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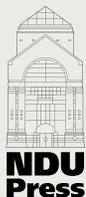
Strategic Forum 295
*Reflections on U.S.-Cuba
Military-to-Military Contacts*
by Hal Klepak



President Barack Obama's visit to Cuba in March 2016 opened up the possibility of strategic benefits for

both nations. Well after over 50 years of hostility, however, it will not be easy to keep this nascent relationship on track. Avoiding missteps requires a deep knowledge of Cuba and particularly its Revolutionary Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, or FAR). The FAR are a complex and powerful institution that enjoys great public respect—more so than Cuba's Communist Party—and remain central to the functioning of the Cuban economy and state. Broadening rapprochement without the support of the FAR is inconceivable.

This paper offers insights concerning the FAR. It argues that it will be important to expand cooperation in the right areas and that it will be important to start small, go slow, build trust, consult early and often, let Cuba take the lead, and avoid imposing or reflecting a U.S.-centric view of civil-military relations.



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