

together, or would you rather go back to the time when Americans were left to fend for themselves?

This is not about big Government. The era of big Government is over. It's about whether you want a weak, divided Government that says, "I hope you do well, but you're out there on your own." The American people don't want that. When there is a disaster, nobody wants a weak emergency management agency. When a small-business person needs to start a business, nobody wants a weak SBA. Do you know that your SBA, your Small Business Administration—we've cut the budget and doubled the loan volume in the last 3 years? And we had to, because we have to make up in new businesses what we're losing in big businesses. Businesses owned by women alone have created more jobs in the last 3 years than the Fortune 500 have laid off. And the Small Business Administration helped that.

So we can do a lot of talk about how nice it would be if we had 20 more seats and Dick Gephardt were Speaker and all of that; that would be really nice for all of us who have to work for you. But the main thing is what your life and your children's life and your coun-

try is going to be like. And I'm telling you this election is about two very different visions of change. There is no status quo option.

And you now have a clear, unambiguous record of where we stand and where they stand on all the critical issues for the future. And I ask you not just to stop with the contribution you made tonight, but as citizens in every way you can, with all your voice and all your heart and all your energy to say to all your friends from now until November, "We have to go forward together. We have to do this together. We can't go back to a time when the American people were told to fend for themselves. When we are together, we never lose. The 21st century can be America's greatest time if we will go there together."

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:30 p.m. on the roof at the St. Regis Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Congressman Martin Frost, chairman, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee; James J. Florio, former Governor of New Jersey; Mario Cuomo, former Governor of New York; and entertainer Tina Turner.

Remarks on Signing the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

March 12, 1996

Thank you very much. Welcome to the White House. Senator Helms, Senator Gramm, Senator Mack, Senator Lautenberg, Senator Coverdell, Congressman Menendez, Congressman Torricelli, Congressman Diaz-Balart, Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Congressman Deutsch, Congressman Burton, Congressman Kennedy—I hope I haven't missed any Members of Congress who are here—to the family members of those who were tragically shot down, Ambassador Albright, Assistant Secretary Watson, my fellow Americans.

We are here today around a common commitment to bring democracy to Cuba. Two and a half weeks ago, the world received a harsh reminder of why a democratic Cuba is so important, not only to us but to the people of Cuba. In broad daylight and without justification,

Cuban military jets shot down two unarmed United States civilian aircraft, causing the deaths of three American citizens and one U.S. resident. The planes were unarmed, the pilots unwarned. They posed no threat to Cuba's security.

This was clearly a brutal and cruel act. It demanded a firm, immediate response. On my instructions, Ambassador Albright convened the United Nations Security Council, which unanimously deplored Cuba's actions. Dozens of countries around the world expressed their revulsion. Cuba's blatant disregard for international law is not just an issue between Havana and Washington but between Havana and the world.

I ordered also a number of unilateral actions. One of those steps was to have my representa-

tives work closely with Congress to reach prompt agreement on the Cuban Liberty and Democracy Solidarity Act. Within 2 days, and with the extra efforts of our friend Congressman Menendez, Democrats and Republicans came together and produced a better bill. It will strengthen the embargo in a way that advances the cause of freedom in Cuba. Today I sign it with a certainty that it will send a powerful, unified message from the United States to Havana, that the yearning of the Cuban people for freedom must not be denied.

This bill continues our bipartisan effort to pursue an activist Cuba policy, an effort that began some 4 years ago with the Cuban Democracy Act. Under the provisions of that legislation, our administration has encouraged Cuba's peaceful transition to democracy. We have promoted the free flow of ideas to Cuba through greater support for Cuba's brave human rights activists, a dramatic increase in nongovernmental humanitarian aid to the Cuban people, long distance telephone service. And the more the Cuban people are free to express the freedoms and rights their neighbors enjoy the more they will insist on change.

We have also kept the pressure on Cuba by maintaining a tough embargo policy. The legisla-

tion I sign today further tightens that embargo. It sends a strong message to the Cuban Government: We will not tolerate attacks on United States citizens and we will stand with those both inside and outside Cuba who are working for a peaceful transition to freedom and democracy.

Finally let me say as I sign this bill into law, I do so in the name of the four men who were killed when their planes were shot down on February 24th: Armando Alejandro, Carlos Costa, Mario de la Pena, and Pablo Morales. In their memory, I will continue to do everything I can to help the tide of democracy that has swept our entire hemisphere finally, finally reach the shores of Cuba.

The Cuban people must receive the blessings of freedom they have been so long denied. And I hope and believe that this day is another important step toward that ultimate goal that so many of you in this audience have worked so hard for, for so very, very long.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:37 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. H.R. 927, approved March 12, was assigned Public Law No. 104-114.

Statement on Signing the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

March 12, 1996

Today I have signed into law H.R. 927, the "Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996." This Act is a justified response to the Cuban government's unjustified, unlawful attack on two unarmed U.S. civilian aircraft that left three U.S. citizens and one U.S. resident dead. The Act imposes additional sanctions on the Cuban regime, mandates the preparation of a plan for U.S. assistance to transitional and democratically elected Cuban governments, creates a cause of action enabling U.S. nationals to sue those who expropriate or "traffic" in expropriated properties in Cuba, and denies such traffickers entry into the United States. It is a clear statement of our determination to respond to attacks on U.S. nationals and of our continued commitment to stand by the

Cuban people in their peaceful struggle for freedom.

Immediately after Cuba's brutal act, I urged that differences on the bill be set aside so that the United States could speak in a single, strong voice. By acting swiftly—just 17 days after the attack—we are sending a powerful message to the Cuban regime that we do not and will not tolerate such conduct.

The Act also reaffirms our common goal of promoting a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba by tightening the existing embargo while reaching out to the Cuban people. Our current efforts are beginning to yield results: they are depriving the Cuban regime of the hard currency it needs to maintain its grip on power; more importantly, they are empowering