diplomats were expelled from the United States for espionage activities.
- Over a 15-year period from 1983 to 1998, 15 members of the Cuban mission to the United Nations were expelled for espionage activities, including three who were handlers for the Wasp Network in 1998.
- Cuban spies have also found considerable success penetrating U.S.-based exile groups. A notable example is that of Juan Pablo Roque, a former MiG-23 pilot who “defected” to the United States in 1992, became a paid source for the FBI, and joined the ranks of the Brothers to the Rescue (BTTR). He “re-defected” back to Cuba just days after the early 1996 BTTR shoot down, denouncing the exile group on Cuban television and accusing it of planning terrorist attacks against Cuba and Castro.
- A similar example involves the case of Jose Rafael Fernandez Brenes, who jumped ship from a Cuban merchant vessel in 1988. From 1988-1991, he helped establish and run the U.S.

Government-financed TV Marti, whose signal was jammed from its inception in March 1990, due in part to frequency and technical data provided by Fernandez Brenes.²

Two years ago, State Department official Kendall Myers and his wife Gwendolyn were sentenced to life without possibility of parole for conspiring to commit espionage and conspiring to pass national defense information to Cuba. Back in 1978, Myers was working as an instructor for the Foreign Service Institute where he met a Cuban “diplomat” (who was actually an intelligence officer), who invited Myers to come to Cuba. Two weeks in Cuba, and a follow up visit by the DGI officer the next year to Gwendolyn’s home in South Dakota, and the Myers (both ideologically committed to the Revolution) were fully recruited. Kendall’s career took him into the Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research, where he had constant and continuing access to sensitive intelligence of value to Havana. The Myers would serve as clandestine agents of Cuba for the next 30 years.

More damaging still was the espionage of Ana Bolen Montes, a DIA analyst convicted in 2001 of spying for Cuba. Few people realize the extent of the damage her 16 years of meticulous espionage caused this country – including putting lives at risk. As a graduate student in Washington D.C., Montes expressed sympathy for the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, which may have brought her to the attention of Cuban intelligence trolling for possible recruits. With encouragement from her handlers, she sought employment with the U.S. government, landed a job with the Defense Intelligence Agency, and rose to become DIA’s foremost Cuba analyst – all the while spying for Cuba. She is now serving 25 years in prison.

In fact, Montes was one of the most damaging spies in U.S. history, owing to her far-reaching access to all Cuban-related intelligence matters and beyond. The damage assessment, which was several years in the making and remains highly classified, was completed on my watch. Montes compromised all Cuban-focused collection programs, calling into question the reliability of all U.S. intelligence collected against Cuba. She also served as an agent of influence on behalf of Cuba, to the extent her work as an analyst and her interactions within the analytic and policy communities were colored by her loyalties to Cuba. It is also likely that the information she passed contributed to the death and injury of American and pro-American forces in Latin America. She also compromised programs of broader scope – highly sensitive intelligence of limited value to Cuba, but potentially very high value to other adversaries.

There is a continuing market for such stolen U.S. secrets, which can be sold or bartered to third party states or terrorist organizations that have their own uses for the information. For example, the knowledge gained of U.S. intelligence sources and methods -- through spies, unauthorized disclosures, and even some authorized disclosures -- has aided in extensive concealment and denial programs that increase our uncertainty about foreign capabilities and intentions, and more effective foreign deception operations to mislead us. India’s detonation of nuclear explosions in 1998 – which came as shock to U.S. intelligence -- was a prime example of such a successful effort.

As a result of sensitive knowledge gained about U.S. intelligence, many nations have learned how to deny and deceive the United States in order to present a false picture of reality. These foreign denial and deception practices may lead analysts to faulty judgments, when vital information has not been collected, or when deception distorts understanding. The danger is that useless or deceptive

² Fact Sheet, U.S. State Department Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, Washington, DC, July 30, 2003

information – whether from human or technical collection -- may be integrated into U.S. intelligence and disseminated to policymakers, weapons designers, war-fighters and even the warning community as if it were true.

In short, the damage to the United States from the loss of sensitive national security information to Cuban espionage is not bounded by the national security threat presented by Cuba alone, but also by its value to potentially more dangerous adversaries.

What makes the United States such a favorable operational environment for Cuba's clandestine services? Access. Familiarity with the environment. The ability to move about freely. The ability to blend into the culture. Close cultural ties. A potential recruitment pool open to ideologically-based enticements. Linguistic compatibility. Tradecraft refined and honed over many decades. And the advantage the Cuban intelligence services have gained through past successes.

On this last point, it may be instructive to recall that in the late 1980s, U.S. intelligence learned from a defector, Major Florentino Aspillaga, that CIA's entire Cuban program had been compromised: all of the penetrations we thought we had of the Cuban government were in fact double agents working under Cuban control. Subsequent efforts to recover from that debacle were in turn compromised by Ana Montes. As a consequence, during much of Castro's time in office, U.S. intelligence has been put in the position of playing catch up. And that is not good.

Cuba's long history of support for anti-U.S. and anti-democratic elements in Latin America presents another serious concern for U.S. national security and counterintelligence. Cuban intelligence involvement in Venezuela is deep and wide, including embedded personnel in the Chavez government. Other nations who may have interests in Latin America inimical to the United States may turn to Cuban intelligence for help. Iran's growing presence in Venezuela and elsewhere in Latin America is a case in point.

Direct and close political ties between Cuba and Iran are yet another concern. Both are on the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism. Just last year, members of Iran's special operations Quds force mounted an assassination attempt against the Saudi Ambassador to the United States at a Georgetown restaurant (where some members of this Committee may have dined at one time or another). According to the affidavits filed in the criminal case, the Iranians turned to a Mexican drug cartel for local expertise. There is no suggestion that Cuba was involved, but the case does illustrate both the brazenness of Iran and the complex global interrelationships among criminal organizations and hostile intelligence services.

Finally, Fidel and Raul Castro have maintained power through the use of Cuba's formidable internal security forces. The Cuban people live under a totalitarian regime, where life is very difficult and individual rights are subordinate to the state. Following the Soviet KGB model, the same intelligence organization that goes abroad to spy – the DGI – is also responsible for suppressing the Cuban people at home. In assessing the threat posed by Cuba's intelligence operations, we should not overlook the threat they present to their own people.

Recommendations for U.S. Policy: the role of counterintelligence

At the start of the 21st Century, there are many more highly capable foreign intelligence services in the world than ever before, and we are only just beginning to understand their modern potential as an extension of state power. In the face of these changing intelligence threats, the several functions that U.S. counterintelligence performs have well established tactical objectives and processes; but their potential as an integral part of American national security strategy is only just beginning to emerge.

As the Committee considers larger policy and strategy toward Cuba, I would urge that you keep in mind the need to have a clear strategy and resources for countering the intelligence operations they direct against United States and our friends and allies.

This may seem obvious, but in my experience, the national security policy community seems largely unaware or unconvinced of the dangers to U.S. national security posed by the intelligence activities of foreign powers. As a consequence, plans and programs to counter those activities rarely factor into policy discussions. All the more reason why today's hearing is so important. To be sure, most nations spy on each other. But to acknowledge that fact is not to say that it does not matter.

America's deterrence and defense have long depended on strategic secrets. The locations of our hidden retaliatory forces. The codes by which we protect our military and diplomatic communications. Intelligence sources and methods that give us warning and permit us to understand the threats and opportunities we face. And the sensitive technologies that give us military and commercial advantage. Our political strength also turns on protecting our institutions and alliances from covert influence operations by foreign intelligence services. To survive at peace with our values intact, we need a clear appreciation of which secrets and other strengths we must protect, and the will do to so.

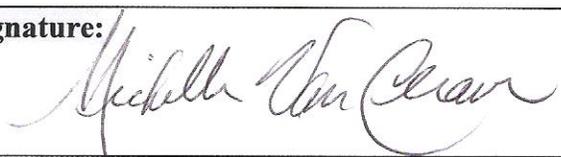
At a time when our Nation is engaged in a war against terror, and consumed with economic troubles at home, the actions of foreign intelligence services may seem a far distant matter. It is precisely in periods when our attention is diverted that adversaries may choose to exploit that perceived advantage. I believe that is what we are seeing today, with the expansion of foreign intelligence activities within U.S. borders, and the growing Latin America presence of foreign powers such as China and Iran.

The challenge for our nation's leadership is to tie policy decisions to a clear strategic vision to advance America's enduring interests and core values. I see today's hearing as part of such an effort, and I am grateful for the opportunity you have given me to contribute to your deliberations.

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs

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1. Name: Michelle Van Cleave	2. Organization or organizations you are representing: self
3. Date of Committee hearing: May 17, 2012	
4. Have <u>you</u> received any Federal grants or contracts (including any subgrants and subcontracts) since October 1, 2008 related to the subject on which you have been invited to testify? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	5. Have any of the <u>organizations you are representing</u> received any Federal grants or contracts (including any subgrants and subcontracts) since October 1, 2008 related to the subject on which you have been invited to testify? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
6. If you answered yes to either item 4 or 5, please list the source and amount of each grant or contract, and indicate whether the recipient of such grant was you or the organization(s) you are representing. You may list additional grants or contracts on additional sheets.	
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