

I told President Castro that there must be more movement in Cuba with regard to human rights and economic reforms—and urge him to act now. He seemed responsive and pledged to give my request very serious and immediate consideration.

We also had an excellent meeting with Jamie Cardinal Ortega—the Roman Catholic Cardinal in Cuba. His Eminence told us that the official position of the Catholic Bishops was against the US embargo for humanitarian reasons. He also was very clear about his continued concerns regarding human rights abuses that currently exist in Cuba.

On a related matter, I raised with the Cuban leadership my hope that they would invite Pope John Paul II to visit Cuba during his visit to the Caribbean later this year.

My trip began and ended with important meetings with Cuban dissident groups. While these people suggested that the difficulties in Cuba run much deeper than the economic hardships, a majority of those we meet expressed opposition to the Helms-Burton legislation.

One of the things that stunned me the most about my trip is the explosion of independent entrepreneurship. There are roughly 208,000 independent family businesses operating in Cuba. This entrepreneurship is allowing people greater personal freedom from government controls. When people are no longer dependent on the government for their jobs, they are freer from economic coercion. I got the sense that the Cuban government recognizes that these small businesses are necessary for the country's economic viability and are accepting the political space that they create.

In fact, Caritas (a Catholic charitable organization in Havana) described its plans to establish training programs to help these fledgling businesses succeed. Michael Ryan, President of ABC Forum on Cuba, which organized the trip said: "It was great to see our group get excited about helping support the Cuban people, particularly in their efforts to form small businesses and independent NGOs. A number of our participants expressed a real desire to support these efforts after we concluded our trip."

The European Union is about to hold talks with the Cubans on closer economic ties—and is using this opportunity to urge the Cuban government to improve its human rights record. The United States could have ten times more leverage with Cuba than the Europeans if we got serious about improving relations. Right now the embargo leaves us completely out of the picture. I'm afraid if we let Helms-Burton become law, we will lose an important opportunity to improve the situation in Cuba. Of all the meetings I had, there was consensus on one thing—that the future of Cuba will be decided by Cubans on the island. The degree to which we can encourage positive change will depend on whether or not we defeat Helms-Burton.

[From the Boston Globe, Jan. 23, 1996]

OUR BAN IN HAVANA (By H.D.S. Greenway)

HAVANA.—"Socialismo O Muerte"—Socialism or Death—say the graffiti scrawled on the walls of this once grand, now crumbly Caribbean capital. But as communists the world over have found, their "socialism" means a death of sorts: stagnation and decline, a slow demise of ambition and incentive and the equality of shared poverty.

There are only five countries left that call themselves communist: China and its three abutters in Asia—North Korea, Vietnam and Laos—and then Cuba. In all, to varying degrees, the communist leaders recognize the inadequacy of their economic system, but all want to cling to political power. With some

justification they can point to the death of their great progenitor, the Soviet Union, as an example of what can happen when the reins of political power are suddenly dropped. In short, they want to eat the cake of capitalism without ingesting political freedoms.

All the ambiguities of this approach are evident in Fidel Castro, the last of the founding fathers of postwar communism. All the others—Mao Zedong, Kim Il Sung, Ho Chi Minh—are dead, but Fidel remains. To some, America's most enduring bete noire is a Latin David to our gringo Goliath; to others he is an irredeemable tyrant.

Nine US presidents have tried to do him in—by invasion, assassination, economic embargo—but he lives on "to remind us of our failures," as US Rep. J. Joseph Moakley put it.

For 30 years Castro had a free ride, strutting the world's stage as a symbol of independence to a world emerging from colonialism but in fact a kept man, his bills paid by the Soviet Union. After the demise of his patron, Castro and his economy went into a free fall, bottoming out in 1993.

In desperation, Castro and his lieutenants have planted the first, few seeds of a free-market economy here. The Yankee dollar is now a legal currency in Cuba alongside the peso. Joint ventures with foreigners are beginning to bear fruit, especially in the tourist industry. Some 208,000 Cubans are permitted to work in the private sector, but the state still remains supreme, and a gulf is widening between those who work in the dollar economy and those left behind in a land of unconvertible pesos.

Small, private restaurants called "paladares" are springing up in people's homes, but the law allows no more than a dozen tables, and all the cooks and waiters must be family members because it is still illegal for one Cuban to hire another. Thus is entrepreneurship on the one hand encouraged while the other hand suppresses it.

Last week Moakley led a delegation of inquiry here of which I was a member. We talked to Castro, aging now but still in command. He is trying to probe for weak spots in the mortar of the embargo that the United States has imposed. Moakley, in turn, was trying to squeeze human rights concessions from Castro, concessions that Moakley could use back in Washington to defeat the Helms-Burton bill, sponsored by Sen. Jesse Helms of North Carolina and U.S. Rep. Dan Burton of Indiana, which would put even more restrictions on doing business with Cuba.

It seemed evident in conversations with Castro and his ministers that Cuba isn't going back on the meager reforms they have instigated. Castro said the changes are irreversible. But Cuba's leaders are afraid of moving forward too fast. Castro and his lieutenants appear to have no clear vision but are making policy up as they go along.

Listening to Castro—his famous beard now gone gray—I was struck by how much the world had changed and how much Fidel has been bypassed since the heady revolutionary days of 30 years ago. Fidel Castro no longer presents the United States with the mortal threat of Russian missiles 90 miles offshore. His expeditionary forces no longer rampage through Africa, spreading socialismo and death. Nor are his agents stirring up trouble in the hemisphere. Che Guevara and the revolution he represented lie in an unmarked Bolivian grave.

In an era when the United States is helping North Korea with nuclear power, scrambling for investment in China and no longer involved with embargoing Vietnam, the present restrictions on trade with Cuba seem somewhat anachronistic. Castro may have suffered from the U.S. embargo, but he has

also benefited enormously by having someone other than himself to blame for Cuba's economic inadequacies, able to wrap himself in the nationalist flag against the big bully of the North.

In the long run, communism in Cuba is doomed. Both the United States and Cuba have a convergence of interest in seeing that the transition is smooth and the landing is soft. A breakdown of order on the island would bring another vast armada of Cubans fleeing to our shores, and that would be destabilizing to both countries.

The best way to ensure a soft landing is to defeat counterproductive legislation such as the Helms-Burton "Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act," which would threaten our allies that do business in Cuba and tie even more restrictions on the present embargo. The bill will not help Cuba's transition to a market economy and could only retard the very forces of freedom and openness the United States wishes to encourage. The embargo is strict enough without additional baggage and should be used as a bargaining chip to nudge Cuba into the democratic and human rights reforms that will one day set its people free.

HAVANA, January 19.—Cuban dissidents have met a visiting U.S. congressman in public, the first time in years such a meeting has taken without interference from the authorities, one of dissidents said on Friday.

Elizardo Sanchez told Reuters he and other dissidents met visiting Democratic Representative Joe Moakley of Massachusetts for several hours in the state-owned Hotel Nacional.

Sanchez, leader of the Cuban Committee for Human Rights and National Reconciliation, said he was surprised the dissidents had been able to hold a meeting in public without problems. Meetings with members of Cuba's small and illegal opposition groups generally take place in dissidents' homes or foreign embassies.

We are not bothered (by officials) either entering or leaving (the hotel)," Sanchez said, adding that the group discussed issues such as proposals in Congress to toughen the longstanding U.S. embargo against communist-ruled Cuba.

Moakley, who also met the dissidents on Tuesday at the house of the senior U.S. diplomat in Cuba Joseph Sullivan, is on a fact-finding mission that included talks with President Fidel Castro on Wednesday night.

Moakley said on Thursday he found Castro flexible on the congressman's suggestion that if there were some change on the island it might help defeat moves to toughen the embargo.

FRENCH NUCLEAR TESTINGS

(Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, now that it's almost certain that President Chirac of France will be making a state visit to our Nation's Capitol next week to meet with President Clinton and the leadership of the Congress, this will be a sad occasion for me, Mr. Speaker, and the millions of peoples throughout the world and through representation of leaders of some 168 countries throughout the world who have earnestly pleaded with President Chirac not to break the moratorium on nuclear testing. And yet despite all

this, President Chirac of France in defiance of global consensus on raising tensions and suspicion, and even to promote again the extension and proliferation of nuclear weapons testing and development, France has already now exploded five nuclear bombs to improve its nuclear delivery capabilities with its long-distance missiles.

It might interest my colleagues that French Government officials—and they're masters of these ploys—a few leaks here and some leaks there—some critical points that President Chirac is going to shove right at our noses at the joint session of Congress next Thursday.

First, a warning to Republican leaders and the President that closing our Government down will have serious economic consequences not only to France but to Europe and other regions of the world.

Second, that the United States contributes too little in foreign aid to Third World countries.

Third, that the United States should live up to its global responsibilities, whatever that means.

Fourth, that United States contributions to the crisis in Bosnia is not enough, but at the same time, France expects to play very prominent, if not, the leading role as far as Europe is concerned relative to Bosnia.

And fifth, France does not want any nation of the world to criticize its current nuclear testing program, because France does not trust the United States involvement with Europe's security needs for the past 50 years.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to my colleagues that what we're going to get from President Chirac next week is not the eloquence of Marquis de Lafayette, but the ghost of Charles de Gaulle II.

Mr. Speaker, I include the following article from the January 24 New York Times for the RECORD:

[From the New York Times, Jan. 24, 1996]
 POSSIBILITY OF DEFAULT STARTS TO WORRY
 EUROPE, ESPECIALLY FRANCE
 (By Craig R. Whitney)

PARIS, January 23.—The possibility that the deficit-cutting impasse between Congress and the Clinton Administration could start causing the United States Government to default on its debt next month has begun to sink in on European leaders, and the French are anxious to avoid the turmoil that could result.

President Jacques Chirac, who will visit Washington next week, is prepared to warn in a speech to a joint session of Congress that default would upset economies around the world and deeply undermine the American global position, French officials said today.

Congressional Republicans have threatened to refuse to raise the national debt limit unless the Clinton Administration agrees to their agenda for cutting the Federal deficit. If the Administration refuses to give in and fails to find other ways of coming up with money, the Government could start running out of money to pay obligations due on March 1.

At this point, some European leaders are said to be beginning to feel like onlookers at a political game whose players appear little concerned about the chaos a default would

cause in international currency and bond markets.

Some see a situation comparable to that in 1975, when Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany felt compelled to warn President Gerald R. Ford that letting New York City go bankrupt could send economic shock waves around the world, which was still fragile from the effects of a sudden rise in oil prices.

Mr. Chirac told the Senate majority leader, Bob Dole, and Speaker Newt Gingrich during his last visit to Washington in the summer that the United States gave too little foreign aid to developing countries, and French officials say that he plans to deliver the same message to Congress in an address planned for Feb. 1.

"We hope that Congress will be disposed to let the United States live up to its global responsibilities," one official here said.

Mr. Chirac will tell Congress, French officials say, that Europe, with about the same size economy as the United States, gives three times as much to developing countries—\$31 billion, compared with less than \$9 billion last year from the United States.

"Where is America and its traditional generosity, where is its desire to help reshape the world?" asked one French policy maker.

Mr. Chirac is also likely to use his visit to tell both Congress and the Administration that France will insist on reshaping the NATO alliance to reflect changes since the end of the cold war, according to officials in Brussels and Paris.

Mr. Chirac has reintegrated France into some NATO military structures that it left in 1966, but officials say he did so to push for the creation of a stronger European defense arm within the alliance. "We need to be able to deal with crises like Bosnia even if the United States doesn't want to become involved," an official said.

Mr. Chirac may also tell Washington that American plans to contribute \$600 million to the reconstruction of Bosnia over the next three years are inadequate. European estimates of the total cost run to \$3.7 billion. "Don't think that the Europeans will be the only ones paying for Bosnian reconstruction," Mr. Chirac said in a recent interview, adding that the Europeans expected the United States to pay about the same as they will—about one third.

American officials have responded that the United States committed 20,000 soldiers to the NATO peacekeeping force that began moving into Bosnia last month, a larger contingent than any of its allies.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 27 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HEFLEY) at 5 o'clock and 19 minutes p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was com-

municated to the House by Mr. McCathran, one of his secretaries.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2880, THE BALANCED BUDGET DOWNPAYMENT ACT

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Appropriations be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2880) and that it shall be in order at any time to consider the bill in the House; that the bill be debatable for not to exceed 1 hour, to be equally divided and controlled by myself and the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY]; that all points of order against the bill and against its consideration be waived; and that the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to the final passage without intervening motion, except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, and I do not intend to object, I simply want to take this reservation in order to observe that, unlike so many episodes which the public has seen lately in the Congress where divisions among us have caused great turmoil and consternation both on the floor and throughout the country, both sides of the political aisle have worked very hard and very intensively with a great deal of involvement of people on both sides of the aisle in order to assure that we can overcome major differences and keep the Government open.

I would simply, in continuing my reservation, make the point that there are some items in the proposition which the gentleman from Louisiana is about to bring to the House with which I have strong disagreement; for example, the reduced level of funding for education and a number of other items in the bill. But I think the overriding need of the country is for us to overcome our differences, or at least manage to live with those differences, especially since this is a CR of short-term duration, with the exception of a couple of items in the bill.

So I would simply say that I want to congratulate the gentleman from Louisiana for the way he has handled this difficult task. I am pleased to say that the White House, while they certainly do not agree with every provision in this bill, as I do not, they have signed off on this as a short-term compromise. I very much appreciate both the way they have handled things and the way the gentleman from Louisiana and other Members on both sides of the aisle have handled this.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. If the gentleman would yield to me, before he withdraws his reservation.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I