

Only a few months ago I had the privilege of greeting the elected president of a free democracy and that is South Africa, President Nelson Mandela. If it were not for this Congress, we would not have been able to do this. I strongly supported the economic embargo against the military thugs who terrorized the nation of Haiti. Today Haiti is making strides and moving toward democracy. And I have had the privilege to greet the democratically elected President of Haiti.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come that we take strong and decisive action against Fidel Castro's Cuba. I repeat, it is time that we take strong action. I am not an expert in foreign affairs. I cannot tell this Government what to do. But I am making a plea for strong action against Castro's Cuba.

It is always difficult, Mr. Speaker, I think, for Americans to truly understand in a personal way the suffering of people in other countries. But I am from Miami, Mr. Speaker, which is only 90 miles from Castro's Cuba. The brutality of the situation in Cuba is something we live with every day. We see what happens with the Cuban people when atrocities are perpetrated against their families who are in Cuba. I do not think anyone that hears my voice would want this to happen to any of their families.

So many of our constituents have fled from Castro's prisons. So many of our constituents still have relatives, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters. I am asking this Congress to take that into consideration, to think this might be members of their families undergoing hardship and oppression.

So many of my constituents have left everything they worked for. Whatever they had in Cuba, they do not have anymore. So it is important that we understand that, Mr. Speaker. Just as we helped the people of South Africa and the people of Haiti, we must now help the people of Cuba in the time of their greatest need and in the hour of their greatest hope.

There are those who say that we should invest in Cuba and keep closer ties. This is certainly an option but I do not believe it would be effective. I do not think it will work. Foreign investments in Cuba are used to prop up Castro, not improve the lives of the Cuban people. Castro is desperate, as I perceive it, and I get all my information from people in my district. He is very desperate for foreign currency and he will say and do almost anything to get it. He needs that money. But we do not forget that there is no meaningful economic freedom in Cuba.

Workers are prevented from organizing labor unions, a basic economic right we have taken for granted. In fact, under Cuban labor laws employees are actually assigned by the government, not hired by employers. And foreign trade is a monopoly reserved for the privileged friends of the regime.

I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker, telling you the way I feel and the way

my constituents feel back in Miami. How can we talk about investing in a regime where workers cannot organize, where employees and workers are exploited and people are still imprisoned for speaking their minds.

We believe very strongly in the freedom of speech here in this country because we have a democracy. If it is a Communist regime, we cannot control it. Therefore, we must work hard to make Cuba into a democracy.

We have been successful with that, Mr. Speaker, all over the world. So we must not break our record with Cuba. He is clinging to power. I think Castro's government is in its death throes, but it is going to need the help of the United States. The Cuban Liberty and Democracy Solidarity Act of 1995 would tighten this embargo against Castro as we did against the corrupt governments of South Africa and Haiti. I believe it will greatly hasten the fall of Castro's dictatorship.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the time in the near future when I can greet here in this Capitol the democratically elected President of a free Cuba as I have greeted others, as I have the democratically elected President of a free South Africa and a free Haiti. They all are in the same situation, governed by a dictator. I strongly urge my colleagues to throw their strength behind the Helms-Burton bill. I do not care who developed this bill, Mr. Speaker. I do not care about the argument either in parties or wherever, whether this is a bipartisan issue or not. But I am saying, everyone who has any sense of humanitarian work should appeal and do whatever they can to help Cuba. So I urge Members to support Cuba. It will someday be free, democratically.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SMITH of Michigan addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

CASTRO'S TYRANNY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank from the bottom of my heart Congresswoman MEEK and, of course, Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN. I heard also earlier today Congressman MENENDEZ and Congressman GOSS and perhaps I missed others, but I want to thank them all for their concern on this, about this horrible tragedy that occurred on Saturday. There is so much to say. I really think it is important to put it in perspective.

This is connected, this horrible crime by Castro, is connected to a crackdown that he began on the 15th of February

against the internal opposition in Cuba. Over 130 of the dissident groups in Cuba had announced that they were going to meet on February 24th, this last Saturday, peacefully, and seek ways to achieve a democratic transition. They even asked Castro for permission. The answer came in by way of a massive crackdown.

The elected leaders of the opposition and most of the delegates who were already on their way for the February 24 meeting were arrested. The chairman, the national chairman of this group called the Cuban Council, was arrested and summarily sentenced to a prison term, as was the vice chairman. Another vice chairman, a lady, was arrested and taken to a hospital for surgery that the regime called necessary surgery. No one has heard yet from her since. And as I mentioned, the chairman, Leonel Molejon Almagro was sentenced to a prison term. His mother was able to see him once. He was arrested on the 15th of February. She says she fears that he is receiving electroshock torture. And Castro wanted to send a very strong message, spine chilling message to the Cuban people, and he did so on Saturday by murdering Americans who are in unarmed airplanes in international waters on the high seas.

Why did he do that? The message is clear that Castro is sending to the Cuban people. He is saying, if I can kill Americans in international waters with impunity, imagine what I can do to you, the Cuban people. That is the message that he is sending. Every once in awhile Castro needs a dose of blood to scare, terrorize the Cuban people and maintain his totalitarian grip.

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But what we have to ask ourselves is to what extent are we going to permit and until when are we going to permit Castro to act with impunity. Mark my words, Mr. Speaker, if President Clinton does not make it clear to Castro that any further attempts at blackmailing the United States will be met inevitably with a total blockade of Cuba, including oil shipments, mark my word we will see in the next hours another attempt by Castro to blackmail President Clinton.

Mr. Speaker, Castro's crimes against humanity began at the very beginning of his regime in 1959 with show trials that seemed, that recalled, the spectacles of the Roman Coliseum, and the crimes continue to this day. In addition to the drug trafficking and the money laundering and counterfeiting and all the crimes that Castro is engaged in, there are additional crimes Mr. Speaker, that clearly qualified as crimes against humanity.

Today I received a message from one opponent within Cuba who is not under arrest at this time, and his suggestion is that we, the United States Government, support the indictment of Castro as a war criminal; in other words, for crimes against humanity in the International Court of Justice in the Hague.

That would be, Mr. Speaker, the clearest way not only to label Castro as what he is, a criminal who engages in crimes against humanity, but there are few things that could give more hope to the Cuban people and hasten the return of democracy than to label the Cuban tyrant as the war criminal that he is. It is necessary, Mr. Speaker, that Castro be told in no uncertain terms that further blackmail against the United States will not be permitted and that a blockade will ensue forthwith once he begins his campaign of blackmail.

These four young men who were murdered on Saturday, my personal friends and constituents, will never be forgotten, and their debts cannot be in vain. We cannot permit the Cuban tyrant to now appropriate the Florida Straits for himself and not only continue with a campaign of terror against the Cuban people, but act as though he is also the ruler and the owner of international waters as well.

President Clinton yesterday announced some steps, which we obviously thank him for, but they were woefully, tragically insufficient. He must sanction truly, truly sanction the Cuban dictatorship, by supporting our Helms-Burton bill, which we are going to pass, we are going to pass in Congress in the next days, and by stating clearly that any attempts by Castro to blackmail the United States will inevitably be met with a total unilateral American blockade that will hasten the collapse of the dictatorship and the return of democracy to Cuba.

THESE MURDERS WILL NOT STAND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SCARBOROUGH] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank those members from the Florida delegation, the gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. MEEK] and of course the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] and the gentlewoman from Florida [Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN] and all the others that have come to this floor today and decided to speak out for freedom and speak out for those very values that our Founding Fathers fought for over 200 years ago, and now though the war for freedom is being waged right off our shores, less than 90 miles away from the United States of America. All I can say is this:

As Mrs. LINCOLN stated before, we have had Castro send a strong message. It is time for America to send a strong message to Fidel Castro and let him know that this will not be permitted to stand, let him know that we will not allow this senseless slaughter to stand, that we will not allow these murders of Americans to stand, flying in a Cessna airplane, being gunned down by a Soviet MiG.

Now many of Castro's apologists in this country and across the world are claiming that these Cessnas may have strayed into Cuban airspace. Well, first of all the facts show that clearly to be false. Fishermen saw the smoke rise and saw the wreckage fall, and that wreckage fell clearly outside of Cuban airspace. But even if those apologists wanted to apologize for Castro and claim that the wreckage fell within Cuban air space, which it did not, still it goes so far beyond the normal accepted standards of international diplomacy and behavior to have Soviet MiG jets gun down unarmed Cessna airplanes that it clearly shows that Castro is a war criminal and should be treated as such.

I am going to be flying down to the area this weekend, and I certainly invite any other members of the Florida delegation to join in, if they wish. As a member of the Committee on National Security and as a member from Florida of the Committee on National Security, I think it is important that we go there, see exactly what happened and ask the difficult questions, and I am going to be calling for hearings. Hopefully we can get a field hearing in Miami at the site of where these planes took off and have a hearing to see what happened, now it happened, and what we can do not only to make Castro pay for what he has committed, but more importantly, to finally bring down after decades of his tyrannical rule a government that is illegitimate and is the last remaining Communist dictatorship in the Western Hemisphere. The fight is for freedom and the fight is for American lives, and again it is extremely important that we do not let these senseless slaughters stand.

I, like many others, would like to thank the President for stepping forward and taking the first step yesterday by talking about some sanctions, which are not sweeping, which do not go far enough, but I am hopeful that this is merely the President's first step. I think we need to step forward with a blockade and let Castro know that it will not stand. I think we need to sit back and even have our military leaders consider selective military strikes against military targets, to let them know that we will not stand back idly and let Americans be killed by a hand of a Communist tyrant. I mean, what is the Federal Government's responsibility in the end?

We have seen an explosion of proliferation of power coming into Washington, DC, but what do our Founding Fathers in the Constitution say this Federal Government was supposed to do first and foremost? It was to protect our shores and to protect American lives.

We have lost American lives now, and the question is are we going to sit back and do nothing, or are we going to respond in an affirmative manner that will make Castro think twice before he decides to kill, murder, and maim Americans again? I think we have no choice.

The history of Castro, really indeed the history of civilization and mankind, shows that the only way to stop a tyrant from being a tyrant, the only way to stop a bully from being a bully, the only way to stop a murderer from being a murderer is to step forward with strong enough responses to scare them from ever doing it again.

We could go back to the ages of the Roman Empire when Julius Caesar put down a rebellion and he struck back and explained to his generals and said why do we not be lenient and let them back in. Julius Caesar said we cannot do it because the order of our society depends on rewarding those who live by the accepted norms in our society and by punishing those that live outside the accepted norms in our society. Fidel Castro has shown this past weekend with the murder of these four Americans that he does not care to live within accepted means of behavior and to be a member of international civilization, and he needs to be punished.

But we do not have to go back to the times of the Roman Empire, the times of Julius Caesar, to see how this plays out. All we have to do is go back to 1984. Do you remember leading up to 1984 when Muammar Qaddafi went around and took credit for every single act of terrorism across the Mideast and across the world, in fact? And he took credit for it and claimed that he was striking back against Americans. Finally, in 1984 some American Marines were blown up and killed in West Germany, and at that point President Ronald Reagan had enough, and he said that it was our responsibility to protect the lives of Americans wherever they were, either at home or abroad, and he went ahead and issued orders for a selective military strike against one of Qaddafi's military bases. The strike was successful. The military base was destroyed. And an interesting thing happened, did it not? The next time there was a terrorist attack in the Middle East, guess who the first leader was to step out and say he had nothing to do with it? It was Qaddafi, because we taught him a very simple lesson, and that lesson was that we were not going to stand for the slaughter of innocent Americans' lives.

That is the same message that I am pleading with President Clinton that he will send to Fidel Castro.

Of course, earlier this morning the United Nations made a pitiful gesture, hardly even condemning these senseless slaughters. Not having the courage to step forward and call a war criminal a war criminal, they merely provided some words. But let me tell you something, friends. Words are not enough. We can talk tough to thugs on the street, to bullies in the school yard, but unless we step forward with positive action and have swift and decisive retribution against those who feel free to kill Americans in broad daylight, we are merely inviting another attack.

As the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] mentioned, Castro felt