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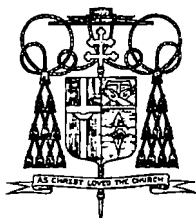
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OF DENVER

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December 16, 1997

President William J. Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the Archdiocese of Denver, I am writing to request that you authorize the resumption of direct humanitarian flights to Cuba. Recognizing the need to impose some kind of sanctions against the Cuban government for the downing of U.S. planes this past February, I would also ask you to take into consideration separating out those sanctions which may cause unnecessary suffering to the poor from those which would create a hardship for the government. The suspension of direct humanitarian flights has had nothing but harmful consequences for both the authorized providers of such aid and the intended recipients, with relatively few consequences to the Cuban government.

The Catholic Church of Cuba has a well-developed aid agency, Caritas, with offices in every diocese in the country. Caritas has been able to channel medicines and materials from their U.S. counterpart agency, Catholic Relief Services, where they are most needed. Despite the fact that the cost of shipments has quadrupled, CRS has continued to send donations to Cuba through other countries. However, the immediate impact has been that CRS is able to provide less assistance to the poor and needy in Cuba. The added financial burden has also seriously stretched the ability of Catholic Relief Services to respond to urgent crises in other countries around the world.

This relief program has been fully authorized and encouraged by our government. It has been seriously burdened by these sanctions, so I once again appeal to you to lift the ban on these humanitarian flights. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.
Archbishop of Denver

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