

What concerns me tonight, my colleagues, is we are looking at some potential dramatic costs and disaster for the future. One of the things that the United States did when they went into Panama was to really help dissolve the military organization which was corrupt, which was the tool of General Noriega, and also involved in some of this illegal and corrupt activity.

We have in fact dismantled most of the military in Panama, leaving them with a weak national police force. What concerns me is that Panama has had on its border and within its border the FARC organization and a Marxist rebel group which are conducting operations, both from Panama now and also in Colombia. As they see the opportunity for corruption to take hold, as we lose control of any assets, any military presence in the Canal Zone, I think we are creating a vacuum, and I think some of these rebels from the south, again, will move further into Panama and create a very unstable situation.

So we may be back in Panama at great cost, at great sacrifice, in the future, but it is in fact the failed negotiations, again, that have gotten us into this situation, into this cost and into this potential for future activity by these Marxist guerrillas who are already located in Panama and, I think, again will take advantage of this.

Panama has always been a major narcotics route and it always will be because of its location as an isthmus and as a route linking South America and Central America and North America. Again, I believe that we are going to pay a very high price in the future by the decline of our ability to conduct advanced surveillance operations from the location we have had.

Panama historically has had a notoriously corrupt political class, and again, we are faced with only a small police force to deal with this impending situation with the departure of the United States forces. Both the country and the canal, in my estimation, are in danger, and we are about to turn over this entire operation at great cost and great loss to the taxpayer. We will hear more about this in the hearing that we will be conducting next week as that action takes place on May 1.

I also want to just talk briefly tonight about the national debate that is raging on the question of use of illegal narcotics in this country. I said earlier, as chairman I have pledged to hold a hearing and will do that, I hope, later this month on the question of legalization and also decriminalization of illegal narcotics.

I myself do not favor that action by our government, by our Congress. In fact, what I think from what I have learned since taking over this responsibility and my past work on this issue is that sometimes tough enforcement, tough eradication, tough interdiction, does in fact work. I welcome the opportunity to have this debate before our subcommittee, but I must say that,

again, all the evidence I see points to the contrary.

Let me just, as I may in closing, comment on what I have learned about the question of tough enforcement versus legalization. I have here a chart, and I will put it up here for a few minutes, and it is narcotics arrest index crime comparison for New York City.

This chart dramatically shows as the numbers of arrests for narcotics offenses increased, that in fact the incidence of crime dramatically was reduced. This is pretty dramatic, and it covers the period from 1993 to 1998 under the regime of Mayor Giuliani. So when drug arrests are enforced and executed, in fact crime goes down. The proof is in this chart and in these statistics, and I think is not refutable.

I would like to compare that. I got this chart from Tom Constantine, who is the United States Drug Enforcement Administrator. He looked at New York and saw a dramatic decrease in crime in that city. Then, by comparison, he looked for a city which had a more liberalized philosophy and tolerance of drug use and programs to provide alternative substances to drug users.

A great example, of course, is Baltimore. Baltimore in 1950 had a population of 949,000, and it had an addict population of 300. In 1996 it had a population which was reduced down to 675,000. It had 38,985 heroin addicts. Absolutely startling statistics. Again, a policy of liberalization, not the tough enforcement. New York's statistics are absolutely dramatic, not only the crime index that I showed you, but the loss of lives.

Let me, if I may, put up as a final exhibit this chart that shows the numbers of murders in New York City in 1993; nearly 2,000, 1,927. In 1998, I believe it is a 70 percent reduction, 629.

Therefore, I think that the question of legalization will be interesting. The question of decriminalization will be interesting. I think we do need to look at some other ways rather than incarceration for so many individuals who have ended up in our jails and prisons, nearly 2 million Americans at this point. But the facts are, my colleagues, that tough enforcement does work.

Madam Speaker, tonight I have had the opportunity to again raise before the Congress and the House what I think is our biggest social problem facing this Nation, 14,000 to 20,000 drug-related deaths last year across our land, hundreds of them across the district that I represent, with heroin, just tragic deaths, cocaine and other hard drugs that have taken their toll, particularly among our young people and across this Nation at great loss, not only in dollars and cents that the Congress must expend and public policy that demands, but also the incredible human tragedies.

I cannot describe how difficult it is to face a parent who has lost a son or a daughter in a drug overdose. I cannot describe the agony that they as a family must experience, to lose a loved one to this tragedy.

So as we focus on all the other problems, we cannot forget, again, what I consider is the major problem facing the Congress and this Nation, the social problem. I do feel confident about learning from the past, as I said, not making the mistakes of the past, putting our money on programs that work, that are cost effective, looking at some alternatives. And I welcome those suggestions from my colleagues and others that are interested in this subject so that we can do a better job for all Americans, and particularly for young Americans who are the biggest victims today of this epidemic facing our land.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to address the House tonight to talk about the subject of illegal narcotics and drug abuse.

CHANGING U.S. POLICY ON CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BONO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Speaker, distinguished colleagues, as I grieved along with the rest of America this last Sunday, this weekend, about the senseless bloodshed, the condemnable violence against innocent victims last week in Littleton, Colorado, and my heart goes out to the victims and their families, I was reading some news reports from various wire services. I noted two news reports that I placed copies of in my files.

One was titled "Portugal Concerned Young People Will Forget Coup of 1974." It is an Associated Press wire.

"Bloodless Action Toppled Dictator, Brought Democracy. Lisbon, Portugal. The coup was swift, bloodless and effective, so smooth and neat that as Portugal marks the 25th anniversary of the Army coup that brought it democracy, some citizens fear it is at risk of being forgotten. An older generation that lived under dictator Antonio de Oliveira Salazar's heavy hand, proudly recalls the courage of the dissidents and the outpouring of joy when disgruntled Army officers led the coup that toppled the dictatorship."

The article went on, "The coup paved the way for the country, Portugal, to join the European Union in 1986, a coming of age that accelerated the pace of change as development funds poured in and Portugal scrambled to make up for lost time. Portugal crammed into 10 years social and economic development that had taken other countries decades to accomplish."

Another news wire that caught my eye, and I filed it, read, "Two Bills to Seek End of Cuban Embargo. Senator CHRISTOPHER DODD, Democrat, Connecticut, will file a bill this week jointly with Senator JOHN WARNER, Republican, Virginia, seeking an end to the embargo in Cuba. At the same time, Representative JOSÉ SERRANO, Democrat of New York, will file a similar bill in the House," DODD said. DODD

made the announcement Friday as the keynote speaker during the 17th Annual Journalists and Editors Workshop on Latin America held in Miami, Florida. "The time has come to lift the trade sanctions in Cuba," DODD said, adding that the embargo has been ineffective, counterproductive, inhumane and a failure.

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According to DOD, the 4-decade-old embargo has not yielded the result it intended.

I found an interesting contrast in the two articles, because during the decades-long dictatorships in Portugal and in Spain, or during the dictatorship of the 1960s and the 1970s in Greece, no one ever complained that the European Union, which was then known as the European Community, made it absolutely clear that its doors would remain closed, remain airtight; that there could be no conceivable entry into the European Union by Spain or Portugal or Greece until they were democracies. No one ever complained.

No legislative or diplomatic initiatives to say, let Spain and Portugal and Greece in, were ever initiated. No one filed bills in any of the democratic parliaments of Europe saying the Oliveira Salazar regime in Portugal has lasted 50 years or the Franco regime in Spain has lasted 40 years; our policy of isolation has failed. Let us end their isolation, because they have lasted so long. No, no one ever filed bills or initiated initiatives such as those.

On the contrary, during the last year of Franco's dictatorship there was a mobilization in the international community to reimpose a blockade such as the one that the United Nations had imposed on Franco decades earlier. And at the time of Franco's death in 1975 in Spain, that posture, similarly at the time of the coup referred to in this Associated Press article in Portugal in 1974, that posture, that policy by Europe was decisive in the political openings and democratic transitions that took place in those countries that had long been oppressed by dictatorships.

Political parties were liberated. Political prisoners were liberated first. Political parties were legalized. Long-term exiles, those who had survived, were able to return. Along with the legalization of political parties came the legalization of the independent press and independent labor unions, and free elections were authorized, they were then organized, and then they were held. In other words, freedom returned.

That precisely is the goal of our policy with regard to Cuba. That is why we maintain a trade and tourism embargo on the Cuban dictatorship. That is why we deny the U.S. market to the Cuban dictatorship, a regime that has kept itself in power through terror and through repression for 40 years. Because first, we believe that it is in the national interests of the United States for there to be a democratic transition in Cuba. My colleague, the gentleman

from Florida (Mr. MICA), who was just talking about the narcotics trafficking problem in this hemisphere, how for example the Mexican governor of the province of Quintana Roo, the Yucatan Peninsula, has just sought refuge. Just before he was about to be arrested for being a major drug trafficker, he sought refuge and he is in Cuba today, as is Robert Vesco and over 90 other fugitives on the FBI's Most Wanted List.

So we believe for many reasons that it is in the United States' national interest for there to be a democratic transition in Cuba. Second, we believe that just as in Europe, in the cases of the democratic transitions that occurred in Spain or Portugal or Greece, or in the transitions that took place in South Africa or Chile or the Dominican Republic, it is absolutely critical that there be some form of external pressure for a democratic transition to take place in Cuba once the dictator is no longer on the scene. Either because, like in the case of Franco in Spain, the dictator dies, or if it occurs through a coup, for example, like in Portugal, or by way of a coup followed by the death of a dictator, if it occurs as in Romania. However it occurs, whatever way it occurs, at the time of the disappearance from the scene of the Cuban dictator, that is when it will be absolutely critical for the U.S. embargo to be in place as it is today, with its lifting being conditioned, as it is by law, on three fundamental developments in Cuba.

Number one, the liberation of all political prisoners. Number two, the legalization of all political parties, independent labor unions and the independent press. And number three, the scheduling of free, internationally supervised elections. The exact same conditions that brought about the democratic transitions in Portugal and in Spain and in South Africa, and in Chile and in the Dominican Republic and in so many others.

At the time of the disappearance of the dictator in Cuba, the U.S. embargo, with its lifting being conditioned on those three developments, as it is by law, will constitute critical leverage for the Cuban people to achieve those three conditions. In other words, for them to achieve their freedom, like the South Africans and the Spaniards and the Chileans and the Portuguese and the Dominicans achieved theirs during the last four decades.

It should not seem that complicated. Wherever there has been some form of external pressure, there has been a democratic transition. Where there has been acquiescence, financing, trade, oxygen for the regimes such as in China, there is no democratic transition. It is very simple.

So when we see some asking for an end to the embargo against Castro now, before the three conditions, we have to then ask which of the three conditions do the Cuban people not deserve? Do they not deserve the liberation of all political prisoners, the legal-

ization of political parties, the press, labor unions, or do they not deserve free elections? Which of the three conditions do the Cuban people not deserve? We must ask those who want to lift the embargo now, unilaterally.

There is another question. Why else, why in addition to the ethical reasons, in addition to the profound immorality of sitting by while our closest neighbors are ignored year after year after year, while they are oppressed year after year, decade after decade, by a degrading and humiliating military dictatorship that has implanted a system of economic and political apartheid against its own people. A system where people are thrown in prison for their thoughts, where refugees are killed for leaving the country without permission, the most glaring, horrible example being July 13, 1994 where a tugboat, an old tugboat full of refugees was systematically attacked and sunk, and over 40 women and children, along with some adult men, were murdered, over 20 children were murdered.

A system where, to use another example, the pharmacies, the drugstores, if a Cuban citizen has a child with a fever or another medical problem, they can only purchase medicines in the pharmacies if they have dollars and if they are foreigners. In other words, they have to get a foreigner to go in and purchase the medicine and they need a foreign currency, dollars, to be able to do that.

To cite a very well written report by the respected human rights organization PAX Christi Netherlands of February of this year, a system where the criminal code, even in its pre-February 1999 form, before the draconian new law that Castro had his public parliament pass that established up to 30 years in prison for peaceful pro-democracy activity; even before the February 1999 law, the criminal code was used as a means to silence political dissent by charging opponents of the regime with, for example, "contempt for authority" or "dangerousness" or "enemy propaganda."

In Cuba, where the judiciary is directly controlled by the communist party, the right to a fair trial is not guaranteed. Sometimes political proponents remain detained for prolonged periods, months, even years without any charge, much less a trial. And PAX Christi Netherlands continues in its Human Rights Report, February 1999, a list exists, drawn up by the Cuban Commission on Human Rights and Reconciliation, of approximately 300 political prisoners.

What is often overlooked, though, is that this is only a partial list. The Cuban Government does not disclose any data on the number of those imprisoned for political offenses such as rebellion, disrespect or enemy propaganda. Human rights organizations, therefore, will have to depend on other sources to report a political imprisonment to them. In actual fact, there are anywhere, and this is according to PAX

Christi Netherlands, in actual fact, there are anywhere from 2,000 to 5,000 political prisoners.

There is an additional problem in the form of people that are in prison under the pretext of, for instance, economic offenses, while the real reason is political. We can only guess at the numbers, says PAX Christi Netherlands. And it continues: Prisoners are put under great psychological pressure and at times they are beaten up. Prison conditions are generally bad. Inmates are undernourished and have no blankets, sanitary facilities or legal representation. There are frequent reports of political prisoners being denied medical attention in the case of illness.

An example is political prisoner Jorge Luis Garci-Perez Antunez, 33 years old and imprisoned for 18 years, accused of enemy propaganda. In the beginning of 1999 he was brutally beaten to unconsciousness by prison officers. According to his sister, one of these officers at the prison stated that they were authorized to beat prisoners. Actually, Antunez is in a very poor state of health, as he is denied medical treatment for his injuries and for his illnesses, a kidney insufficiency, an-gina pectoris and hypoglycemia. Until this writing, his sister has not been allowed to give her brother the necessary medicines, from PAX Christi Netherlands, February 1999.

So why, in addition to the moral imperative, I was asking, is it in the national interest of the United States for Cuba to be free? I think it is important that we touch upon just a few of the reasons.

We in Washington have the ability to receive research from many so-called think tanks. They are institutes of research. One of the most respected and certainly well informed of those research institutes is the William Casey Institute of the Center for Security Policy. In a recent report, November 1998, they wrote, "American advocates of normalization contend that Cuba no longer poses any threat to the United States, and that the U.S. embargo is therefore basically an obsolete and harmful relic of the Cold War.

Unfortunately, this view, reports the Center for Security Policy, ignores the abiding menacing character of the Castro regime. This is all the more remarkable given the emphasis Secretary of Defense William Cohen, among other Clinton administration officials, have placed on asymmetric threats, the very sorts of threats Cuba continues to pose to American citizens and interests.

These include the following: Thanks to the vast signal intelligence facilities operated near Lourdes by Havana's and Moscow's intelligence services, facilities that permit the wholesale collection of sensitive U.S. military diplomatic and commercial data and the invasion of millions of Americans' privacy, the Cuban regime has the capability to conduct sustained and systematic information warfare against the

United States. A stunning example of the potentially devastating consequences of this capability was recently provided by former Soviet military intelligence Colonel Stanislav Lunev. As one of the most senior Russian military intelligence officials to come to this country, Lunev revealed that in 1990 the Soviet Union acquired America's most sensitive Desert Storm battle plans, including General Norman Schwarzkopf's famed Hail Mary flanking maneuver, prior to the launch of the U.S. ground war on the Persian Gulf.

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Moscow's penetration of such closely-guarded American military planning via its Cuban ally may have jeopardized the lives of literally thousands of U.S. troops in the event the intelligence had been forwarded to Saddam Hussein by then Soviet Premier Gorbachev.

By the way, Moscow pays \$200 million to this day. Even though they get a lot of money from the U.S. taxpayers, they turn around and pay \$200 million a year to Castro for the intelligence facilities that Moscow maintains in Havana.

Recent news reports have brought forth that the same types of concerns that existed during Desert Storm due to the intelligence-gathering operations in Cuba that the Russians maintain and the intelligence-gathering operations that Castro maintains with the help of the Russians, that these same concerns remain and have remained during our recent operations in Iraq and our current operation in Serbia.

The Center for Security Policy, in their report in February, 1999, continue talking about the Cuban threat, and specifically mention the following. According to a January 29 article in the Financial Times of London, drug traffickers have capitalized, drug traffickers, have capitalized on the increased flow of European and Latin American tourism and trade with Cuba in the post-Soviet period, as well as the Castro regime's rampant official corruption and its ideologically-driven desire to damage its economic enemies. These operations use Cuba both for a drug market for the tourists that go there, and as a favored cleansing route employed to reduce the opportunities for detection.

Several instances reported in the Financial Times of London illustrate this alarming development. For example, the frequency of drug cargoes dropped by air traffickers into Cuban waters for pick-up by smugglers more than doubled in 1998 over previous years.

On December 3 of 1998, a 7-ton shipment of cocaine bound for Cuba was seized in Columbia by the Columbian police. Further evidence of such offensive, albeit asymmetrical activities, and indications that the Clinton administration is finding this behavior to be

suppressed, was presented in Robert Novak's syndicated column in the Washington Post on February 1, 1999.

Such is the concern of the Committee on International Relations, led by its chairman, the gentleman from New York (Mr. BEN GILMAN) about the actual status of Cuban drug running that the committee asked the State Department to place Havana on its narcotics blacklist.

For its part, the administration, in the person of the drug czar, General McCaffrey, has denied any suggestion that it is downplaying or concealing Castro's Cuba's involvement in narcotics trafficking. But the problem is that they have not answered our concerns. They have not answered our concerns, Madam Speaker.

I sent a letter, along with the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROSELEHTINEN) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. DAN BURTON), to General McCaffrey in November of 1996 on the issue of Castro's participation in the drug trade and the lack of a policy, even the lack of acknowledgment by the administration that it is going on.

We specifically said in the letter: "There is no doubt that the Castro dictatorship allows Cuba to be used as a transshipment point for drugs. We were deeply disappointed when DEA administrator Thomas Constantine, testifying before the House International Relations Committee in June, said that 'there is no evidence that the government of Cuba is complicit' in drug smuggling ventures. On the contrary, there is no doubt that the Castro dictatorship is in the drug business. Your appearance," this was addressed to General McCaffrey, "before the committee that day was also very disappointing on this critical issue.

"Castro and his top aides have worked as accomplices for the Columbian drug cartels and Cuba is a key transshipment point. In fact," in 1996, "sources in the DEA's Miami Field Office stated to the media that more than 50% of the drug trafficking detected by the U.S. in the Caribbean proceeds from or through Cuba.

"Since the 1980's, substantial evidence in the public domain has mounted showing that the Castro dictatorship is aggressively involved in narcotics trafficking. In 1982, four senior aides to Castro were indicted by a Florida grand jury for drug smuggling in the U.S. They were Vice Admiral Aldo Santamaria, a member of the Cuban Communist Party Central Committee who supervised military protection for, and the resupply of, ships transporting drugs to the US; Ambassador to Columbia Fernando Ravelo, who was in charge of the arms for drugs connection with the Columbian M-19 guerillas and the Medellin Cartel; Minister Counselor Gonzalo Bassols-Suarez, assigned to the Cuban Embassy in Bogota, Columbia; and Rene Rodriguez-Cruz, a senior official of the DGI (Cuban Intelligence Service) and a member of the Communist Party Central Committee.

"In 1987, the U.S. Attorney in Miami won convictions of 17 South Florida drug smugglers who used Cuban military air bases to smuggle at least 2,000 pounds of Colombian cocaine into Florida with the direct logistical assistance of the Cuban Armed Forces. Evidence in this case was developed by an undercover government agent who flew a drug smuggling flight into Cuba with a MIG fighter escort. In 1988, Federal law enforcement authorities captured an 8,800 pound load of cocaine imported into the United States through Cuba. In 1989, U.S. authorities captured 1,060 pounds of cocaine sent through Cuba to the United States.

"Prior administrations have correctly identified the Castro regime as an enemy in the interdiction battle. As early as March 12, 1982, Thomas Enders, then Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, stated before the Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism of the Senate Judiciary Committee that 'We now also have detailed and reliable information linking Cuba to trafficking in narcotics as well as arms.'"

On April 30, 1983, James Michel, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, testified before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. His remarks validated prior findings:

"The United States has developed new evidence from a variety of independent sources confirming that Cuban officials have facilitated narcotics trafficking through the Caribbean. . . . They have done so by developing a relationship with key Colombian drug runners who, on Cuba's behalf, purchased arms and smuggled them to Cuban-backed insurgent groups in Colombia. In return, the traffickers received safe passage of ships carrying cocaine, marijuana, and other drugs through Cuban waters to the U.S."

"On July 26, 1989, Ambassador Melvin Levitsky, Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Matters, testified that, 'There is no doubt that Cuba is a transit point in the illegal drug flow. . . . We have made a major commitment to interdicting this traffic. . . . Although it is difficult to gauge the amount of trafficking that takes place in Cuba, we note a marked increase in reported drug trafficking incidents in Cuban territory during the first half of 1989.'

"We are sure that while in Panama," we wrote General McCaffrey, "as Commander of the U.S. Southern Command, you became aware of General Noriega's close relationship with Castro, and of Castro's intimate relationship with the Colombian drug cartels.

"Because past administrations identified Cuba as a major transshipment point for narcotics traffic, it was integrated into the larger interdiction effort. By contrast, under the existing strategy" of this administration, "no aggressive efforts have been made to cut off this pipeline despite the growing awareness of its existence.

"In April, 1993, the Miami Herald reported that the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida had drafted an indictment charging the Cuban government as a racketeering enterprise, and Cuban Defense Minister Raul Castro as the chief of a ten-year conspiracy to send tons of Colombian cartel cocaine through Cuba to the United States. Fifteen Cuban officials were named as co-conspirators, and the Defense and Interior Ministries cited as criminal organizations." The indictment was shelved. It was placed in a drawer by the Clinton administration.

"In 1996, the prosecution of a drug trafficker, Jorge Cabrera, a convicted drug dealer, brought to light additional information regarding narco-trafficking by the Castro dictatorship. Cabrera was convicted of transporting almost 6,000 pounds of cocaine in the United States, and he was sentenced to 19 years in prison and fined over \$1 million. Cabrera has made repeated, specific claims confirming cooperation between Cuban officials and the Colombian cartels. His defense counsel has publicly stated that Cabrera offered to arrange a trip, under Coast Guard surveillance, that would 'pro-actively implicate the Cuban government.' That investigation was shelved. It was put in a drawer by the Clinton administration.

"Overwhelming evidence points," we continued in our letter, "to ongoing involvement of the Castro dictatorship in narco-trafficking. The Congress remains gravely concerned about this issue." We ended the letter by saying, "We are deeply disappointed that the Administration continues to publicly ignore this critical matter."

General McCaffrey sent us back a form letter that he sends to schools and people who ask for the ability to have input throughout the country into the Nation's drug policy.

The chairman of the Committee on Government Reform in the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAN BURTON) then sent a letter to General McCaffrey. I signed the letter, along with my colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ILEANA ROSENTHALINEN):

"Dear General McCaffrey, we write in response to your letter," your form letter, "asking for comments in regard to updates." "We have included herewith a letter which we sent to you November 18, 1996. You subsequently replied to us with a form letter. . . .

"We hereby reiterate our request that you address the issue of the Cuban government's participation in narco-trafficking and take all necessary actions to end the Clinton Administration's cover-up of that reality.

"We look forward to receiving a specific and detailed response to the information and points raised in our correspondence. Thank you in advance for your personal attention to this request."

General McCaffrey wrote back saying that we had impugned his integrity or

his commitment to the country, something that we never did. We remain focused on what we asked for.

As the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman DAN BURTON) stated in his reply to General McCaffrey on March 16, 1999, "Simply put, your response was insufficient. I unequivocally disagree with your assessment of the Cuban government," because the General maintains that the Cuban government is not involved with drug trafficking.

Despite all the evidence that he knows of and we provided publicly to him, it is part of the public record, he continues to say, no, the Cuban government is not involved with drug trafficking, and/or is unable to monitor or patrol its territory.

Chairman BURTON continued, "I have never questioned your service or dedication to our country. Your military career was long, and you indeed rose to four star (CINC) status, and I salute you for that."

That is not the issue. The issue is that we sent a detailed letter that I just read from the Congress of the United States, once again asking for what the policy is of the administration with regard to concrete evidence of decades-long participation by the Cuban regime in narco-trafficking into the United States; in other words, a systematic campaign to poison the youth in the United States.

What is the policy of this administration? It is not an issue of whether General McCaffrey had a good military record or not. Nobody is questioning that. It is, what is the policy of the administration now? Why is there an obvious attempt to cover up the involvement of the Cuban regime in narco-trafficking into this country?

The Center for Security Policy, in its February, 1999, report, stated, with regard to Cuba's two VVER 440 Soviet-designed nuclear reactors, that assurances from the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy to the effect that these reactors are "in excellent condition and meet all contemporary safety requirements" are unconvincing.

The Center for Security Policy continued: "In fact, many Western experts, including the U.S., the General Accounting Office, and Cuban defectors from the Juragua complex have warned about myriad design and construction flaws.

"Among the items of concern are the fact that much of the facility's sensitive equipment has been exposed to corrosive tropical weather conditions for almost 6 years, and a large percentage of the structural components, building materials, and fabrication, for example, of critical welds, has been defective."

The Pentagon is currently constructing a so-called Caribbean Radiation Early Warning System, known as CREWS, around the southern United States downwind from these Cuban reactors. According to Norm Dunkin, the lead contractor on CREWS, this system

will monitor the activity of the reactors being built in Cuba in the event of an accident. Mr. Dunkin states that the CREWS system would allow for an immediate response.

Now, just what that immediate response would be remains far from clear. We are talking about two Soviet-designed nuclear power plants that Castro is committed to completing in Cuba. So will this "early warning system" enable the mass evacuation of as many as 80 million Americans who might, according to U.S. official estimates, be exposed to Cuban radiation within days of a meltdown?

And even if that extraordinary logistical feat could be accomplished, what would happen to the food supply, animals, and property left behind? This is the Center for Security Policy in its report of 1999, February.

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I think it is important, Madam Speaker, that we point out what we are talking about specifically here with regard to these Cuban power plants. These are Soviet-designed nuclear power plants. We just remembered the horrible accident at Chernobyl, where so many innocent lives were lost and radiation caused damage to millions and millions of people in the Ukraine. Well, what we are talking about here is Cuba. We are not talking about the Ukraine.

We are talking about Soviet-designed nuclear power plants. They are known as the VVER 440. Soviet designed nuclear reactors. There are two of them. Here. Here is Key West. Here are the nuclear power plants. We are talking about less than 200 miles. These reactors, the VVER 440s, were all shut down when the Soviet Union collapsed and the Iron Curtain came down in Europe. All of the newly-freed countries of Eastern Europe, without exception, starting with East Germany but going throughout the entire continent, immediately moved to shut them all down because they are inherently dangerous.

But in addition to that, engineers and workers who worked on the initial stages of these two Cuban nuclear power plants have testified here in Congress and before Federal executive agencies that not only are these plants defective because of their design but because of the great mistakes that were committed, the great flaws in the construction, the initial construction of these plants that Castro is determined to complete.

Now, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that prepared this chart for my office, if the winds happened to be blowing north, in this direction, where we are right now, here, Washington, D.C., and even further north, as far north as Pennsylvania and New York, within 2 days of an accident in one of these plants, or an incident, because the Cuban dictator would be able to create an incident if he would so decide, with-

in 2 days, if the winds were blowing north, the radiation would expose most of the eastern coast of the United States.

If it were blowing in this direction, obviously, the central United States. It would take longer, obviously, to get to Texas and the West. But 80 million Americans reside in this area, and within 2 days, if the winds were blowing this way, if these plants were completed and if there were an accident, and we obviously had an accident in Chernobyl, we are not talking theory here, these are Soviet-designed plants, it would expose up to 80 million Americans to grave risk. And this chart, as I say, was provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

We are all concerned about Kosovo. It is a great humanitarian crisis and tragedy, but this is here. These plants are less than 200 miles from the United States. What is the President doing? What is the Clinton administration doing to prevent this? Well, they have come forth with something called, as I mentioned before, CREWS, the Caribbean Radiation Early Warning System. I have never seen, to be diplomatic I will say, a less logical idea. Because this CREWS system, Caribbean Radiation Early Warning System, is designed to monitor the activity of these reactors in the event of an accident, this system would, quote, allow for an immediate response. The radiation would be picked up by the system.

Is that what our policy has to be? I think that is inconceivable. I think our policy needs to be a policy of simply letting the Cuban regime know that under no circumstances can those plants be completed. The United States of America has to make it clear to Mr. Castro that those plants cannot be completed. It means putting at risk, if they are completed, 80 million Americans plus the entire Cuban people, plus the neighbor, if the winds happen to go this way, Mexico. If the winds happen to go this way, it is Central America.

The United States has to be telling the Cuban Government that those plants will not be completed. But, no, the Clinton administration came up with CREWS, the Caribbean Radiation Early Warning System, that will allow for an immediate response because radiation will be detected if there is an accident. That is not acceptable.

I ask all of my colleagues and the American people watching through C-SPAN to contact their Congressman or Congresswoman and tell him or her that they must tell the President of the United States that he must unequivocally state that these plants, these nuclear power plants in Cuba, cannot, will not, under any circumstances, be completed. This is an issue of extraordinary importance.

With regard to the matters we are touching upon, which are why it is in the national interest of the United States, in addition to the moral prerequisites, the reasons for there to be a democratic transition in Cuba, Inside

Magazine, Inside Magazine here in Washington, published an article last month and I would like to quote from it. It is a very brief article.

Fidel Castro was, quote, among the principal sponsors of international terrorist Carlos the Jackal, according to a former senior Cuban Interior Ministry official. Juan Antonio Rodriguez Menier, who has lived under police protection in the United States for the past 13 years, told investigators that Castro supplied Carlos, that is the name this well-known terrorist goes by, whose real name is Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, with money, passports and apartments in Paris.

Menier, this former Cuban intelligence official, alleges that the Cuban President, referring to Castro, organized drug trafficking in the United States, France, the Netherlands and elsewhere, and that Carlos was used by Castro to, "put pressure on and execute the people he designated." Carlos, this terrorist, is serving a life sentence in France for the murder of two secret policemen and an informant.

These are what threats exist. What are the reasons, again, Madam Speaker? The question is, in addition to the moral imperative, what are the reasons why it is in the national interest of the United States for there to be a democratic transition in Cuba? Why do we have an embargo on Castro that provides not only the only sanction against his brutality but the only leverage for the Cuban opposition, for the Cuban people to achieve a Democratic transition once Castro is gone from the scene?

Why do we maintain an embargo? For all these reasons. Why is it in the United States' national interest for there to be a democratic transition in Cuba? For all these reasons that I have been mentioning.

There was an unprecedeted act of state terrorism against American citizens a little over 3 years ago. Castro ordered his own air force, not talking about Carlos the terrorist, but his own air force to shoot down American civil planes over international waters. That is the only time it has ever been done. Not even Saddam or the North Koreans have done that.

Civilian planes over international waters by an act of state terrorism directly by an air force. The only time it has been done. It is unprecedeted, as was noted by Judge Lawrence King in his wise and erudite decision in the U.S. District Court in the Southern District of Florida. In an unprecedeted act, Castro ordered the murders by his own air force of U.S. citizens over international waters 3 years ago.

Well, sometimes it is important to go back and read what was said at the time. This is March 11, 1996, 3 years ago. Time Magazine. In an exclusive conversation with Reginald Brack, chairman of Time, Joelle Addinger, Time's chief of correspondence, and Cathy Booth, the Miami bureau chief, Castro tried to explain and justify shooting down two defenseless planes.

Question: What was the chain of command? Here is Castro's answer: We discussed it with Raul. That is his brother, head of the air defense forces in the military. We gave the order to the head of the air force. Castro continued saying, I take responsibility for what happened. Castro admits, he takes responsibility publicly for shooting down unarmed civilian aircraft over international waters. Unprecedented act of state terrorism.

Where is the administration? The Clinton administration signed the codification of the embargo, that is true, and ever since then has systematically waived every part of the legislation that the administration has been able to waive. Sometimes it is important to realize why things were done. We are not talking about 30 years ago but 3 years ago.

Now, Madam Speaker, it is important, I think, to go back to what the Center for Security Policy stated in its February 1999 report. Bottom line, it ended, the report, saying, "In short, Fidel Castro's Cuba continues to represent a significant, if asymmetric, threat to the United States. The Clinton administration needs to be honest with the American people about these and other dangers, perhaps including the menace of biological or information warfare, which the President says he has seized. The Clinton administration must dispense with further efforts to cover up or low-ball them. Under these and foreseeable circumstances, it would be irresponsible to ease the U.S. embargo, and thereby not only legitimate, but offer life support to the still offensively oriented Castro regime." That was the Center for Security Policy, February 1999.

Madam Speaker, I would ask how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BONO). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) has 14 minutes remaining.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. The dictatorship in Cuba is economically bankrupt and obviously desperate. That is part of the danger, the desperation angle. For example, the fact that Castro would be so committed to completing two nuclear power plants whose design is so inherently faulty that everywhere where they had been completed in Eastern Europe they were closed down, proves he is desperate. He wants it complete, even those nuclear power plants.

The dictatorship is bankrupt and desperate. The clear signs of that, for example, are that just a few days ago he went to the Dominican Republic, where the very mediocre President of the Republic there, who falls all over himself when he sees Castro, literally, just about; he drools in admiration. Castro was there and all of a sudden his number two bodyguard, and it is important to know what these bodyguards are in the context of Cuban society. They are the ones who have everything the people do not have, starting with the food and all the privileges and benefits. His

personal bodyguards. Well, his number two personal bodyguard defected; responsible for waking Castro up and taking care of his life. If he cannot trust his number two bodyguard, of the hundreds of bodyguards he has, who can he trust? Obviously, he knows, no one. That is a sign of desperation. That is a sign of where the dictatorship is.

People say, well, the policy has not functioned. What do they mean it has not functioned, when it has to be in place; conditioned, our embargo conditioned, its lifting conditioned on the three key developments that have to occur in Cuba, and that will occur in Cuba? In other words, the liberation of all political prisoners, legalization of political parties, labor unions and the press, and the scheduling of free elections. This is a desperate, bankrupt dictatorship that, obviously, everyone knows, even the supporters of the dictatorship, that it cannot survive the life of the dictator if we maintain the embargo, the leverage. Obviously, the dictatorship is desperate and bankrupt.

Now, there is something I need to say, because I think it is fair. The UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva passed a resolution this last Friday condemning the human rights violations by the Castro regime. And I want to publicly commend, congratulate and show my admiration for the Czech Republic, who was the prime sponsor of the resolution, and the Polish Government as well. In other words, the Czech president, Vaclav Havel, and Polish Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek, who were the prime sponsors of this resolution, this marvelous resolution, standing firm on the side of the Cuban people. And, really, those who voted for the governments, who voted for it, constitute a hall of fame and dignity at this time. And those who voted against it really constitute a hall of shame.

□ 2000

It only passed by one vote, by the way, but it passed. Obviously, too many people, when we realize it passed by one vote, are in the hall of shame. But, nevertheless, the hall of fame prevailed.

In favor: Argentina; Austria; Canada; Chile; the Czech Republic; Ecuador; France; Germany; Ireland; Italy; Japan; Latvia; Luxembourg; Morocco. By the way, I want to thank His Royal Highness King Hassan and the distinguished and brilliant Foreign Minister Mohammad Benaisa Benahista for their courageous stand. Norway; Poland; the Republic of Korea; Romania, that wonderful, heroic people; the United Kingdom, the United States of America; and Uruguay.

A significant development in this last year, because there was a defeat in this resolution a year ago, a significant development was the naming by Secretary Albright of Assistant Secretary Coe, Assistant Secretary for Human Rights. He did a wonderful job, and he is to be commended.

And then of course voting against, and I am not going to go into the en-

tire list, but the fact that Latin American neighbors of the Cuban people, two of them voted against, Mexico and Brazil. The Mexican Government remains consistent in its policy of corruption in all aspects. And the new Venezuelan President, who wrote a letter by the way to Carlos the Jackal, the terrorist that I referred to previously, well, the new Venezuelan President wrote him a letter the other day congratulating him. That is the new President of Venezuela.

And then abstaining, in other words, those who say, yes, I see the horrible violations of human rights but I do not have the courage or the whatever to vote to condemn them, abstaining was Colombia, El Salvador, and Guatemala. They may not be in the hall of shame but they sure are near.

Madam Speaker, I think in addition to congratulating the people who those governments have voted for this resolution, and noting our disillusionment with those who abstained, and of course, our condemnation of those who voted against, I remain convinced that a great problem that the Cuban people face, the reason why there have been so many years of dictatorship there, one of the great reasons is the lack of press coverage.

I ask my colleagues, I ask the American people watching on C-SPAN, did they read or see coverage of Castro's bodyguard defecting, the No. 2 bodyguard of a dictator that has been in power for 40 years? Did they read about it, hear about it? Was it in the news?

Did they hear about this resolution that condemned the human rights violations? Did they read or hear about, did they see coverage about the crackdown that Castro was involved in against the Cuban people, the new law calling for up to 30 years of imprisonment for peaceful pro-democracy activity? Have they read about that? Have they seen coverage?

Do they know about the four best known dissidents in Cuba, the, in effect, Vaclav Havel and Lech Walesa of Cuba, who bravely refused freedom in lieu of prison and were just sentenced to long prison terms for writing a document asking for free elections and criticizing one-party government? Have they read about their names: Vladimiro Roca, Felix Bonne, Rene Gomez Manzano, Marta Beatriz Roque?

Had they heard about the prisoner that I referred to before, that PAX Christi Netherlands talked about his repeated beatings, a 33-year-old man condemned to 18 years in prison for peacefully advocating for democracy?

Had they heard about Jorge Luis Garcia Perez Antunez? Did they know about Oscar Elias Biscet or Leonel Morejon Almagro, who has been nominated by over 60 Members of this House for the Nobel Peace Prize, or Vicky Ruiz or the hundreds of other pro-democracy activists in Cuba, or the independent press who bravely each day fight for democracy or work to inform the world about the horrors, about what is going on?

Have they read about that? Or did they read about the Baltimore Orioles or the Harlem Globetrotters playing with Cuba's national teams? Is that what we read about? That is the only thing that the press covers with regard to Cuba. How cute, the Baltimore Orioles or the Harlem Globetrotters playing Castro's designated national team. That is the only coverage, in essence, with very rare exceptions.

It is time to help the internal opposition, Madam Speaker. A number of us are filing, we prepared legislation that basically tells the President of the United States, we in the Congress, we passed a law 3 years ago saying he is authorized to help the internal opposition in Cuba, to find ways to do it like we did in Poland, and he has not done it, and it is time that we do it and we are filing legislation to do so.

It is time that the world learn the names of the Vaclav Havels and the Lech Walesas of Cuba. It is time that the world be able to put faces to those names and names to those faces. It is time to help the internal opposition.

We will be filing this legislation. We need the support of our colleagues. It does not deal with the embargo. They can be pro-trade, anti-trade, or in the middle. They can stand for the Cuban people's right to be free by supporting this legislation that calls on the President to devise a plan, like was done by President Reagan in Poland, to help the internal opposition.

And we talk to those now members of parliament in Poland or the President in the Czech Republic and they will tell us what it meant when we had a President in the United States who stood with them and found ways to help them when they were dissidents and when they were being persecuted by their communist totalitarian regimes.

That is what we need to do in the case of Cuba. Cuba will be free. The Congress has always been on the side of the Cuban people. What we need is the President to speak up on this issue on these people 90 miles away, our closest friends, our closest neighbors, to stand on their side and against the repressor.

We need the administration to be heard. The Congress is heard, will continue to be heard, has been heard. And we are going to file our legislation, and we need the support of our colleagues. I know we have it, because always the Congress of the United States have stood with the Cuban people. And the Cuban people, when they are free, they will remember this Congress for having stood always for their right to be free, for self-determination, for freedom for dignity, for free elections and against the horrors of their 40-year totalitarian nightmare.

PATIENT PROTECTION LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. GANSKE. Madam Speaker, it is déjà vu all over again. Delay patient protection, keep it from the floor, try to push it back in the legislative year so that time will run out, or load up a clean patient bill of protection with a lot of extraneous, untested ideas and then let it sink of its weight.

Madam Speaker, I would think that we would learn in this House that the American public is demanding that Congress address this problem. I recently learned, Madam Speaker, that the leadership of the House is not thinking about bringing patient protection legislation to the floor until October at the earliest. And I also learned, Madam Speaker, that the chairman of jurisdiction is considering adding a number of untested ideas to a clean bill of patient rights, things like health marts or association health plans, ideas which have not been tested, which could actually be harmful.

Why is this a disaster, Madam Speaker? Well, consider the case of little James Adams, age 6 months. At 3:30 in the morning his mother Lamona found him hot, panting, sweaty, moaning. His temperature was 104. Lamona phoned her HMO and was told to take James to Scottish Rite Medical Center. "That is the only hospital I can send you to," the reviewer added.

"Well, how do I get there?" Lamona said.

"I do not know. I am not good at directions."

So at about 3:30 in the morning Lamona and her husband wrap up little Jimmy, little sick Jimmy. It was raining out, terrible night. They get in their car. They live way on the east side of Atlanta, Georgia, about 20 miles.

About 20 miles into their ride they pass Emory Hospital's emergency room with a renowned pediatric medical center. Nearby are two more of Atlanta's leading hospitals, Georgia Baptist and Grady Memorial. But they did not have permission to stop, and they knew that if they did the HMO would stick them with the bill. So not being medical professionals, they thought, "We think we can get there in time."

They had 22 more miles to travel before they got to Scottish Rite. While searching for the hospital, James's heart stopped. Madam Speaker, think of what it was like for Mr. and Mrs. Adams, driving frantically in the early morning hours, trying to resuscitate and keep little Jimmy alive while they push on to the emergency room.

Well, they got him to Scottish Rite eventually but it looked like he would die. But he was a tough little guy, and despite his cardiac arrest due to delay in treatment by his HMO, he survived. However, he ended up with gangrene of both of his hands and both of his feet. The doctors had to amputate both of little Jimmy's hands and both of his feet.

All this is documented in the book "Health Against Wealth," and the details of baby James' HMO's methods

emerged, and a judge who looked at this said the margins of safety of that HMO were razor thin. Madam Speaker, I would say about as razor thin as the scalpel that had to amputate little baby James' hands and feet.

Think of the dilemma this places on a mother struggling to make ends meet. In Lamona's situation, under last year's Republican task force bill, if she rushes her child to the nearest emergency room she could be at risk for a charge that is on average 50 percent more than what the plan would pay for in network care. Or she could hope that her child's condition will not worsen as they drive past other hospitals to finally make it to the ER that is affiliated with their plan. And woe to any family's fragile financial condition if this emergency occurs while they are visiting friends or family out-of-State.

Madam Speaker, cases like this are not isolated examples. They are not mere anecdotes. Madam Speaker, tell to little James today or to his mother Lamona, who I spoke to about a month ago, that James is just an anecdote. Those anecdotes, if we prick their finger, if they have a finger, they bleed.

Little James, with his bilateral leg amputations and his bilateral hand amputations, today with his arm stumps can pull on his leg prosthesis, but his mom and dad have to help him get on his bilateral hooks. Little James will never be able to play basketball or sports. Little James, some day when he marries the woman that he loves, will never be able to caress her cheek with his hand.

Madam Speaker, this is the type of disaster that the type of delay that we are seeing in this House and in this Congress in addressing this problem makes this a tragedy. Well, Madam Speaker, these cases have earned the HMO industry a reputation with the public that is so bad that only tobacco companies are held in better esteem.

Let me cite a few statistics. A national survey shows that far more Americans have a negative view of managed care than positive. By more than two to one, Americans support more government regulation of HMOs. The survey shows that only 44 percent of Americans think managed care is a good thing.

Do my colleagues need proof? Just remember the way the audience clapped and cheered during the movie "As Good As It Gets" when Academy Award winner Helen Hunt expressed an expletive, which I cannot repeat on the floor of Congress, about the lack of care her asthmatic son got from their HMO.

□ 2015

No doubt the audience's reaction was fueled by dozens of articles and news stories highly critical of managed care. These are real-life experiences.

In September of 1997, the Des Moines Register ran an op-ed piece entitled "The Chilly Bedside Manners of HMOs" by Robert Reno, a Newsweek writer.