

And there are more rewards in the offing. Administration officials are reportedly considering removing Cuba from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism—a request Raul Castro made in May 2014 and one that the Cuban regime has made many times in recent years. Under Section 6(j) of the Export Administration Act, a country's designation as supporting acts of international terrorism may be rescinded in only two ways. Cuba is not ready to come off that list. Quite the opposite.

In the first instance, the President must certify to the Congress that there has been a fundamental change in the leadership and policies of the government in question, as was the case with Iraq after the removal of Saddam Hussein. There is no legitimate way that administration officials can make such a claim with respect to Cuba. Moreover, the criteria for determining such a systemic transformation is clearly defined in the LIBERTAD Act, known as the Helms-Burton law. For starters, as stated in the law, Fidel and Raul Castro cannot be part of the governing structure.

That leaves only the second option for removal from the list. To remove Cuba's terrorism designation, the president would need to submit a report to Congress, 45 days prior to the proposed removal, certifying that 1) the regime has not provided any support for international terrorism during the preceding six months and 2) the government has provided assurances that it will not support acts of international terrorism in the future. Most would agree that Cuba fails on both counts.

Cuba has supported and provided safe haven to members of the Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Both are U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs). The Obama administration would therefore need to remove ETA and FARC from the FTO list, before removing Cuba from the state-sponsors-of-terrorism list. Both actions are untenable at this time. Unless Spain's foreign-policy establishment is about to make a radical shift in thinking, ETA remains a terrorist organization and there are ETA sympathizers in Cuba who are wanted for terrible crimes against the Spanish people. As for FARC, despite the faux peace process in Havana the past few months, it continues to carry out violent acts in Colombia, has no plans to lay down arms anytime soon, and has links to al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

The "April 2014 State Department Country Reports on Terrorism," however, implied that the only role the Castro regime had with FARC was facilitating travel for the "peace talks" between these terrorists and the Colombian government. It further stated that the ETA presence in Cuba is diminished. It would appear that a kinder-and-gentler Cuba narrative is being written to accommodate a preconceived policy outcome.

Administration officials have reportedly spent the last two years creating a foundation for Obama's Cuba announcement on December 17—all the while denying any such activity when asked by Congress about related news reports. If this sounds familiar, it's because it closely parallels the script used in the negotiations leading to the release of five Taliban leaders held at Guantanamo in exchange for Bowe Bergdahl.

The State Department terrorism report also makes references beyond ETA and FARC—most significantly that Cuba harbors several fugitives of U.S. justice. Terrorists, murderers, and other violent criminals are being protected, well fed, and supported by the Communist regime. Among these is a woman convicted of first-degree murder, Jo-

anne Chesimard. Also known as Assata Shakur, she is on the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorists list for executing a New Jersey State Police trooper. With the help of the Black Liberation Army, she broke out of prison and found refuge in Cuba. According to the FBI, Chesimard "continues to profess her radical anti-U.S. government ideology." New Jersey governor Chris Christie said recently that he wants her back in New Jersey. He'll be waiting a long time.

Basing the decision to remove Cuba from the state-sponsors-of-terrorism list solely on these above-referenced examples (there is probably a great deal more in classified form), the president would need to prove that for the six months prior to the proposed rescission, the Cuban dictatorship did not provide any assistance to terrorists and had unconditionally returned U.S. fugitives. But Communist-party officials have already stated publicly that Cuba considers Chesimard a political asylee and, as such, not to be released into U.S. custody.

The president would also have to accept as credible the "assurances" from the Havana regime that it would not provide support in the future for international terrorism—a difficult task given intelligence gaps highlighted in the State Department's terrorism report. The pertinent section states: "There was no indication that the Cuban government provided weapons or paramilitary training to terrorist groups," but it provides no further data or analysis on these activities. It also fails to address the relationship and cooperation between Cuba and other state sponsors of terrorism such as Iran, or other entities listed on the FTO List.

And then there is the question of intelligence tainted and manipulated by Americans spying for the Cuban regime. One of the most notorious of these traitors, Ana Belen Montes, used her position at the Defense Intelligence Agency to provide Cuban handlers copious amounts of highly sensitive data, including military contingency plans, details of intelligence-gathering efforts, and profiles of a broad spectrum of U.S. officials.

Congress must therefore require a comprehensive appraisal of the range of Cuba's activities against the U.S. and its interests and priorities before the White House can make any decision on whether Cuba will remain on the terrorism list. The review must cover no less than a 20-year period and include a fresh appraisal of all available raw data used in the Clinton-era Pentagon assessment spearheaded by Montes. The review should include detailed intelligence and analysis of unconventional threats and programs that have dual-use application, such as Cuba's biotech capabilities.

The congressional national-security and judiciary committees must be given full access to all files pertaining to the WASP spy network, including data related to the 1996 Brothers to the Rescue shoot-down, as well as damage assessments for all Americans and non-Americans convicted of spying for the Cuban regime.

However, if President Obama chooses to proceed irrespective of the aforementioned conditions and determines that Cuba should be removed from the state-sponsors-of-terrorism list, Congress would have only 45 days from the submission date to evaluate the rescission proposal and act accordingly.

Members of the House and Senate must therefore be proactive in countering the executive action outlined on December 17 and in preventing further damage. Failure to do so would make Congress complicit in the administration's acquiescence to Cuba's Communist regime; it would undermine American interests and reinforce a message of weakness to other enemies of freedom and security.

SUPPORT FOR THE CUBAN PEOPLE

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 12, 2015

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my strong support for the Cuban people, who have suffered for so many decades under the brutal regime of the Castro brothers, and to thank my colleague, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for her leadership in calling for statements on the record on the deplorable human rights situation in Castro's Cuba.

Her leadership and moral clarity on this issue stands in contrast to that of the Obama Administration, which once again has demonstrated its fecklessness. The events of this past weekend—where the absence of our President among so many bold Heads of State who marched in Paris for freedom and against extremism was so glaring—underscores how this Administration scorns our friends while coddling this country's enemies. The disregard this Administration showed for the people of France is part of a pattern, a pattern of contempt which includes disrespect to our great ally Canada and Prime Minister Harper over the crucial Keystone pipeline, which includes allowing Administration spokesmen to insult Israel's courageous Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu in the most juvenile fashion, and which includes abandonment of our Polish and Czech allies when they sought to base a missile shield in their countries in 2009.

By this move to normalize relations with Cuba without consultation with either Congress or the State Department, and without holding the Castro regime to minimum standards of protection of human rights and commitment to democracy as prerequisites to negotiations, the Administration betrays the aspirations of the Cuban people while embracing the brutal dictators and oligarchs who turned an island paradise into a gulag.

Again, there is a pattern here, a pattern of embracing our enemies, be it Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, the mullahs of Iran, or the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, whose rise this Administration helped facilitate. And with each embrace of dictatorships and murderous regimes, the Administration showed its contempt for the downtrodden of these countries—the masses of people in Venezuela who suffered first under the dictator Chavez and now suffer under his understudy in oppression, Nicolas Maduro, who continues to persecute democracy advocates such as Leopoldo Lopez.

This Administration was also silent when the Muslim Brotherhood Morsi regime oppressed the Coptic minority in Egypt, and it lifted no fingers to support the people of Iran during their peaceful Green Revolution protests in the wake of the 2009 election in that country, which were met with batons and pepper spray.

And now the President embraces the Castro brothers, who were tutors to Hugo Chavez in the ways of oppression and whose support of so-called revolutionary movements has brought so much suffering to countries in Latin America and around the world. Let's be clear about this: Cuba has been a state sponsor of terrorism, supporting violence against allies of the United States such as Colombia.

I have been a consistent supporter of the Cuban people in resisting tyranny. I am fortunate to have known many great Cuban dissidents, first and foremost Armando Valladares, whose autobiography *Against All Hope* was a first-hand account of Castro's tyranny, on par with the great work of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. I have also stood with the Ladies in White, or Las Damas de Blanco, and courageous leaders such as Ivonne Malleza Galano, and with heroes such as Dr. Oscar Biscet, a medical doctor and courageous human rights advocate who testified before our human rights subcommittee in February 2012 on "Further Human Rights Violations in Castro's Cuba: The Continued Abuse of Political Prisoners."

Dr. Biscet's story is far too commonplace to ignore. For the QUOTE UNQUOTE "crime" of organizing meetings on behalf of human rights, Dr. Biscet was first arrested and detained by Cuban police in 1999 along with two dozen other advocates. He was released after 5 days, but was rearrested again later that year, this time spending three years in prison. After he got out, he was rearrested a third time in December 2002, beaten and released. Presumably, the Castro regime saw his beating as sufficient warning not to speak out in defense of liberty and human dignity. When he continued to do so, however, the Castro regime arrested him a fourth time, in March 2003, and sentenced him to 25 years in prison.

Fortunately, the Catholic Church intervened to secure his release and that of 50 other unjustly-jailed dissidents in March 2011. He was able to testify via phone at our hearing from Cuba from the US mission. To this day he is unable to leave the Island, prevented by the Castro Brothers.

Dr. Biscet is just one example of the many who suffer under the Castro Brothers. I join my voice with those of my colleagues to express my dismay that the Administration would squander so much leverage in seeking this rapprochement with Cuba, and not doing more to gain concessions from the Castro regime to advance the cause of human rights, offering so much in exchange for so little.

Despite today's news confirming that Cuba released 53 dissidents, which we welcome, since the Administration announced that it would seek normalization of relations with Cuba, hundreds have been arrested, and critics of the government who thought this might signal a new openness continue to be suppressed. This includes Cuban artist Tania Bruguera, who along with other freedom advocates was detained following her attempt to speak and assemble freely in Havana's Revolutionary Square.

There should be no easing of the pressure until Cuba has met definitive and concrete human rights and democratic milestones. Among this is the release of all political prisoners, the end of harassment and a policy of releasing and then re-jailing, the ending of restrictions on freedom of speech and the press,

and on the rights of Assembly. Moreover, the Church must be allowed to conduct its affairs fully and freely without government interference.

And, finally, the Castro regime must be held to account for their harboring of some seventy fugitives from justice, including Joanne Chesimard, who was convicted of killing a state trooper from my home state of New Jersey in 1973, Werner Foerster, leaving his then-young wife a widow. The events of the past several weeks remind us how political violence done in the name of ideology destroys lives and creates deep divisions in the fabric of our society. That this Administration would fail to condition normalization upon the return of fugitives such as Joanne Chesimard, who is on the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorist list, shows where its priorities are.

In closing, I want to assure the Cuban people that I will do everything to make sure that human rights milestones are met before our government makes concessions that are effectively unilateral, squandering leverage. Mind you, this lifeline thrown by the Obama Administration to the Castro regime came at a time when Cuba's oil patrons, Russia and Venezuela, were themselves hurting for cash, and unable to continue subsidizing the regime in Cuba.

To that end, I plan to hold a hearing on the human rights situation in Cuba, focusing in particular on the plight of Afro-Cubans. I also intend to seek a visa to go to Cuba, so I can meet with political prisoners languishing in jail and visit churches, which are spheres independent of government control. I have on multiple occasions sought a visa, only to never have one granted. I say to the Cuban regime—if today marks a new day of openness, then prove it, and let one of your most consistent critics visit Cuba and have freedom of movement to meet with victims of the regime. And, finally, I will introduce legislation to make sure that human rights are not forgotten.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF
DR. DALE PATTERSON, PASTOR
OF EAST BRENT BAPTIST
CHURCH IN PENSACOLA, FLORIDA

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 12, 2015

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Dale Patterson, Pastor of East Brent Baptist Church, upon the occasion of his retirement after 33 years at East Brent Baptist Church in Pensacola, Florida, and for more than 50 years of ministry.

Pastor Patterson is a native of Sumrall, Mississippi, and he started his long and distinguished career in the ministry in Mississippi, where he served congregations in Hattiesburg, Mendenall, Shuqualak, and Picayune, while

also pursuing his education at Mississippi College, William Carey College, Mississippi State University, and the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, where he received his master's and doctoral degrees.

In 1981, Pastor Patterson and his family moved to Northwest Florida, where he took the important position of Pastor of East Brent Baptist Church. During his three-plus decades in Northwest Florida, Pastor Patterson became a staple of the community, leading his ministry based on a simple plan to minister to those within the church, while also reaching out to spread the Gospel to all the members of the community in need of the Lord's guidance.

Under Pastor Patterson's leadership, and with the grace of God, East Brent Baptist Church has grown significantly over the past decades. Pastor Patterson supervised the purchase of property surrounding East Brent Baptist Church to expand the grounds and facilitate the construction of many new facilities, including the Family Life Center, the Worship Center, the G Building—used to house various events from Sunday School classes to GED classes and weddings—as well as the reutilization of existing property to provide recreational opportunities for children in the church community. In addition, during his tenure, East Brent Baptist launched Care Ministries, Inc. to help further spread the word of Jesus Christ far and wide.

There is no question that Pastor Patterson's record of leadership and accomplishments at East Brent Baptist are myriad; however, he has also served in important leadership positions throughout the state and in the larger Southern Baptist Community. During his time in ministry, Pastor Patterson has served as President of the Associational Pastor's Conference, Moderator of Association and has served on State Board of Missions for Florida Baptist Convention. Pastor Patterson has also held the chairmanship of various committees, including: the Evangelism Committee, Mission's Committee, Sunday School Committee, Program Committee, State Order of Business, State Nomination Committee, State Loans and Grants Committee, Budget and Allocations Committee, and the Health and Hope Committee.

Pastor Patterson's many accomplishments, however, are only a small window into the exceptional work that he has done serving the Lord and the congregation of East Brent Baptist Church, and his many successes in life are a testament to what can be achieved through faith and adherence to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, my wife Vicki and I wish Pastor Patterson, his wife Louise, and the entire Patterson family all the best as Pastor Patterson enjoys his retirement years spending time with his family and the many friends he has made throughout the Northwest Florida community.