

Marty fought successfully for important new legislation that brought renewed financial stability to the Corporation, expanded pension coverage, and ensured that millions of Americans' pensions were more secure.

Hillary and I will miss him greatly. Our thoughts and prayers are with Cookie and his family on this sad day.

### **Statement on the First Anniversary of the Downing of American Civilian Aircraft by Cuba** *February 24, 1997*

One year ago, four innocent civilians were killed when their aircraft were brutally shot down by the Cuban regime. Without warning, Cuban MiG's fired air-to-air missiles at two small unarmed planes in international airspace. Three U.S. citizens and one permanent resident were the victims: Carlos Costa, Armando Alejandro, Mario de la Peña, and Pablo Morales.

Today we join the families in honoring the memory of these men as we carry forward our efforts to seek justice for their deaths. An investigation by the International Civil Aviation Organization last June confirmed that the shootdown was unlawful and without any justification. The U.N. Security Council last February and again in June strongly deplored Cuba's illegal use of violence against the aircraft. The Castro regime, however, has consistently rejected the judgment of the international community. As we did one

year ago, we call on Cuba to take full responsibility for its actions and provide assurances that an outrage like this will never happen again.

The shootdown and the Cuban Government's continuing repression of human rights activists and independent journalists underscore the need to continue working for a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba. The United States continues to lead the international effort to achieve that goal, and over the past year, more of our friends and allies than ever before have joined with us to help bring democracy to Cuba.

On this anniversary, with the memory of the four victims in our prayers, the United States reaffirms its commitment to help bring democracy, respect for human rights, and prosperity to the people of Cuba, who have too long been denied these essentials of a decent life.

### **Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization** *February 24, 1997*

*Dear Mr. Chairman:*

Pursuant to section 1048 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997, I transmit herewith a report on the enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

For over 50 years, successive Presidents and Congresses have maintained a firm, bipartisan consensus that the security of Europe is vital to the national security of the United States. It remains so. NATO, even as it evolves and adapts to a changing world, remains the core of the transatlantic alliance that has served American interests for two generations.

Inclusion of new members into NATO's ranks is an indispensable element of a broader American strategy to create an undivided, democratic Europe for the 21st century. By extending the underpinnings of security beyond the arbitrary line of the Cold War, NATO can strengthen democratic and free market reforms for all of Europe, just as it has done for Western Europe in the decades since 1949. By admitting new states to the alliance, NATO will limit and help eliminate a potentially destabilizing vacuum in Europe, widening the circle of like-minded nations sharing common values and willing to