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Hideaki Kami. *Diplomacy Meets Migration: U.S. Relations with Cuba during the Cold War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. ISBN: 9781108423427 (hardback, \$49.99); 9781108437547 (paperback, \$29.99).

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When I was compiling the 1977-1980 *Foreign Relations of the United States* volume for Mexico, Cuba, and the Caribbean, I came across a very unusual statement by Cuban leader Fidel Castro.² In September 1978, during an unusually warm period of relations between the United States and Cuba, Castro spoke to members of the Cuban-American media and declared that Cuban emigres would no longer be referred to as “counterrevolutionary ‘worms’”³ but instead as the “Cuban community abroad.” I considered Castro’s statement amusing enough to include as a footnote in the quixotic story about a failed rapprochement between two longtime rivals, but after reading Hideaki Kami’s *Diplomacy Meets Migration: U.S. Relations With Cuba During the Cold War*, I now understand the full significance of Castro’s comments and I am glad (and lucky) that I included them.

William LeoGrande and Peter Kornbluh’s recent monograph on U.S.-Cuban relations revealed an extensive and hidden history of backchannel discussions between individuals from the two countries, concluding that Washington had missed numerous opportunities to repair the diplomatic chasm that separated the United States and Cuba.⁴ Kami’s book should be viewed not as a coda to LeoGrande and Kornbluh’s work, but rather as a companion piece. *Diplomacy Meets Migration* argues persuasively that the Cuban-American community in Miami played a key role in the fate of U.S.-Cuban relations, and that the Washington-Miami and Havana-Miami axes deserve greater consideration from historians. Furthermore, Kami argues that international politics have led the public to adopt false perceptions about the Cuban-American community; for years, Havana designated Cuban migrants ‘counterrevolutionaries’ whereas Washington considered them ‘refugees.’ Kami states that neither label is entirely accurate. In his own words: “For the U.S. government, these Cubans were the enemies of the enemy, thus of tremendous symbolic importance. Although Havana claimed that most of [the migrants] left the island ‘voluntarily,’ Washington called all Cuban emigrants ‘exiles’ and ‘refugees’ to discredit the revolution” (29), whereas “the Cuban government looked to emigration as ‘betrayal’ of the nation and questioned [emigrants] claim to being Cuban.” (10) Instead, Kami posits that Cuban migrants were a diverse group that challenged their native country using a myriad of

¹ The opinions of the author do not necessarily represent the views of the Department of State or the United States government

² Alexander Poster ed. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980 Volume XXXIII, Mexico, Cuba and the Caribbean* (Washington D.C.: United States Department of State), Document 35.

³ “Guisanos.”

⁴ William LeoGrande and Peter Kornbluh, *Backchannel to Cuba, the Hidden History of Negotiations between Washington and Havana* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

strategies, many of which influenced policy in Washington. While events such as the Bay of Pigs and groups such as Alpha-66 are symbols of violent, counterrevolutionary resistance to Castro's Cuba, they are merely one part of the story, and lobby groups like the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) played a significant role, too. To Kami, the history of U.S.-Cuban relations is not the sum of 'what one clerk wrote to another,' but a complicated equation involving the agency of hundreds of thousands of migrants. Thus, Castro's September 1978 remark represented a fundamental (though brief) shift in thinking about the Miami Cuban community, one which was reflective of realities and not of Cold War propaganda.

To be fair, Kami is not the first author to write about the importance of the Cuban migrants. Lars Schoultz wrote at length about the CANF in his monograph, and journalist Ann Louise Bardach's book focuses on the Cuban-American community, even if it focuses more on the post-Cold War period.⁵ The value of the author's contribution is that he has written a Cold-War focused look at the influence of Cuban migrants that is grounded in archival sources. In fact, Kami's extensive research is one of the strongest elements of his scholarship. He consulted archives in Canada, Japan, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Like Piero Gleijeses, Kami also succeeded in accessing Cuban archival documents. Additionally, his thorough use of personal papers, published Cuban sources, Cuban periodicals, oral histories, and interviews is admirable.⁶ This book is what international history is supposed to look like.

Kami structures his book chronologically. One of his first major claims is that the Cuban revolution created the Cuban diaspora in Miami, a claim he backs up by citing events such as Operation Pedro Pan, which brought 14,000 Cuban children to the United States during the early 1960s (29), the mass emigration that occurred after Castro opened the port of Camarioca in 1965 (41), and the U.S.-Cuban migration agreement ('freedom flights') that allowed 260,000 Cubans to leave their home country for the United States between 1965 and 1973. Although Cuban-Americans had fomented revolution in their native country long before the Cold War (such as the 1868-1878 Ten Years War), Kami states that fewer than 20,000 Cuban-Americans lived in the Miami metropolitan area (which he defines as Dade County) during the 1950s, compared to 600,000 in the early 1980s (43).

During the 1960s, Kami argues, Washington used this new community to conduct acts of terrorism and sabotage against the Cuban government. The evidence – from Operation Mongoose to the training of Cuban-Americans at the School of the Americas to the Bay of Pigs – is undeniable. But Kami also discusses the diversity of opinion within the Miami Cuban community. Although he does not shy away from discussing the acts of freelance terrorists such as Orlando Bosch, he states that Cuban emigres held contradictory feelings toward their former home, citing a 1975 *Miami Herald* poll that revealed that only 53% of Cuban-Americans opposed normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba, and that 49.5% wished to visit Cuba, "perhaps to meet their families" (50). While some emigres possessed violent, militant, and unwavering hostility to Castro's government, the full story, Kami demonstrates, is much more complicated.

According to the author, a key moment for the Cuban-American community in Miami was the Presidential election of 1976. Kami asserts that while Gerald Ford generally ignored the Miami Cuban diaspora, Ronald Reagan saw an opportunity. Although Reagan did not win the 1976 Republican primary, he carried 71% of Cuban Republicans in Dade County; a major development since Florida then became important as a swing state and the Cuban-American community realized it could be a major political force. Nonetheless, Jimmy Carter won the 1976 Presidential election and pursued a normalization of relations with Cuba, but not before consulting with the Cuban emigres in Miami in February 1977 (103). Although Carter ignored the hesitant attitude of the emigres, the meeting symbolized the growing importance of the Cuban diaspora to Washington policymakers. The Carter administration had early successes, lifting the commercial travel ban to Cuba, convincing Havana to allow family visits, and concluding a hijacking agreement that promised to reign in the more militant

⁵ Lars Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Cuban Republic: The United States and the Cuban Revolution*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Ann Louise Bardach, *Cuba Confidential: The Extraordinary Tragedy of Cuba, its Revolution, and its Exiles*, (London: Penguin, 2004).

⁶ Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002)

members of the Cuban-American community (107-128), but Havana's refusal to remove Cuban troops from Africa created an impasse that prevented a full rapprochement. The collapse of détente led to hostilities between the two nations, culminating in the Mariel Sealift, which led to more than 120,000 Cubans entering the United States, and made the Cuban-American community a much more influential force in American politics (145). The Sealift also revealed the conflicted attitudes among the many Miami Cuban emigres who flouted Washington and boated to Mariel to bring home family, friends, and strangers, effectively making Castro's gambit a success.

During the Reagan administration, Kami argues, the Cuban-American community recognized the political clout it possessed. Jorge Mas, a Cuban émigré, created the influential CANF and encouraged members of his community to lobby Washington to take a stronger position against Havana (201). In collaboration with CANF, the Reagan administration developed Radio Martí (and later TV Martí), which became the centerpiece of U.S. policy toward Cuba once Secretary of State Alexander Haig's ambitious plans to return surreptitiously "excludables" from the Mariel Sealift were deemed impossible (217). By the end of the Cold War, CANF was a powerful political organization that gave money to Democrats and Republicans who supported its views. As the Eastern Bloc collapsed, CANF even drew up policy plans for a 1990s "Post-Castro Cuba," which did not occur, but the episode illustrates the influence of the Cuban-American community in Washington politics. Kami concludes that within the span of three decades, Cuban emigres grew from a small diaspora that, at best, was useful for clandestine operations to a community of several hundred thousand people who formed a powerful lobby that influenced policy decisions.

Kami's well-researched book has many strengths and should be read by historians interested in international history or migration history. In general, Kami supports his arguments quantitatively, and his use of Cuban sources provides a perspective that is unique and important, since it gives him the ability to look at both the Washington-Miami and Washington-Havana axes. His conclusions are particularly on-target when he writes about the Reagan administration, using the full extent of declassified material to illustrate how Jorge Mas worked with the administration to create Radio Martí. Furthermore, his conclusion that the Cuban revolution itself created the Cuban-American community in the United States as it is known today is persuasive, compelling, and ironic, given Fidel Castro's repeated weaponization of migration to minimize dissent in Cuba.

Nonetheless, a book review would not be complete without a few quibbles. Kami devotes only two paragraphs to the Soviet brigade crisis. In 1979, many U.S. policymakers panicked over the discovery of Soviet troops in Cuba, forgetting that a Soviet presence on Cuba had been a reality since the Missile Crisis. Although the Miami Cuban community was certainly important, the brigade crisis mobilized U.S. public opinion against Cuba, doomed the SALT II negotiations, and left Cuban policymakers with the impression that it was not worth the effort to negotiate with the United States. Similarly, Kami should recognize the importance of Cuban public opinion and its effect on policy and migration. One reason Castro initiated the Mariel Sealift is that years of recession in Cuba were taking a toll on his popularity and opening the port of Mariel served as means to remove discontented Cubans with minimal bloodshed. Last, *Diplomacy Meets Migration* contains long passages of exposition that do not mention the Cuban-American community and instead focus on the discussion in Washington. Although this background is important, the amount of discussion regarding U.S. policymaking may undermine Kami's hypothesis about the agency of the Cuban-American community.

In sum, however, Kami's book deserves the praise it has received. The volume and diversity of research in his monograph is extraordinary, and he accounts for an oft-overlooked element in the historical discussion of U.S.-Cuban relations.

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