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Looking Forward: Comparative Perspectives on Cuba's Transition . Marifeli Perez-Stable . University of Notre Dame Press , 2007 , 360 \$27.00

Informed by the experiences of socialist transitions in eastern Europe and East Asia, leading experts on Cuba offer stimulating speculations on post-Castro scenarios. The two most likely paths are the single-party mixed-economy model (China, Vietnam) and a full-fledged transformation (of uncertain timetable) to a market democracy, but a violent breakdown precipitating U.S. military intervention cannot be ruled out. In his graceful introduction, former Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso opines that as members of the Western world, Cubans are likely to demand greater political liberties in tandem with demands for economic freedom. However, the dozen contributors do not attempt a detailed blueprint for tilting the balance toward the democratic scenario beyond calls for dialogue and restraint (although some authors do propose North American Free Trade Agreement membership for Cuba). Nor do the authors weigh how the preferences of the island's new benefactor -- Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chávez -- could affect Cuba's prospects. These omissions aside, the volume includes a number of outstanding chapters. Carmelo Mesa-Lago suggests plausible ways that a post-Castro Cuba could achieve greater economic efficiency without sacrificing social equity, and Daniel Erikson offers striking insights on how to escape the corruption curse. And the always eloquent William LeoGrande provocatively suggests that Miami's hard-line Cuba lobby may prove to be a paper tiger when the moment for normalization finally arrives.