

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

January 17, 2006

Dear _____:

Consistent with section 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-114)(the “Act”), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond February 1, 2006, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Richard G. Lugar, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Thad Cochran, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Henry J. Hyde, chairman, and Tom Lantos, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; and Jerry Lewis, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Iraqi Citizens

January 18, 2006

Listen, thank you all for coming. It’s been my honor to visit with folks who know firsthand the brutality of Saddam Hussein. These are folks who have suffered one way or the other because the tyrant was a law unto himself and was willing to deny people basic human rights. The stories here are compelling stories. They’re stories of sadness and stories of bravery.

In the course of our discussion, we were also able to talk about what a contrast it is between a society which was willing to jail people, torture people, and beat people and kill people, to a society that is beginning to understand the fruits of democracy and freedom.

Last year was an amazing year in Iraq. Millions of people went to the polls to vote, first in January, then to ratify a Constitution, and then back to the polls again to elect a Government under the new Constitution. It’s a testimony to the courage of the Iraqi people. Obviously, we still have got work to do and fully intend to do it.

And one of the interesting moments will come here this year when Saddam Hussein’s trial is brought forth for the world to see, to see the butcherer, the person who brutalized many people or ordered the brutality of many people here at this table, get his due justice under rule of law.

And so I want to thank you all for coming. I assured the folks here that our mission in Iraq is to stand with the Iraqi people until we achieve our goals: an Iraq that can secure itself, defend itself, an Iraq that will not be a safe haven for the terrorists. And of all the countries in the Middle East, I’m convinced Iraq is going to lead that part of the world to a more democratic future. The Iraqi people are brave and courageous and smart people.

And so thank you for being here. Thank you for sharing your stories. I appreciate it very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In