

THE POLLS—TRENDS

AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARD CUBA

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Though the Cold War ended, by most accounts, in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union, some of the most contentious issues in American foreign policy still involve how the United States should relate to the small number of remaining communist countries, especially China, Cuba, and North Korea. Of the three, Cuba offers a particularly good window for examining changes in American public opinion since both the overall regime and the top leadership in that country have undergone remarkably little change over the last 40 years. Cuba's significance to the American public is further enhanced by its geographical location: as several generations of Americans have learned, just 90 miles separate Cuba from Florida. And though most Americans, as we will see, have not regarded Cuba as a constant, serious threat to their survival, the island nation was directly and prominently involved in some of the most celebrated incidents in the Cold War, including the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Nicaraguan civil war, and the American intervention in Grenada.

Against this background, it is surprising that there has been so little previous work on American public opinion toward Cuba. Though there is a long-standing scholarly interest in how the mass public thinks about foreign policy in general, and a large literature dealing specifically with American attitudes toward China and the Soviet Union, Cuba has generally escaped this kind of attention. (For a few important exceptions, see Falcoff 1989; Fisk 1999; and Watts and Dominguez 1977.)

This report examines how American attitudes about Cuba and Cuban-American relations have changed since 1959, when Fidel Castro first came to power. The data are divided into six sections. Since public opinion about Cuba often seems to fluctuate in reaction to the immediate events and crises of American

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foreign policy, I have also included a short chronology of major events in U.S.-Cuban relations since 1959 (see table 1).

I. General Attitudes toward Castro and Cuba

The first survey question ever asked about Fidel Castro, so far as I can determine, comes from a July 1959 Gallup Poll. Since Castro's forces had triumphed over those of Fulgencio Batista just 6 months earlier and Castro's own role in the new Cuban government was still not fully defined,¹ it is not surprising that almost half of all Americans did not have a firm opinion about Castro at that point; but of those who did, unfavorable impressions outnumbered favorable ones by better than two to one (see item 1). Over the next 5 years, as Castro became better known to the American public, his image grew substantially more negative. By May 1964, when Americans were asked to rate the Cuban dictator on a scale ranging from -5 to +5 (item 2), only a fraction more than 1 percent gave him a positive rating, as compared to 92 percent who gave him a negative rating (83 percent placed him at -5, the very lowest point on the scale).

Castro's standing with the American public held constant for about the next 5 years and then began to improve a bit (it could scarcely have gotten worse). As shown elsewhere (see Mayer 1992, chap. 4), the late 1960s and early 1970s were a time when American attitudes about almost all aspects of the Cold War became somewhat more positive, and Castro seems to have benefited from the general trend. If the Cuban dictator never exactly became a popular figure with the American public, by December 1978, 18 percent of Gallup's respondents gave Castro a positive rating (again using a scale from -5 to +5), and only 49 percent placed him at one of the two lowest points on the scale.

In December 1967, Gallup began to ask a similar question about Cuba. As shown in item 3, the country was not viewed very warmly either, though it was consistently more popular than its leader. Like Castro, however, Cuba substantially improved its standing with the American public from the late 1960s through the late 1970s. The number of Americans who gave Cuba a highly negative rating on the scale (-4 or -5) fell from 65 percent in 1967 to 41 percent in 1976 and then to 29 percent in early 1979.

At some point in late 1979 or early 1980, however, Cuba's public image underwent a dramatic reversal. Two events were probably responsible for the change. In August 1979, the U.S. government confirmed earlier reports that the Soviet Union had some 2,000-3,000 combat troops stationed in Cuba.

1. In the immediate aftermath of Batista's resignation, Castro's only formal position was commander of the armed forces. Cuba was nominally ruled by a provisional civilian government, headed by Manuel Urrutia. For accounts of this period and Castro's early efforts to solidify his power, see Geyer (1991), Suchlicki (1997), and Szulc (1986).

Though there is still some dispute about how meaningful or threatening this situation was, the Carter administration faced a storm of criticism over the matter, finally declaring that the Soviet troops were “a serious threat” and “unacceptable.” Then, in late December 1979, the Soviet Union sent troops into Afghanistan, a move that helped reignite the Cold War and make American public opinion significantly more hostile toward anything connected with communism and the Soviet Union. Whatever the cause, between February 1979 and January 1980, highly negative assessments of Cuba on the –5 to +5 scale jumped from 29 percent to 49 percent, while positive ratings of any sort dropped from 27 percent to 14 percent.

Through the rest of the 1980s, to judge from the limited data available, American attitudes toward Castro and Cuba either stayed constant or became slightly more negative. Not until the early 1990s did the public’s hostility toward Cuba and its leader soften somewhat. In a question asked by the Roper Poll, for example, between 1982 and 1984 about 45 percent of Americans called Cuba an “enemy of the United States.” This declined to 34 percent in 1993 and then to 30 percent in 1998 (see item 4). In a quadrennial series of polls sponsored by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, respondents were asked to rate Cuba on a 0–100 “feeling thermometer” (item 5). The mean rating for the Caribbean nation was 32 in 1978, fell to 25 in 1982, then rose to 37 in 1994 and 38 in 1998. In general, the public image of Castro and Cuba in the late 1990s was not very different from what it had been in the late 1970s (see also items 6, 7, and 8).

II. Perceptions of Threat and Danger

The state of Cuban-American relations might have been even more conflictual were it not for one offsetting feature of American public opinion: Though most Americans have held decidedly negative views of both Castro and Cuba, they have not regarded Cuba as an especially serious threat to this country’s peace and security. This conclusion depends, it should be said, on the particular type of survey question asked. As items 9–11 all show, if one simply asks, Is Cuba a threat to the United States, a sizable number of Americans—about 50–60 percent before the dissolution of the Soviet Union—will respond that, yes, Cuba is a threat. But this sort of question, I would argue, sets a very undemanding standard. While calling Cuba a “threat” does say something about how respondents view that country, it does not tell us whether the threat is perceived as actual and immediate, or merely potential and theoretical. A more revealing method of approaching this issue is to ask respondents to compare the threat posed by Cuba with that posed by other countries. Item 12 shows four questions of this type, and it is striking how consistently low Cuba has always ranked in this sort of comparison. When asked which one

Table I. Some Major Dates in U.S.-Cuban Relations, 1959–2000

Date	Event
Jan. 1, 1959	Cuban President Fulgencio Batista resigns and flees to the Dominican Republic.
Oct. 1960	Cuban government nationalizes a large number of U.S.-owned enterprises, effectively ending U.S. private investment in Cuba.
Oct. 20, 1960	U.S. government announces an immediate embargo on most U.S. exports to Cuba. The embargo is extended and tightened by President Kennedy in 1962.
Jan. 3, 1961	United States severs diplomatic relations with Cuba.
Apr. 17–20, 1961	The Bay of Pigs invasion. Pres. Kennedy accepts “sole responsibility” for the debacle on April 24.
Dec. 2, 1961	In a nationwide TV address, Castro publicly declares, for the first time, that he is “a Marxist-Leninist and will be one until the day I die.”
Oct. 22–28, 1962	The public phase of the Cuban Missile Crisis (Kennedy was first informed of the presence of Soviet missiles on Oct. 16, but did not reveal the information to the country until 6 days later).
Sept. 24, 1970	After a long string of airplane hijackings in the late 1960s, Cuba for the first time directly returns a hijacker to the United States. Two days later, Cuba’s foreign minister announces that Cuba is willing to enter into an agreement with the United States for the joint extradition of hijackers.
Feb. 15, 1973	U.S. and Cuba sign a 5-year “memorandum of agreement” designed to curb the hijacking of airplanes and ships between the two countries.
Oct. 1975	Cuban troops begin supporting the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in its struggle to win control of the former Portuguese colony. By the time a peace accord is signed in December 1988, an estimated 50,000 Cuban troops are stationed in Angola.
March 24–29, 1977	U.S. and Cuban delegations meet in New York in an attempt to reach agreement about fishing rights in the waters between the two countries, a meeting described by the State Department as “the first formal, face-to-face negotiations” between the two countries in 16 years. Two fishing pacts are eventually signed on April 27.

Aug. 31, 1979	The U.S. government confirms that the Soviet Union has 2,000–3,000 combat troops in Cuba. A week later, President Carter says it is a “serious matter” and that “this status quo is unacceptable,” later announcing increased surveillance of Cuba and expanded U.S. military maneuvers in the area.
Apr. 21–early June, 1980	The Mariel boat lift: A large flotilla of private boats conveys some 118,000 Cuban refugees to the United States.
Feb. 24, 1996	Two unarmed private planes belonging to a Miami-based Cuban exile group are shot down by the Cuban military over waters between Cuba and the United States.
Nov. 25, 1999	Elian Gonzalez and two other refugees are rescued off the coast of Florida. Three days later, Cuba’s foreign ministry asks the U.S. government to give the 6-year-old boy to his father in Cuba.
Jan. 5, 2000	The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) orders that Elian Gonzalez be returned to his father.
April 22, 2000	INS agents seize Elian Gonzalez in a predawn raid on the home of his Miami relatives. He finally returns to Cuba on June 28.

SOURCES.—Dates and details are drawn primarily from *Facts on File* and the *New York Times*.

country provides the greatest threat to U.S. security or world peace, no more than 5 percent of those surveyed have ever mentioned Cuba.

Another notable feature of these data is how sharply the perceived threat from Cuba declined with the end of the Cold War. Once Cuba could no longer be portrayed as a Soviet foothold in the Western hemisphere, the number of Americans who saw Cuba as a threat to the United States declined from 56 percent to 29 percent in the ABC/*Washington Post* surveys (item 10), and from 68 percent to about 35 percent in a series of Yankelovich polls (item 11).

III. Reestablishing Diplomatic and Trade Relations

Since the early 1960s, Cuban-American relations have been dominated by two enduring issues. The first is whether the United States should reestablish diplomatic and/or economic relations with Cuba.² Gallup first asked about this issue in late April 1961, in the immediate aftermath of the Bay of Pigs invasion. At that time, 63 percent of Americans favored a policy of refusing to “buy or sell [American] products to Cuba so long as Castro is in power”; just 23 percent opposed it (item 13). Unfortunately, so far as I can determine, no survey organization asked an even remotely comparable question at any time in the next 10 years.

The drought was finally broken in 1971, when Harris asked a question on the narrow issue of “allowing Cuban cigars to be sold in this country.” Though it is unwise to read too much into this one question about a specific product, it is striking that the results were almost identical to those that Gallup had registered a decade earlier: 62 percent supported the ban on Cuban cigars and 22 percent opposed it (see item 14). Like other attitudes about Castro and Cuba, public opinion on this issue changed quite substantially over the next several years. When Harris repeated this question in late 1974, those favoring the sale of Cuban cigars in America jumped from 22 percent to 43 percent, while opposition fell from 62 percent to 38 percent.

While survey questions about reestablishing diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba have been asked more frequently over the last several decades, the question wordings and formats were changed so frequently that it is sometimes

2. In theory, of course, the two matters are separable: the United States could reestablish diplomatic relations with Cuba without lifting the trade embargo. Moreover, there is good reason to think that the American public reacts somewhat differently to the two proposals. In January 1998, CBS News tried to explore the distinction by asking half of its sample, “Do you approve or disapprove of reestablishing diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba?” The other half was asked, “Do you think diplomatic relations with Cuba should or should not be reestablished?” While 56 percent of the respondents favored reestablishing diplomatic relations, only 40 percent supported reestablishing diplomatic and trade relations. In other words, about 15 percent of the American public appears to favor diplomatic relations with Cuba but oppose trading with it. Such results notwithstanding, as the questions in Section III indicate, most pollsters tend to ask about both issues in the same question.

difficult to say with any confidence whether and when mass attitudes have changed. A Harris question that focuses more clearly on the issue of diplomatic relations (item 16) shows no change between early 1973 and late 1974. A Roper question on the same subject (item 17) shows no change between January 1975 and March 1977. Between 1977 and 1982, however, Gallup recorded a modest decline in support for “entering into negotiations with Cuba” (see item 18). Where the public supported such negotiations in the former year by a 59 percent to 25 percent margin, 5 years later they endorsed it more narrowly, 48 percent to 36 percent. When the same question was asked in 1990, the public was split in half: 45 percent in favor of negotiations, 45 percent opposed. The evidence from the 1990s is even more fragmentary but suggests that support for reestablishing diplomatic and trade relations did increase somewhat in the second half of the decade (see especially items 19 and 20).

Overall, the data on this issue show only a modest change over the last 40 years. In early 1961, as we have seen, the Gallup Poll found Americans supporting the trade embargo against Cuba by 63 percent to 23 percent. When this same question was repeated in 1998 (in a Yankelovich poll), the public still favored a ban on trade with Cuba, albeit by a closer margin, 48 percent to 41 percent. Moreover, most of whatever change did occur seems to have taken place in the early 1970s. Since that time, according to a second Gallup question (item 20), support for “reestablishing diplomatic relations with Cuba” has gone up and down a bit, but with no overall trend. In two surveys conducted in 2000, as in two surveys conducted in the mid-1970s, about 55 percent of the American public favored reviving diplomatic ties with Cuba, while 33 percent opposed it. Three questions that deal specifically with the trade embargo (items 21–23) suggest that the same pattern probably applies to attitudes about economic relations with Cuba.

IV. American Military Intervention

The other enduring policy question about Cuba concerns whether and under what circumstances to use U.S. military force against that country. Unfortunately, there are few questions on this issue that have been asked more than once, and none that have been asked over an extended period of time. Here, I simply attempt to bring together the available data on this topic, to highlight a few general findings.

During the 1980s, when American public opinion resolutely refused to show much support for military or economic involvement in El Salvador and Nicaragua, many commentators claimed that this reticence was a sign of the so-called Vietnam syndrome, a fear that even a very limited U.S. commitment would gradually get the country entangled in a long, drawn-out, unproductive “quagmire” (see, e.g., Wittkopf and McCormick 1993). Against that back-

ground, it is interesting to note that well before Vietnam became a significant issue in American politics, the American public was never very enthusiastic about using its military power against Cuba. On three different occasions in the early 1960s, Gallup asked its respondents if the “U.S. should send our armed forces into Cuba to help overthrow Castro” (item 24). In all three cases, only about 20 percent of the sample favored such a move, while more than 60 percent opposed it.³ Even on the more limited question of “aid[ing] the anti-Castro forces with money and war materials” (item 25), there was surprisingly modest popular support: just 44 percent supported such aid, while 41 percent opposed it. Similarly, a question from the American National Election Studies (item 26) shows that as early as 1964, more Americans wanted to “let the Cuban people handle their own affairs” than “get the communist government out of Cuba.” In 1965, according to a Gallup survey, just 13 percent said that we should “march in and get rid of Castro,” while 43 percent said we should “not [take] any direct action against Castro” (item 27).

Two other questions from this time period show somewhat greater support for action against Castro. In 1964, 48 percent of the respondents in a Gallup survey favored “stronger measures, including a naval blockade” (item 28). (The question wording, unfortunately, makes it difficult to say just what respondents were endorsing: stronger measures in general, a naval blockade, or both.) And Americans were, at least, overwhelmingly willing to fight to defend the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay (item 29).

By the 1970s, pollsters no longer even asked about invading Cuba. The few questions dealing with American military force and Cuba from this decade are concerned with a quite different matter: whether the U.S. should “go to war” or “use troops” if Castro tried to take over another country in Latin America. Perhaps because of this country’s experience in Vietnam, the American public was not notably enthusiastic about military involvement in this circumstance either. In three different questions that specified somewhat different levels of U.S. involvement (items 30–32), a plurality of Americans were, in every case, opposed to the use of U.S. forces. Support for sending U.S. troops “if Cuban troops were involved in a communist takeover of a Central American country” did increase modestly between 1981 and 1985 (see item 33), perhaps in response to Cuba’s role in assisting the anti-American forces in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Yet, in two polls conducted in 1994 and 1998, only about 40 percent of the public endorsed the use of American troops if “people in Cuba attempted to overthrow the Castro dictatorship” (item 34).

3. Two of these three surveys, it is worth noting, occurred before October 1962, so the results cannot be explained as an indication of the public’s desire to avoid a replay of the Cuban Missile Crisis or to honor the promise the United States made during that crisis not to invade Cuba.

V. Cuba and the Kennedy Administration

The final two sections in this article attempt to provide a more in-depth look at a small number of particularly controversial incidents in U.S.-Cuban relations. If nothing else, the survey data on Cuba from the presidency of John Kennedy offer a revealing commentary on the extraordinary growth of polling in American politics. In late 1999 and early 2000, when Cuba and the United States fought for custody of one 6-year-old boy, a total of 172 different survey questions were asked on this topic by one survey organization or another.⁴ By contrast, so far as I can determine, there are only about five or six questions that deal directly with the Bay of Pigs invasion and none about the Cuban Missile Crisis.

In late April and early May of 1961, about a week after the Cuban exiles' invasion at the Bay of Pigs had collapsed, Gallup asked its sample about three possible ways of opposing Castro.⁵ The policy that clearly comes closest to what the United States did at the Bay of Pigs was a question discussed earlier (item 25), asking if the United States "should aid the anti-Castro forces with money and war materials." As already noted, the American public endorsed this policy only by the narrowest of margins, 44 percent to 41 percent. The public decisively rejected sending our own armed forces into Cuba, 24 percent to 65 percent (item 24). Only an economic embargo won the enthusiastic support of the American public (item 13). In June 1961, a clear majority also opposed the policy that the Kennedy administration ultimately decided upon for gaining the release of the prisoners who were captured during the Bay of Pigs invasion, by exchanging them for U.S. tractors (see item 35).

Its reservations or disagreements about specific policies notwithstanding, the public also claimed, by a four-to-one margin, that it approved of the way President Kennedy was "handling the situation in Cuba" (item 36). Indeed, even though the Bay of Pigs is universally regarded as a debacle for the new administration, Kennedy's general approval rating actually increased in the first survey after the invasion, rising from 78 percent in mid-April to 83 percent in late April and early May.

How would the public have handled the Cuban Missile Crisis? Did it favor an American air strike? Would it have been willing to accept an explicit agreement in which the Soviets withdrew their missiles from Cuba while the United States removed its missiles from Turkey? There is, simply put, no survey data at all on any of these questions. The only thing we can say with any assurance is that the public approved of the final result. Kennedy's ap-

4. This count is based on the polls included in the Roper Center's POLL data base, and is thus limited to polls with national samples.

5. As a further limit on our ability to study these matters, the data for the late April-early May of 1961 survey (AIPO no. 643-A) have apparently been lost; in any event, they have not been archived at the Roper Center, where all of the other early Gallup data are stored. The results are reported, however, in a contemporary press release, and reprinted in Gallup 1972, p. 1721.

proval rating, which had drifted down from the high 70s to the low 60s over the previous 6 months, jumped from 61 percent in a mid-October survey to 74 percent in mid-November and then stayed at that level for the next 2 months. Through the early months of 1963, the public generally said that it was “satisfied . . . with the way the Kennedy administration has been handling the Cuba situation in recent weeks” (item 37), though its endorsement was considerably less one-sided than it had been in early 1961.

VI. The Elian Gonzalez Affair

Finally, no collection of survey data on U.S.-Cuban affairs would be complete without at least a brief look at the public reaction to the controversy that raged during the first half of 2000 over the fate of a 6-year-old boy whose mother drowned while they were fleeing Cuba. As already noted, the Elian Gonzalez case generated an enormous amount of survey data, including what is perhaps my favorite survey question of the last several years: “If you had the chance to choose one person’s name that you would never have to hear again, which of the following names would you choose: Elian Gonzalez, Monica Lewinsky, or O.J. Simpson?”⁶

The data shown here focus on the more mundane issue of who should have gotten final custody of the child: his father in Cuba or his relatives in Miami. In the very first question of this type posed to a national sample, taken from a Gallup survey in December 1999, the American public was evenly divided: 45 percent thought the boy should remain in the United States, and 45 percent said he should go back to Cuba. Over the next 4 months, however, opinion shifted dramatically in favor of the father. On April 24, the last time Gallup asked this question, 63 percent of Americans wanted Elian to live with his father, while only 25 percent sided with the Miami relatives (see item 38). According to a second question, asked by ABC News and the *Washington Post*, support for the father continued to increase through early May (item 39).

Sources and Abbreviations

ABC: ABC News

ABC/WP: ABC News and the *Washington Post*

CBS: CBS News

CBS/NYT: CBS News and the *New York Times*

CCFR: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations

CPS: Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan

6. The question was posed by Opinion Dynamics for Fox News in April 2000. The results were 45 percent for Lewinsky, 32 percent for O.J., and 13 percent for Elian.

Gallup: Gallup Organization
 Harris: Louis Harris and Associates
 ORC: Opinion Research Corporation
 PENN: Mark Penn
 PSRA: Princeton Survey Research Associates
 Roper: Roper Organization
 WP: the *Washington Post*
 Yankelovich: Yankelovich, Skelly, and White; and Yankelovich Partners

I. GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARD CASTRO AND CUBA

1. *Gallup*: Have you heard or read about Fidel Castro? [if yes] In general, would you say you have a favorable or an unfavorable opinion of him?

	July 1959	May 1960
Favorable	15	2
Unfavorable	38	81
No opinion	25	17
Haven't heard or read about him	22	...
N (app.)	1,500	1,500

NOTE.—In 1960, the question read, “What is your opinion of Fidel Castro—is it favorable or unfavorable?”

2. *Gallup*: Here is an interesting experiment. You notice that the 10 boxes on this card go from the highest position of plus 5—or someone you like very much—all the way down to the lowest position of minus 5—or someone you dislike very much. Please tell me how you would rate the following: Fidel Castro?

Survey Date	Highly Positive (+5, +4)	Mildly Positive (+3, 2, 1)	Mildly Negative (-1, 2, 3)	Highly Negative (-4, -5)	Don't Know Him/No Opinion	N
May 1960	1	3	12	60	24	1,599
Aug. 1960	1	3	9	71	16	1,553
August 1960	*	3	9	69	18	1,619
Sept. 1960	1	4	10	70	15	1,066
May 1964	*	1	6	86	7	1,640
May 1965	1	1	8	83	7	2,285
Aug. 1966	*	2	10	82	5	1,509
April 1967	1	1	8	86	4	2,190
Aug. 1967	1	2	9	85	4	1,525
Sept. 1968	*	2	11	84	3	1,507
Oct. 1968	1	2	11	82	4	1,605
March 1969	1	4	13	77	4	1,634
July 1969	1	5	17	72	5	1,555
Nov. 1969	1	3	18	72	4	1,575
Jan. 1970	*	3	13	79	5	1,573

Oct. 1970	1	5	14	76	4	1,507
Feb. 1972	2	7	17	68	6	1,502
Aug. 1972	1	6	19	68	5	1,465
Oct. 1972	*	5	17	70	7	1,516
Sept. 1976	1	9	21	55	12	1,498
Aug. 1978	2	11	26	50	12	1,598
Dec. 1978	4	14	25	49	8	1,563

NOTE.—In the four 1960 surveys, the question read, “I am going to read off the names of some men and I would like you to tell me whether or not you know of them. [if respondent has heard of the person] Here’s an interesting experiment. . . .”

3. *Gallup*: You notice that the 10 boxes on this card go from the highest position of plus five—for something you have a very favorable opinion of—all the way down to the lowest position of minus five—for something you have a very unfavorable opinion of. How far up the scale or how far down the scale would you rate the following nations . . . Cuba?

Survey Date	Highly	Mildly	Mildly	Highly	No Opinion	N
	Positive	Positive	Negative	Negative		
	(+5, +4)	(+3, 2, 1)	(-1, 2, 3)	(-4, -5)		
Dec. 1967	*	6	25	65	4	N.A.
June 1976	2	13	36	41	8	1,544
Feb. 1979	4	23	38	29	7	1,534
Jan. 1980	2	12	34	49	4	1,597
March 1996	2	13	32	49	4	979

4. *Roper*: I’d like to have your impression about the overall position that some countries have taken toward the U.S. [card shown respondent] Would you read down that list and for each country, tell me if you believe that country has acted as a close ally of the U.S., has acted as a friend but not a close ally, has been more or less neutral toward the U.S., has been mainly unfriendly toward the U.S. but not an enemy, or has acted as an enemy of the U.S.? . . . Cuba.

Date	Close					Don’t	
	Ally	Friend	Neutral	Unfriendly	Enemy	Know	N
June 1982	1	3	10	38	41	7	2,000
June 1983	1	2	5	39	47	7	2,000
June 1984	0	3	7	38	45	6	2,000
July 1993	1	5	11	38	34	11	2,000
July 1998	1	5	13	38	30	13	2,000

5. *Gallup (for CCFR)*: Next I’d like you to rate these countries on this feeling thermometer. If you feel neutral toward a country, give it a temperature of 50 degrees. If you have a warm feeling toward a country, give it a temperature higher than 50 degrees. If you have a cold feeling toward a country, give it a temperature lower than 50 degrees. What temperature would you give to . . . Cuba?

Date	Mean						Don't	
	Rating	0-24	25-49	50	51-75	76-100	Know	N
1978	32	33	33	19	9	2	4	1,546
1982	25	45	31	13	3	1	6	1,547
1994	37	30	27	20	16	5	2	1,492
1998	38	27	28	22	12	6	5	1,507

6. *Gallup/PSRA*: I'd like your overall opinion of some foreign countries. Is your overall opinion of Cuba very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

	PSRA					
	April 1977	March 1988	March 1996	July-Aug. 1998	March 1999	May 1999
Very favorable	3	1	2	3	4	4
Mostly favorable	30	9	8	18	28	20
Mostly unfavorable	31	37	40	36	48	45
Very unfavorable	21	44	41	26	13	24
No opinion	15	9	9	17	7	7
N	1,549	1,038	979	1,189	N.A.	1,025

NOTE.—In 1977 and 1988, the question read, “Turning to a nearby country, what is your general attitude toward Cuba—very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable?”

7. *Gallup (for CCFR)*: Now I would like you to rate some American and foreign leaders on this thermometer scale. What temperature would you give to . . . Cuban President Fidel Castro?

Date	Mean						Don't	
	Rating	0-24	25-49	50	51-75	76-100	Know	N
1986	20	57	23	12	4	1	4	743
1990	18	60	22	9	3	1	5	780
1994	20	59	22	10	4	2	3	770
1998	23	54	23	13	5	2	4	746

8. *Yankelovich/ABC*: I'm going to read you the names of some political leaders and organizations in the news today. Please tell me whether you have generally favorable or generally unfavorable impressions of each, or whether you are not familiar enough to say one way or the other . . . Fidel Castro.

Date	Not Familiar with Him/			N
	Favorable	Unfavorable	Don't Know	
YANKL March 1997	6	71	24	1,018
ABC Jan. 1998 ^a	4	78	18	1,000
YANKL Jan. 1998	6	75	19	1,020

^a The ABC question read, "I'm going to read you a few names. For each, please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of that person, or perhaps you don't know enough to say. How about . . . Fidel Castro?"

II. PERCEPTIONS OF THREAT

9. *Gallup*: Do you think the Cuba situation is a serious threat to world peace at this time, or not?

	<i>Feb. 1963</i>	<i>April 1977</i>
Yes	60	51
No	29	34
Don't Know	11	15
<i>N</i>	1,661	1,549

NOTE.—In 1977, the question read, "Particularly in view of its relationship with the Soviet Union, do you think that Cuba represents a threat to the security of the United States, or not?"

10. *ABC/Washington Post*: As things now stand, would you say that Cuba is a threat to the national security of the United States, or not? [if yes] Would that be a major threat, or a minor threat?

	<i>March 1982</i>	<i>May 1983</i>	<i>Jan. 1998</i>
Yes	63	56	29
Major threat	...	33	13
Minor threat	...	23	16
Not a threat	31	38	60
Don't know	6	7	11
<i>N</i>	1,218	1,501	1,000

NOTE.—The follow-up question was not asked in 1982.

11. *Yankelovich*: Would you say that Cuba represents a very serious threat to this country, a moderately serious threat, just a slight threat, or no threat to our country at all?

<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>Very Serious</i>	<i>Moderately Serious</i>	<i>Slight</i>	<i>None at All</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N</i>
June 1983 ^a	29	39	23	9	...	1,007
Aug.–Sept. 1994	13	25	30	29	3	800
March 1997	12	24	32	24	9	1,018
May 1999	10	23	25	38	4	1,017
June 2000	15	26	25	26	8	1,218

^a In 1983, the question read, "Cuba has been a communist country now for many years. Would you say it represents a very serious threat to our country, a moderately serious threat, just a slight threat, or no threat to our country at all?" On this occasion, the question was asked only of registered voters.

12. *ORC*: In your opinion, which one country is the greatest threat to world peace today?

		ABC/ WP	PSRA	PENN
	<i>April–May</i> <i>1969</i>	<i>Sept.</i> <i>1981^a</i>	<i>Sept.</i> <i>1996^b</i>	<i>Sept.</i> <i>1999^c</i>
China	50	5	25	36
Russia	27	72	11	8
North Korea	4	...	7	5
North Vietnam	4	...	...	...
Egypt/Arabs	2	2	...	...
United States	2	7	...	...
Cuba	1	1	5	1
Israel	1	4	...	...
Iran	...	5	11	6
Iraq	...	...	36	21
Other	4	4	...	1
No opinion	6	...	5	22
<i>N</i>	1,508	1,501	601	511

^a "If you had to name one nation that you might consider the greatest threat to world peace, which nation would that be?"

^b "In your opinion, which of the following countries do you think is the greatest threat to the United States—Iraq, Iran, China, North Korea, Russia, or Cuba?"

^c "Which nation do you consider the greatest threat to U.S. national security?" This question was asked only of registered voters.

III. REESTABLISHING TRADE AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

13. *Gallup/Yankelovich*: Some people say that the United States should refuse to buy or sell its products to Cuba so long as Castro is in power. Do you agree or disagree?

	<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N</i>
Gallup	April–May 1961	63	23	14	app. 1,500
YANKL	March 1997	51	38	11	1,018
YANKL	Jan. 1998	48	41	11	1,020

14. *Harris*: It is now illegal to buy Cuban cigars in the U.S. Would you favor or oppose allowing Cuban cigars to be sold in this country?

	<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N</i>
	Jan. 1971	22	62	16	1,600
	Nov. 1974	43	38	19	1,525

15. *Gallup*: Now that President Nixon has made a trip to Communist China, do you

think the U.S. should or should not establish regular diplomatic relations with Fidel Castro's government in Cuba?

<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>Should</i>	<i>Should Not</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N</i>
June 1972	42	48	10	524

16. *Harris*: It is argued that with the war in Vietnam over and with relations with Communist Russia and China getting better, the U.S. ought to reestablish diplomatic relations with Cuba. However, others say that as long as Cuba is under Castro's Communist rule, we ought not to have anything to do with that country. All in all, do you favor or oppose the U.S. establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba?

<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N</i>
Feb. 1973	51	33	16	1,513
Nov. 1974	50	34	16	1,525

17. *Roper*: There is talk about the possibility that the United States may recognize the government of Cuba, and reestablish trade and diplomatic relations with Cuba. Do you favor or oppose our recognizing Cuba at the present time?

<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N</i>
Jan. 1975	45	39	15	2,000
March 1977	43	36	21	2,001

18. *Gallup*: Under present conditions, how do you feel about the United States entering into negotiations with Cuba, looking toward reestablishing diplomatic and economic relations and exchanging ambassadors? Would you be very strongly in favor, fairly strongly in favor, fairly strongly opposed, or very strongly opposed?

	<i>April 1977</i>	<i>Oct.–Nov. 1982</i>	<i>Oct.–Nov. 1986</i>	<i>March 1988</i>	<i>Oct.–Nov. 1990</i>
Very strongly favor	21	14	14	15	12
Fairly strongly favor	38	34	39	36	33
Fairly strongly opposed	12	18	17	17	22
Very strongly opposed	13	18	18	14	23
Don't know	16	15	12	18	10
<i>N</i>	774	1,547	1,585	1,038	1,662

19. *CBS/NYT/WP*: Do you approve or disapprove of reestablishing diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba?

	<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>Approve</i>	<i>Disapprove</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N</i>
CBS/NYT	April 1977	55	29	16	1,707
CBS/NYT	June 1978	55	29	16	1,527

CBS/NYT	Jan. 1998	40	45	15	2,300
WP	June–Aug. 1999	49	40	11	4,614

20. *Gallup/CBS*: Suppose that on election day this year you could vote on key issues as well as candidates. Please tell me whether you would vote for or against each one of the following propositions . . . Reestablishing diplomatic relations with Cuba?

	<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N</i>
Gallup	Oct. 1974 ^a	58	34	8	1,595
Gallup	March 1977 ^b	53	32	15	1,550
Gallup	April 1996	40	49	11	1,001
CBS	Jan. 1998 ^b	56	30	15	2,300
Gallup	March 1999	67	27	6	N.A.
Gallup	May 1999	71	25	4	1,025
Gallup	May 2000	57	36	7	1,031
Gallup	Oct. 2000	56	35	9	1,004

^a “Suppose that on election day, you could vote on these key issues. Please tell me how you would vote on each, remembering that you should try to vote for or against each proposition just as you would in a regular referendum. A. Diplomatic relations with Cuba should be reestablished. B. Diplomatic relations with Cuba should not be reestablished.”

^b “Do you think diplomatic relations with Cuba should or should not be reestablished?”

21. *Gallup*: Do you favor or oppose the United States government continuing its embargo against Cuba, as long as Fidel Castro is in power?

	<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N</i>
	Dec. 1993	66	26	8	1,014
	Sept. 1994	70	24	6	1,022

22. *CBS*: The United States has imposed a trade embargo against Cuba since it became a Communist nation under Fidel Castro, prohibiting U.S. trade with Cuba. Do you think the United States government should continue the trade embargo against Cuba, or should it end the embargo and have normal trade with Cuba?

	<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>Continue Embargo</i>	<i>End Embargo</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N</i>
	Sept. 1994	51	42	7	1,161
	Oct. 1996	56	32	12	1,528
	Jan. 1998	46	43	11	2,300

23. *Gallup*: Suppose that on election day this year, you could vote on key issues as well as candidates. Please tell me whether you would vote for or against each one of the following propositions. Would you vote . . . for or against ending the U.S. trade embargo with Cuba?

<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N</i>
March 1999	51	39	10	N.A.
May 1999	51	42	7	1,025
May 2000	48	42	10	1,031

IV. AMERICAN MILITARY INTERVENTION

24. *Gallup*: Some people say that the U.S. should send our armed forces into Cuba to help overthrow Castro. Do you agree or disagree?

<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N</i>
April–May 1961	24	65	11	app. 1,500
Sept. 1962	23	61	15	1,701
Feb. 1963	20	63	17	1,661

25. *Gallup*: Some people say that the United States should aid the anti-Castro forces with money and war materials. Do you agree or disagree?

	<i>April–May 1961</i>
Agree	44
Disagree	41
Don't know	15
<i>N</i>	app. 1,500

26. *CPS*: How about the situation in Cuba? Do you happen to remember whether its government is democratic, communist, or something else? [if communist] Some people feel we must do something to get the communist government out of Cuba; others feel that it is up to the Cuban people to handle their own affairs. Have you been interested enough in this to favor one side over the other? [if yes] What is your feeling? Should we get the communist government out of Cuba or let the Cuban people handle their own affairs?

<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>Get Communists Out of Cuba</i>	<i>Let Cubans Handle Own Affairs</i>	<i>Not Communist/Don't Know/No Interest</i>	<i>N</i>
Fall 1964 ^a	25	32	43	1,356
Fall 1968	13	52	35	1,549

^a In 1964, the question began, "How about the situation in Cuba? Have you been watching it closely enough to notice what kind of government it has? [if yes] Is it democratic, communist, or something else?"

27. *Gallup*: In general, there are three choices of action the United States has with regard to Cuba. We could march in and get rid of Castro, we could continue as we have been, not taking any direct action against Castro, or we could help set up a government in exile made up of escaped Cubans and support their fight against him. Which of these possibilities would you most favor?

	<i>Feb. 1965</i>
Get rid of Castro	13
Continue as we have	43
Set up government in exile	31
Don't know	13
<i>N</i>	1,620

28. *Gallup*: Some people say the U.S. should use stronger measures in dealing with the Cuban problem, including a naval blockade to stop military supplies from going into Cuba, or from Cuba to other countries for purposes of subversion. Other people say such measures are unnecessary and would be dangerous because they would risk a major war. How do you feel about this—would you favor or oppose stronger measures, including a naval blockade, under present circumstances?

	<i>Sept. 1964</i>
Favor	48
Oppose	34
Don't know	18
<i>N</i>	1,611

29. *Gallup*: Under terms of a long-standing agreement with Cuba, the United States has a naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. If Castro should attempt to take over this base by force, do you think the U.S. should fight to keep it, or should we withdraw?

	<i>Jan. 1961</i>
Fight	77
Withdraw	10
Other (vol.)	3
Don't know	10
<i>N</i>	1,502

30. *Harris*: There has been a lot of discussion about what circumstances might justify the United States going to war in the future. Do you feel if . . . Castro took over a country in South America . . . it would be worth going to war again, or not?

	<i>July 1971</i>
Worth it	31
Not worth it	50
Don't know	19
<i>N</i>	1,600

31. *Harris*: There has been a lot of discussion about what circumstances might justify U.S. military involvement, including the use of U.S. troops. Do you feel if Castro's Cuba invaded the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean, you would favor or oppose U.S. military involvement?

	<i>Dec. 1974</i>
Favor	32
Oppose	44

Don't know	24
<i>N</i>	1,513

32. *Gallup*: [Agree or disagree] The U.S. should take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to prevent Castro from sending Cuban troops to support revolutionary movements in Latin America and Africa.

	<i>May 1976</i>
Agree	41
Disagree	43
Don't know	16
<i>N</i>	524

33. *Roper*: There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using U.S. troops in other parts of the world. I'd like to ask your opinion about several different situations. How about . . . if Cuban troops were involved in a communist takeover of a Central American country.

<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N</i>
Feb. 1981	42	42	16	2,000
Jan. 1982	42	46	12	2,000
Oct.–Nov. 1983	56	31	13	1,000
March 1985	51	36	13	2,000

34. *Gallup (for CCFR)*: There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using U.S. troops in other parts of the world. I'd like to ask your opinion about some situations. Would you favor or oppose the use of U.S. troops . . . if people in Cuba attempted to overthrow the Castro dictatorship?

<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N</i>
Oct.–Nov. 1994	44	44	12	1,492
Oct.–Nov. 1998	38	51	12	1,507

V. CUBA AND THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION

35. *Gallup*: Have you heard or read about the plan to exchange U.S. tractors for prisoners from the Cuban invasion? [if yes] Do you favor or oppose this exchange?

	<i>June 1961</i>
Favor	19
Oppose	57
No opinion	12
Haven't heard about the plan	12
<i>N</i>	1,625

36. *Gallup*: Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Kennedy is handling the situation in Cuba?

<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>Approve</i>	<i>Disapprove</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N</i>
April–May 1961	61	15	24	app. 1,500

37. *Gallup*: In general, would you say that you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the Kennedy administration has been handling the Cuba situation in recent weeks?

<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N</i>
Feb. 1963	56	27	16	1,661
March 1963	50	32	18	1,675
April 1963	49	30	21	1,570
May 1963	45	35	20	1,632
May 1963	50	30	20	1,650

VI. THE ELIAN GONZALEZ AFFAIR

38. *Gallup*: Which of the following solutions do you think would be in the best interests of the boy [Elian Gonzalez]: for him to remain in the U.S. to live with relatives who have requested he stay here or for him to live with his father in Cuba, as his father has requested?

<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>Remain in U.S.</i>	<i>Live with father in Cuba</i>	<i>Other (vol.)</i>	<i>No Opinion</i>	<i>N</i>
Dec. 9–12, 1999	45	45	3	7	
Jan. 25–26, 2000	33	60	3	4	1,044
Feb. 14–15, 2000	36	55	4	5	
April 2–March 30, 2000	31	56	5	8	
April 7–9, 2000	31	60	4	5	1,006
April 22, 2000	27	59	7	7	
April 24, 2000	25	63	6	6	611

39. *ABC*: Who do you think should be granted permanent custody of Elian Gonzalez—his father or his relatives in Miami?

<i>Survey Date</i>	<i>His Father</i>	<i>Miami Relatives</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N</i>
April 24, 2000	76	20	4	505
May 7–10	78	14	8	1,068

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