

Statement on the Terrorist Attack in Jerusalem March 6, 2008

I condemn in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attack in Jerusalem that targeted innocent students at the Mercaz Harav Yeshiva. This barbaric and vicious attack on innocent civilians deserves the condemnation of every nation.

I have just spoken with Prime Minister Olmert to extend my deepest condolences to the victims, their families, and to the people of Israel. I told him the United States stands firmly with Israel in the face of this terrible attack.

Remarks on the Situation in Cuba March 7, 2008

Sientese. Gracias. Bienvenidos a la Casa Blanca. Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here; Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart, members of the diplomatic corps, distinguished officials, honored guests.

We gather today to remember a tragic moment in the history of Cuba. Five years ago this month, Cuban authorities rounded up scores of citizens and charged them with offenses against the regime. Those arrested included teachers and librarians and journalists. They committed no crimes. They simply held views their Government did not like, and they refused to be silent. In all, 75 people were given long prison terms. In the world of Cuban dissidents, that crackdown 5 years ago is remembered as the Black Spring.

A few moments ago, I met with one of the men arrested in that crackdown, Miguel Sigler Amaya, *y su esposa*, Josefa. Miguel was arrested in this crackdown because he and his brothers had long opposed the Castro regime. Over many years, they had been harassed and they had been beaten by Cuban authorities. Miguel once had his ribs cracked by one of the regime's mobs. One of the brothers survived an assassination attempt, and the entire family had received death threats. Now during the Black Spring, Miguel was charged with disobedience. He was sentenced to 26 months

in prison. His brothers, Ariel *y* Guido, each received sentences of 20 years.

When Miguel went to prison, his wife Josefa found common cause with the wives of other political prisoners. They formed a group and chose as their symbol the color white, the color of peace. Every Sunday, these Ladies in White—*las Damas de Blanco*—attend Catholic mass, and then together they walk in silence through the streets. In Cuba, even that simple act is considered dangerous defiance. The women have been subjected to harassment and beatings. Josefa herself was stopped by an assailant who told her that he was sending her a message, and then he clubbed her with a blunt object on the back of her head.

Josefa was ordered to leave Cuba with Miguel once he was released from prison in 2006. In Cuba, they are considered outlaws. In America, they are heralds of freedom, and I'm proud to stand with them in the White House.

Miguel and Josefa tell a compelling story about brutal repression right off the shores of the United States. And I want to thank you for letting us share your stories, and I thank you for your courage.

I've asked Josefa to please tell the Ladies in White—*las Damas de Blanco*—that as they pray for a free Cuba, the American