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Reactions to President's Video Address to Cuban-Americans

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM FOR HAROLD ICKES
ALEXIS HERMAN

FROM: SUZANNA VALDEZ
DATE: JUNE 28, 1995
SUBJECT: VIDEO ON CUBA

As per your request for reactions to the President's video address to the Cuban-American community (released on June 27th), please find two attached letters from Carlos Portes.

Mr. Portes is a member of the President's Core Group, and attended the meeting held with Leon Panetta. Mr Portes is a DNC Managing Trustee who is well respected within the Cuban-American community as well as the Democratic Party. He is also a close friend of Congressman Bob Menendez.

In addition to the sentiments in these letters, he relayed the message that the Cuban-American community in New Jersey has also had a negative reaction to the President's video.

cc: Richard Nuccio

C.P. Portes

5041 Broadway • New York, N.Y. • 10034 • (212) 567-0001

June 27, 1995

VIA FAX

Mr. Richard A. Nuccio
Special Advisor to the President
and The Secretary of State for Cuba
United States Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Re: President Clinton's address
Cuban-American Community

Dear Rick:

I acknowledge receipt of your fax dated June 27, 1995 and faxed at what appears to be 7:44 AM, today.

This letter is written to express my total opposition to an ill conceived and poor political decision.

On June 2, 1995, I was requested to express my opinion regarding the concept of doing a video tape. At that time I indicated in writing that this idea of a video tape did not serve the Administration's interest.

It is absurd to advise the President to air a tape just when things were beginning to calm down, by airing this tape now the Administration has created a new speculation that the President is about to change his Cuba policy once again and is only doing this video to prepare the Cuban-American community for said new announcement.

In closing, I had been under the impression that subsequent to our meeting at the White House with Mr. Panetta, Mr. Ickes, Mr. Berger and yourself, we had agreed to consult with each other prior to any issue or actions that would affect our respective position within the Cuban-American community, this is not the case. In this instance and regrettably the damage is already done, I ask myself the following questions.

continued...

June 27, 1995

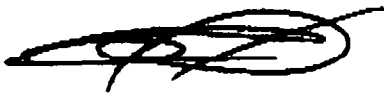
Page Two

1. What possible benefit does the President gain through this action?
2. If we did not do the video immediately after the President made the decision to return the rafters, why a month and a half later?
3. The Cuban-American community is very suspect of the Administration's Cuba policy, why now this video address.
4. Now that the demonstrations have subsided and the Administration's policy decision on Cuba not reversed, why rekindle or refuel the anger of the Cuban-American community towards the President?

Finally, the decision exposes the President to more criticism by the Cuban-American community, the Republican Party and to the Democrats who feel that the President owes no explanation on national policy decisions to a specific group.

Once again, we'll pray to God that these ill conceived, short term, myopic political decisions do not continue to weaken the President's re-election efforts.

Sincerely yours,



Carlos P. Portes

cc: Suzanna Valdez
Sandy Berger

C.P. Portes

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June 28, 1995

VIA FAX

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Special Advisor to the President
and The Secretary of State for Cuba
United States Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Re: President Clinton's video address
to the Cuban-American community
June 27, 1995 - 11:00 AM

Dear Rick:

Well, the Jury is in and the Verdict is out. Regrettably, as I predicted on June 2, 1995 and as reiterated on my memo to you June 27, 1995, these are the reports.

1. UNIVISION (TV): 6:00 PM NEWS AND 11:00 PM NEWS
"Due to the pressure created by the Cuban-American community President Clinton was forced to provide an apology:
2. JORGE MAS: Denounces the President's statement as:
"Rhetoric and empty words, lacking substance or actions".
3. TELEMUNDO: President Clinton caves in to pressure from Cuban groups, particularly the Cuban American National Foundation apologizing for his actions. Cuban-American leaders reject his explanation or apology and criticize his motives.
4. RADIO AND WRITTEN PRESS: The same response.

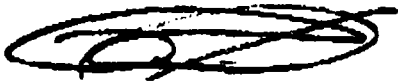
Finally, by stating that the President directly or indirectly supports Cardinal Ortega's position of reconciliation has further infuriated the Cuban-American community, which has denounced the Cardinal's position.

continued...

June 28, 1995
Page Two

Please, pretty please, LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE and don't stir up this issue anymore. The community has to accept the President's decision, no explanations are needed. the policy is clear, let's dedicate our efforts to other aspects of the development of the policy and its implementation.

Sincerely,
your friend

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'CP Portes', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Carlos P. Portes

cc: Morton H. Halperin
Sandy Berger
Suzanna Valdez



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

FAX COVER SHEET

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BUREAU OF INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, D.C.
FAX: 202-647-0344

Date:

June 28, 1995

TO:

FAX:

Alexis Herman
6-2983

FROM: RICHARD A. NUCCIO

SPECIAL ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT AND

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR CUBA

PHONE: 647-7024

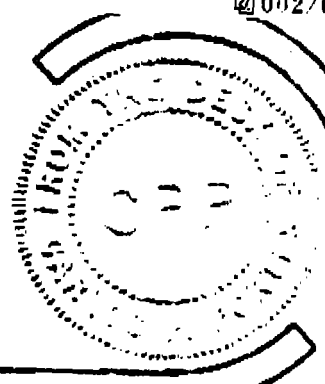
Number of pages including this cover:

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If there are problems with this fax transmission, please
call ARA 202-647-9227.

JUN 28 1995



C.P. Portes

5041 Broadway • New York, N.Y. • 10034 • [212] 567-0001

June 27, 1995

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continued...

June 27, 1995

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Once again, we'll pray to God that these ill conceived, short term, myopic political decisions do not continue to weaken the President's re-election efforts.

Sincerely yours,



Carlos P. Portes

cc: Suzanna Valdez
Sandy Berger
Morton H. Halperin

The Miami Herald

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 1995

CONTENTS CONTINUED

TV MARTI — MARI
RESEARCH

Clinton defends policy TV talk to Cubans reaffirms rafter ban

By JOHN LANTIGUA
Herald Staff Writer

After almost two months of intermittent demonstrations, a march on Washington and withering condemnations on Cuban radio, President Clinton took to television Tuesday to defend his new Cuba policy to Cuban Americans all over the nation.

In a prerecorded speech — aired at least in part on many South Florida stations — the president reemphasized his May 2 decision to close the United States to most Cuban rafters.

There was no new change in policy announced, but the unusual if not unprecedented satellite relay aimed at one ethnic community was a notable attempt to mend fences with those Cubans who oppose him.

"I know that many of you have questions about aspects of this policy," Clinton said. "Yet the simple truth is there is no realistic alternative."

In his address, Clinton stressed:

■ That the refugees remaining at the U.S. Navy Base at Guanta-

namo Bay, Cuba, since last summer's rafter crisis, mostly young men, are being allowed into the United States because "unrest and violence were likely this summer" at the camps if they weren't.

■ The would have led to a "new massive exodus of Cubans," many of whom would perish on rafts at sea, unless the borders were closed.

"We simply cannot admit all the Cubans who seek to come

PLEASE SEE CLINTON, 2B

Clinton takes to TV to explain

CLINTON, FROM 1B

here," he said. But he assured his listeners that those who face political persecution will not be turned back, and that those who have been returned are being monitored to assure they are not punished by Cuban security forces.

■ That new U.S. immigration quotas pertaining to Cuba — 20,000 a year for the next several years — will mean an increase in the number of Cubans allowed to immigrate. About 15,000 have been approved since September, several times more than in previous years, he said.

"Our new policy is working," he said.

Since May, 2, few Cubans have been intercepted at sea — 58 to be exact, one administration source said, compared to about 2,000 in May and June last year.

"Regularizing Cuban immigration also helps our efforts to promote a peaceful transition to

democracy on the island," the president said.

Clinton stressed that his policy is based on the Cuban Democracy Act, passed by Congress in 1992, and that he would maintain the 32-year-old economic embargo against Cuba as the act specifies.

But "if Cuba takes steps in the direction of meaningful changes, we are prepared to respond with our own carefully calibrated response," he said.

"We will continue to help Cuba's democratic opposition and the churches, human rights organizations and others seeking to exercise the political and economic rights that should belong to all Cubans."

In closing, he cited a recent visit to the United States by Cardinal Jaime Ortega of Havana, who called for "reconciliation and forgiveness" among Cubans, as has been seen in other Latin countries that have moved toward democracy in recent

years.

"Cuba will follow this course of its neighbors," he predicted.

The May 2 policy shift ended 35 years of entree to almost all Cuban refugees and was reached after negotiations with the Cuban government. It touched off demonstrations, including traffic blockages by a part of the Cuban community in Dade County. It also drew pledges from some Cuban leaders that Clinton would be badly hurt at the polls in 1996.

Clinton's televised speech came nine days after Attorney General Janet Reno asked to meet with South Florida Cuban leaders to try to mend fences but was rebuffed. But an administration spokesman said Clinton's address was recorded before Reno's trip to Miami for the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

"The policy has been spectacularly successful," said Richard Nuccio, the Clinton administration's Cuba policy coordinator

policy to Cuban Americans

who was a major contributor to the speech. "It is saving lives, and our supporters in the [Cuban] community had been urging the president to say so."

In Miami, Cuban-American activists picked and chose the parts of president's message they liked and condemned those they didn't.

The Cuban American National Foundation applauded Clinton's support for the embargo, but decried the return of rafters to Cuba.

"The president expresses confidence in the ability of U.S. diplomats to monitor the fate of forcibly returned refugees," the group said in a statement. "But CANF has already gathered compelling evidence that every group returned to Cuba thus far has experienced some retribution or abuse."

Nuccio insisted that of the 58 Cubans returned since May 2, the United States had reports of only two cases of mistreatment

by Cuban security forces and those cases were being investigated by U.S. diplomats.

Meanwhile, Miami human rights activists Ramon Cernuda, who has advocated lifting the embargo and opening a dialogue with the Castro government, said the president's insistence on maintaining the embargo "is not ideal." But he praised the speech

in general, saying he thought it opened the door to greater U.S. involvement with pro-democracy forces in Cuba.

"Also, when he talked about Cardinal Ortega, he talked about forgiveness," Cernuda said. "This must be the first time ever a president has used the word 'forgiveness' when speaking about Cuba."

Clinton defiende su nueva política

con Cuba

Declara que no hay alternativa que sea realista

Por CYNTHIA CORZO.
Redactora de El Nuevo Herald

Asegurando que quería tener el privilegio de dar la bienvenida a Cuba en la comunidad de naciones libres, el presidente Bill Clinton dijo el martes a los cubano-americanos que su nueva política era la mejor opción para traer la democracia a la isla.

En un mensaje dirigido a la comunidad cubana y transmitido el martes vía satélite desde Washington, D. C., Clinton dijo que la repatriación de los balse-ros interceptados en alta mar es la fórmula correcta para salvar vidas de cubanos y regular la inmigración descontrolada.

"La simple verdad es que no existe una alternativa realista. Simplemente no podemos admitir a todos los cubanos que buscan venir aquí", dijo Clinton en el mensaje de cinco minutos. "No podemos permitir que las personas arriesguen sus vidas en precarias balsas. Y no podemos condenar a miles de hombres jóvenes a vivir en el limbo en Guantánamo".

Clinton reiteró que su gobierno tiene un compromiso sólido con

VEA CLINTON, SA

TV MARTI - MIAMI
RESEARCH

34 PAGINAS

MIAMI, FLA., MIÉRCOLES 28 DE JUNIO DE 1995

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007/009

Clinton: Hay compromiso con un

CLINTON, DÍA

un "mejor futuro para la población cubana".

"Como presidente, confío en tener el privilegio de dar la bienvenida a una Cuba libre en la comunidad de naciones democráticas", dijo.

La política estadounidense, señaló, está basada en la Ley de la Democracia Cubana, también conocida como la Ley Torricelli, que busca recrudescer el embargo

económico y al mismo tiempo ampliar los contactos entre Estados Unidos y la sociedad civil que nace en la isla.

"Estados Unidos mantendrá el embargo contra el régimen cubano. Es una manera importante de promover el cambio en Cuba, y se mantendrá hasta que veamos amplias reformas políticas y económicas", dijo Clinton.

"Si Cuba da pasos en la dirección de cambios significativos, nosotros estamos preparados a re-

ponder con nuestra propia y cuidadosamente calibrada respuesta".

En el mensaje, grabado tres semanas antes y redactado hace un mes, Clinton indicó que la Ley de la Democracia Cubana establece ayuda a la población de la isla en su lucha por alcanzar la democracia y la estabilidad económica.

"Vamos a continuar ayudando a la oposición democrática en Cuba, las iglesias, las organizaciones de derechos humanos y otros que busquen ejercer los derechos políticos y económicos que deben pertenecer a todos los cubanos", dijo Clinton.

El mensaje de Clinton fue recibido con una mezcla de aceptación, escepticismo y disgusto por cubanos en Miami. Muchos se congregaron en comercios y centros de trabajo para escuchar la declaración, que se convirtió en un tema central de conversación.

"¿Dijo algo que no sepamos?", preguntó Tina Ortiz, manicurista de La Pequeña Habana. "Creí que iba a decir algo drástico —que las relaciones ya estaban hechas o que iba a invadir Cuba— pero nada".

Ramón Saúl Sánchez, dirigente de la Comisión Nacional Cubana, elogió parte del mensaje y criticó otra.

"Lo más interesante, lo único que tiene valor, es el respaldo a los movimientos de derechos humanos y de oposición en la isla", dijo Sánchez. "No dijo nada nuevo, sino que reafirmó su posición de no admitir a personas que salen buscando libertad".

La Fundación Nacional

Declaraciones del Presidente

Fragmentos de la declaración del presidente Bill Clinton a la comunidad cubana transmitida el martes desde Washington, D. C.

■ Hace poco más de un mes el pases para eliminar la peligrosa e ilegal corriente de cubanos que intentaban entrar a Estados Unidos por mar. Quiero informarles los resultados de esos pasos y explicar por qué creo que fue la decisión correcta. Pero primero déjenme aclarar que nuestro compromiso hacia un mejor futuro para la población cubana se mantiene tan fuerte como siempre.

■ La presión de nuestro embargo y la retirada del apoyo soviético han obligado a Cuba a adoptar algunas medidas de reforma económica en los últimos dos años. No habíamos visto eso antes. Pero el cambio económico se mantiene lento, testarudo y dolorosamente inadecuado. La negación de los derechos básicos y oportunidades ha llevado a decenas de miles de cubanos a la desesperación.

■ Las acciones que tomamos concernientes al serio problema humanitario en Guantánamo impiden la inmigración ilegal y peligrosa, protegen a los refugiados políticos y expanden las oportunidades para la entrada legal desde Cuba. Sirven a nuestros intereses nacionales.

■ A través de las Américas, las dictaduras han dado paso a la democracia. Están siguiendo el camino de reconciliación y perdón, predicado por el primer cardenal de Cuba, Jaime Ortega Alamino. Cuba seguirá el curso de sus vecinos.

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mejor futuro para el pueblo cubano

Cubano Americana señaló que el mensaje de Clinton no llega a remendar la confianza perdida y las heridas abiertas por la nueva política inmigratoria.

"Mientras encontramos aliento en la reafirmación del presidente de su apoyo al embargo contra el brutal régimen de Fidel Castro y a favor de una Cuba libre y democrática, también queda claro que él ha sido colocado en la no envidiable posición de tener que defender una política moralmente indefendible", citó un comunicado de prensa de la Fundación.

"Los obstáculos a la democratización de Cuba, a eliminar caóticos éxodos masivos, a la reconciliación y el perdón entre los cubanos son simples: Fidel y Raúl Castro. Un mejor futuro para Cuba espera sólo por su partida del poder", agregó.

En el restaurante Versailles, los comerciales discutieron minuciosamente la declaración presidencial. Algunos opinaron que no significaba nada, otros dijeron que lo que busca Clinton es justificar sus acciones. Pocos aplaudieron.

"Dice que la política está bien, veremos qué pasa", dijo Victor Osaba, que llegó de Cuba por mar en 1960. "Quiere disculparse con los cubanos por haber devuelto tantos para Cuba".

Luis Alberto Hernández aprobó la posición de Clinton con respecto al embargo pero no acerca de la repatriación de los balseros.

"Debido al sistema político en Cuba arriesgan sus vidas y luego los devuelven allí", dijo Hernández, en la bocados de croquetas

con galletitas. "Eso de que no les hacen nada es una mentira. Fidel Castro hace lo que le da la gana".

Desde que se anunció el cambio de política el 2 de mayo, unos 60 balseros interceptados en alta mar han sido repatriados a Cuba. Sólo unos cuantos han recibido permiso para ingresar a Estados Unidos.

Funcionarios del Departamento de Estado sostienen que la Sección de Intereses de Estados Unidos en La Habana ha seguido de cerca la situación de los deportados, los cuales no han sufrido represalias. De acuerdo con los funcionarios, el gobierno cubano ha cumplido su promesa.

"Hemos podido vigilar las condiciones", dijo Richard Nuccio, asesor especial de asuntos cubanos en la Casa Blanca. "Está funcionando".

Partidarios de una transición negociada y pacífica hacia la

democracia en Cuba recibieron con júbilo las palabras de Clinton. Según ellos, de cierto modo éstas subrayan la posición que ellos mantienen.

"Marca un cambio en el espíritu de la política exterior hacia Cuba. Va de un espíritu punitivo y de un intento aislacionista a uno positivo, encaminado a facilitar una transición pacífica a la democracia en Cuba", dijo Ramón Cernuda, representante en el exterior de la Coordinadora de Organizaciones de Derechos Humanos (CODEHU).

Cernuda comentó que la repatriación de los balseros ha contribuido a un cambio en el pensamiento de los cubanos. Ahora, explicó no piensan primero en abandonar el país. "Piensan más en la búsqueda de soluciones internas a los problemas dentro del país", dijo Cernuda.

Cámara aprueba reducción de ayuda a Rusia si colabora en Juraguá, Cuba

Washington —(EFE)— La Cámara de Representantes aprobó el martes una medida para reducir en \$15 millones la ayuda económica a Rusia por su participación en el proyecto para terminar la construcción de la planta nuclear de Juraguá, en la provincia de Cienfuegos, Cuba.

La iniciativa fue presentada por la representante republicana de Florida, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. Apoyada por más de 120 congresistas de ambos partidos, la legisladora envió hace dos semanas una carta al presidente Bill Clinton, pidiendo la intervención de la Casa Blanca para desalentar la participación rusa en el plan de Juraguá.

Ellos consideran que esa central sería un "riesgo para la seguridad" de Estados Unidos y una amenaza para las naciones del Caribe, Centroamérica, Colombia y Venezuela, en caso de un accidente nuclear por el tipo de tecnología que ya está instalada en una de sus dos turbinas, similar a la utilizada en la central de Chernobyl, Ucrania, que en 1986 causó un pavoroso desastre nuclear.

TV MARTI - MIAMI
RESEARCH