

Statement on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996
January 15, 1999

I am today notifying the Congress that I have decided to suspend for an additional 6 months implementation of provisions of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, which allow legal actions to be brought against firms trafficking in confiscated properties in Cuba. I believe that this decision best implements the Act's objective to enhance human rights and hasten the day when the Cuban people enjoy democracy and prosperity.

This action further enhances our efforts to strengthen international cooperation in promoting peaceful democratic change in Cuba. For the past 2½ years, the United States has pursued a strategy, coordinated by Under Secretary of State Stu Eizenstat, to increase international pressure on the Cuban Government to respect human rights and to begin political and economic reforms. We have urged our democratic friends and allies to take concrete actions in support of this goal. Encouraged by the results, in January 1997 I said that I expected to continue suspending this provision of Title III so long as our partners' stepped-up pro-democracy efforts continued.

Over the past 6 months, the Cuban Government has heard a more concerted message from the international community in support of democracy. A number of national leaders have publicly and privately pressed senior Cuban officials on the need for human rights and democracy. While visiting Cuba, they have spoken openly of the need for change, and they have met with and given important encouragement to pro-democracy human rights activists. In international forums, our friends in Latin America and Europe have been explicit in their con-

demnation of Cuba's deplorable human rights situation. The European Union has renewed its Common Position on Cuba, calling for "a peaceful transition to pluralist democracy, the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms." The senior-level report made at the U.S.-EU Summit last month stressed our joint efforts to promote such a transition in Cuba. This partnership has succeeded in increasing international pressure on Cuba to respect human rights and make fundamental reforms. Nongovernmental organizations have augmented their efforts as well. A strong consensus is emerging among business and labor groups that investors in Cuba should adhere to clear "best business" principles. While we do not encourage investment in Cuba, we welcome efforts to seek the agreement of those who do invest to provide Cuban workers with decent pay, the right to organize, and safe working conditions. Major European NGO's have undertaken to develop an international working group to pursue this important initiative further.

We underscored our determination to support freedom in Cuba again on December 10, International Human Rights Day, when we honored human rights activists around the world, including the four members of Cuba's Internal Dissidence Working Group awaiting trial merely for defending their right to speak freely about their hopes for the future. Their willingness to make personal sacrifices for their peaceful, democratic cause inspires us to persevere on their behalf. I again pledge this administration's strongest efforts to encourage and work with our allies on effective steps to promote democracy and human rights in Cuba.

Remarks to the Global Forum for Reinventing Government
January 15, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you. Mr. Vice President, Madam Secretary, Mr. Nye, Prime Minister Shipley, Vice President Bell, to the leaders of other nations and international organi-

zations; Mr. Smith from the Ford Foundation and all the others from the private sector in America; and I want to say a special word of thanks to the employees of our Government

who are here, without which none of this could be done.

I was glad to hear the joke that the representatives from Thailand told yesterday. I have cut a lot of redtape sideways in my life. I was glad to hear you laugh at the Vice President's remark about using plain language in Government regulations. I think that must be a common problem throughout the world. But mostly, I'm glad to see you in such a good frame of mind about this.

You know, one of the problems with having a continuous reinventing Government effort is that it almost never gets any headlines in the newspaper, and most people who cover it think it is about as exciting as watching paint dry. [Laughter] So I think that means that if you're going to do this, you need sort of an extra dose of determination and good humor, because I believe it is truly one of the most important things that those of us in public life today can do.

I've been interested in this for a long time. When I was the Governor of my State, we had what I believe was the first State government-wide ongoing effort in the country. When I became President, I knew we had to change old policies and old ways of doing things. Besides, we were flat broke and running a huge deficit. And even worse, the American people had a very low level of confidence in the Government. I used to say that everyone in America thinks that our Government would foul up a two-car parade. We wanted to change all that. We knew it was important for our economy. We knew it was important for our political success. We knew it was important for the integrity of our democracy.

Fortunately for me, Vice President Gore agreed. And he approached this task as he does everything he really cares about, with an astonishing amount of energy, determination, and intelligence. And I'm sure you have seen, he has absorbed about everything there is to absorb about this subject. And if you hang around long enough, he will give you a chance to know everything he knows about it. [Laughter]

We have a theory about this; most people think it's so boring we have to have a joke every 3 minutes when discussing it. [Laughter] But it is very serious. When the history of our time here is written, the leadership of the Vice President in doing this will be one of the signal

achievements of this administration, and I am very, very grateful to him for a superb job.

We also are heavily into reinventing speeches here; you see I crossed out the first paragraph, and I go from page one to page three. So you'll be out of pain before you know it. [Laughter]

Let me also say to you we have a selfish reason in hosting this conference. We've not tried to reinvent the wheel. We have tried to borrow good ideas wherever we could find them. We very much want to know what is going on in every other country in the world, just as we want to be helpful to every other country in the world if we can.

I'd like to make just one or two points if I might. First is one you know, but I think it bears repeating: This will not work if it is a one-shot effort, if it is something that happens for a month or 6 months or even for a year. In fact, I think you should measure your success in part by whether you have put in a system so integral to the operation of government—a process—and whether you have embedded in the public's mind the importance of this to the extent that all your successors in whatever offices you hold will have to follow suit. That, I think, is the ultimate measure of whether we are successful. Because no matter how long you serve, no matter how hard you work, you will either leave things on the table that are undone, or new opportunities will emerge with the revolutions and technology in human organization that are constantly unfolding.

Our basic theory has been that we ought to have a Government for the information age that is smaller, that lives within its means, but that actually is capable of doing more of what needs to be done. We believe what needs to be done is that we should focus mostly on giving people the tools they need to solve their own problems. We should help people who, through no fault of their own, can't get along through life without help. But most of what we should be doing is creating the conditions and giving people the tools to make their lives as dynamic as the world in which we live.

I also want to emphasize again how important it is to be able to stand up and say that we are giving people good value for their tax investment, because I found that our people tend to judge the reinventing Government sometimes not by what we think they would. It sounds

very impressive to say we have the smallest Federal Government since John Kennedy was President, because we are a much bigger Government. But people want to know, "Well, how does that affect me?"

If you say we've saved \$138 billion that helped us balance the budget, bring interest rates down, and lower their mortgage rates, that's something people can understand. If you say we reformed welfare, that sounds good. But if you say we have the smallest welfare rolls in 29 years, and we have gotten a lot of people into the work force but helped them with child care and education and transportation—so we're not just putting out numbers and behind it there are human people suffering because they are cut out of the safety net—that means something.

If you can say to a small-business person, "It used to take weeks or months for us to process your request for a loan, and now it takes a matter of days," and the form was once an inch thick, and now it's a page long, that means something to people because it affects their lives.

And so I would say to all of you—I made a lot of jokes about it, but I do think we have to find ways to talk about this that make it interesting to our people and that bring it home to them, because that is the best guarantee of our continuing to work.

One other point I'd like to make is for national governments—most national governments have regulatory and other relationships with the private sector and also have financial relationships with local government. I believe a very important and increasingly important aspect of this whole reinventing Government issue will be, how do national governments relate to their private sector. We're trying harder and harder to do less regulation and instead to create incentives and frameworks to solve problems that meet national goals. How do national governments relate to local governments? This is very controversial in our country from time to time. My theory is, just because we gave out money last year in the way we've been giving it out for 20 years, in education, law enforcement, or any other issue, doesn't mean we should continue to give the money out that way if it doesn't work anymore.

We had this huge argument back in 1994 when we tried to pass a crime bill because, interestingly enough, our conservatives argued that it was wrong for the Federal Government

to give money to local governments only if they would agree to hire police officers and put them on the street and have them work in a certain way. But we had learned from local governments that work that that was all that works to bring the crime rate down. So we jammed through this bill, and the people who were against it screamed and hollered that I was presuming to tell police chiefs what to do. Nothing could have been further than the truth. The police chiefs told me what to do. And what we told the people, between the President and the Congress and the police chiefs, was, "You can't have this money unless you do what they say works."

And we now have the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the lowest murder rate in 30 years, partly because of the improvement in the economy but partly because law enforcement works better. We have gone 30 years in which we had tripled the crime rate—violent crime rate—and increased our police forces only 10 percent.

So I think that there is a way in which we should look not only to the internal operations of our own Government, how our systems work and how they serve the people, but how the relationship between Government and the private sector and national governments and local governments can work more effectively.

Finally, let me say that I think that we have—and I'm sure all of you already know this—but I think we have a very strong vested interest in each other's success. If we didn't learn anything from 1998 and the financial turmoil we experienced all over the world, it is that, in the world we live in, competition is good, but failure of our competitors is bad. Competition is good, but the failure of our competitors is bad. We want competition to work within a framework in which we all do better, in which we urge each other on, economically, socially, politically, every way, to higher levels of humane development—so that the United States, for example, clearly has an interest that when the Government of Russia tries to put in place a system that will fairly assess and collect taxes.

Quite apart from the obvious interest we have, and all of you do, in having a system that will help us to continue to reduce the nuclear threat, the United States has an interest in the success of governments in Asia developing regulatory systems that will minimize the spread of financial contagion. We have an interest in nations in Africa and in Latin America and elsewhere who are trying to develop with limited

resources the very best possible education and health systems. We have an interest in learning from nations all over the world that have done a better job than we have in managing their natural resources and developing sound environmental policies while growing their economy.

We have an interest in seeing how the European nations are trying to adapt their social welfare systems that were created after World War II to the demands of the information age, so that they can lower unemployment, increase job growth, and still maintain the integrity of a genuine social safety net—big issue for developed countries. We have lower unemployment and greater inequality; they have more equality and higher unemployment. How can we bridge the gap? And we're interested in the experiments in Great Britain and the experiments in the Netherlands and in other countries. We have an interest. And if those countries succeed, we are not threatened; our lives are enhanced. And I think we should all have that attitude.

Finally, let me say that this is about more than economics. It's even about more than having our customers happy, although I must say one of the biggest kicks I've gotten as President is when a major national business magazine said that the Social Security agency was the best large organization in America, public or private, at providing telephone service to its customers. I like that.

This is about, in my judgment, the preservation of the vitality of democracy. In some countries that are new democracies, it may be about the preservation of democracy itself. But in the end, every one of us serves because people believe in the possibility of self-government through representatives. To the extent that people do not believe their representatives will handle their money for public purposes the way they themselves would, democracy itself is diminished; human potential is diminished; the capacity for worldwide cooperation is diminished.

So I say again, you may not get the headlines back home for this. You may have to tell your own jokes because you won't be able to make anybody else laugh. But never underestimate the profound and enduring importance of what it is you have come here to discuss. We are honored to have you here, and we thank you for your contribution and your dedication.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. in the Dean Acheson Auditorium at the State Department. In his remarks, he referred to Joseph Nye, president, Harvard University Kennedy School of Government; Prime Minister Jennifer Shipley of New Zealand; Vice President Gustavo Bell of Colombia; and Bradford Smith, vice president, Ford Foundation.

Remarks to the Wall Street Project Conference in New York City January 15, 1999

The President. Thank you. I'm not sure I know what to say. [*Laughter*] First I was thinking, here I have to go follow Jesse again. [*Laughter*] You know the story about the guy that went to heaven, and St. Peter said, "Well, we've got a lot of new entrants today, and we want everybody to stand up and tell them what the best thing they ever did in their life was. How would you like to participate?" The guy said, "I'd like to do that. I did a great thing once." He said, "Well, what did you do?" He said, "I saved a bunch of people in a flood." He said, "Fine, you go on right after Noah." [*Laughter*]

I will say one thing, Reverend. This marriage of Jesse Jackson and Wall Street, so full of promise, has already produced one incredibly vivid, concrete result: It has done wonders for your wardrobe. [*Laughter*] I see your sons out there thinking, "No, we did that." [*Laughter*]

I want to say, first of all, to all of you who are here, I'm grateful for the wonderful reception. To the previous speakers—I had actually no idea that they were going to say what they did, and I was very moved, and I thank you for that. That's the sort of thing you normally hear—or you normally don't hear because it's said—[*laughter*—that's the sort of thing people