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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 14, 1994

Statement by the Press Secretary

The President today announced a series of immediate humanitarian steps relating to Cubans in safehavens in Guantanamo and Panama.

First, the Attorney General will parole into the United States chronically ill persons and their caregivers who cannot be adequately cared for in the camps.

Second, she will parole into the United States unaccompanied young children now in the safe havens.

Third, she will parole into the United States migrants over 70.

In each case, we will ensure that those paroled in have appropriate sponsors.

Fourth, the Administration will conduct a review of the status of all children in the camps.

Fifth, we have launched a major effort to persuade other countries to accept some of the Cuban migrants.

Sixth, although much remains to be done, significant improvements have been made in the camps including providing better food, inaugurating mail and telephone service, and improving sanitary conditions. Attached is a fact sheet showing the time table for improvements.

The administration shares the deep concern of the Cuban-American community for the well-being of all the Cubans in safehavens. The root cause of these problems is in Cuba. The administration is dedicated to pursuing policies which will lead to a rapid and peaceful movement to democracy in Cuba.

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FACT SHEET IMPROVEMENTS AT GUANTANAMO

There are five tiers of improvement categories:

- I. **Infrastructure/facilities**
- II. **Food/clothing/medicine**
- III. **Personal communications**
- IV. **Education/recreation**
- V. **Other/administrative**

INFRASTRUCTURE/FACILITIES

Water: Running water is now available in all Haitian and Cuban camps. Water has always been available for consumption, but construction of the last piping system for running water was completed on 9 October. Each migrant is provided safe drinking water and sufficient water for daily hygiene.

Tents: All migrants have shelter, but dust is still a problem in the Cuban camps. As some migrants leave, camp officials can close some camps and build hard stands for other tents going up. The Haitian camps are located on hard surfaces (runways) and dust is not as bad in this location. Many steps have been taken to reduce dust. One measure that has had some success is the spreading of a soil stabilizer, another measure has been to plant surrounding ground cover. These are temporary measures until all tents are hardened to include concrete or wooden flooring. Projected completion of the hardening project is 15 November.

Sanitation facilities: There is currently one latrine for every 30 migrants. Cleaning is now done once every three days; by October 24 cleaning will be done once every day. Plans are now being developed to have permanent latrine facilities. The construction of sewer piping systems is slowed by the small geographic area and by

limited treatment capacity. Follow-on plans include expanding existing treatment facilities.

Camp areas: Each camp has an area for recreation. Half-court basketball and volleyball courts are being constructed, projected completion 24 October. Additionally, baseball diamonds and soccer fields are being built for common use.

FOOD/CLOTHING/MEDICINE

Milk: A preliminary supply of milk has been provided along with specialized milk for babies with digestive problems (*Infamil* with Iron, *Similac*). Follow-on supplies will be provided and sustained.

Food: Every effort is being made to develop a varied menu. There are now enough food stocks to allow the announcement of 2-day menus. Two new kitchens have been built. Each migrant receives 2 hot meals and one MRE (Meal Ready to Eat) per day. Migrants take part in food preparation and as a result of greater food stocks the resulting menu has become more Cuban and Haitian friendly. Examples include the Haitian fare *Paella* and a Cuban recipe for *Arroz con Pollo* on Sundays.

Clothing: Thanks to the efforts of many government and non-government organizations each migrant has spare clothing and shoes and ball-type caps for those that need sun-protection during the day. Over 35,000 pairs of shoes were purchased for the migrants and all have been distributed.

Medicine: There have been no outbreaks/illnesses of any serious nature within the last month. Hygiene is improving daily and preventive care is being developed by camp doctors. There are estimates of up to 250 pregnant women in the camps. Pre-natal and post-natal facilities are being built to assist new and expectant mothers with the care and feeding of their children. Special milk/formula and other infant needs are being stocked.

PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

Mail: Limited postcard service has been available through the American Red Cross. A DoD/US Postal Service team traveled to Guantanamo last week to arrange regular letter service to begin in October. Initial service will include only

letter/post card mail. By early November details of package delivery will be announced.

Phones: 95 phone lines have been established solely for use by Cuban and Haitian migrants. All phones are operational.

EDUCATION/RECREATION

Educational facilities/supplies: Primary education is currently provided through the 6th grade level. Supplies for crayons, notebooks and school books in Spanish and Creole were provided with DoD funds.

Newspaper Deliveries: Daily newspaper delivery service should begin on 20 Oct.

Radio Service: There were over 1000 radios supplied to the migrants in September and more are being scheduled for delivery. Additionally, the radios are able to pick up *Radio Marti* during the evening hours and DoD has been producing additional broadcasts through a temporary station called *Radio Esperanza*.

Other Media: Camp leaders are also given the opportunity to produce their own print media for the camps.

Recreation: The Cubans have asked for basketball areas and 6 are now being constructed, expected completion is 20 October 94. Each camp will have a recreation tent by 12 Oct. Other facilities are being planned and constructed that include baseball diamonds and soccer fields, as previously mentioned. Special activities for children are also being implemented. Currently, there is a program to transport children and their parents or their caregivers to playground areas around the base. More playground facilities are being built within the family camps for greater access. Recreation tents are being stocked with supplies of games, cards, dominos and other related materials.

OTHER

Administrative: Mr. Guarione Diaz, a Cuban-American and President of the Cuban American National Council, was appointed Ombudsman to help assist in the U.S. Government's effort to improve camp conditions. He has been instrumental in coordinating relief activities and supplies from the Cuban-American population.

Camp Leadership for the Migrants: Each camp has selected a small group of camp leaders and representatives to voice their concerns over the conditions in the camps. The leaders' recommendations are followed as much as practical. Camp leaders hold regular meetings with migrants in their areas and during these forums give updates from governmental agencies.

Cigarettes: Small shipments of cigarettes have been arriving in Guantanamo during the last two weeks. Other priority items such as milk for babies, clothes, shoes and other food stocks were delivered first. The Administration is working with the Cuban-American community in Miami for a large donation of cigarettes which DOD will arrange to have transported and distributed in the camps.

Camp Visits: Guantanamo has been visited by the Archdiocese of Miami, scores of press, US government officials, non-governmental organizations, and many others in an effort to assist migrants. Information will be released in November about how private citizens can arrange visits to Guantanamo. The first priority is to get those assigned duty to help the migrants.

Donated Goods/Services: The US Government welcomes all donations of goods and services for the migrants in Guantanamo. The State Department has contracted the services of World Relief to accept and distribute donated goods to the migrants.

To Donate Goods, contact: Peggy Gilbert, World Relief, (914) 268-4135.

To Donate Services, contact: Mr. Guarione Diaz, Ombudsman for Cubans at the Camps, (305) 642-3484.

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
(New Orleans, LA)

For Immediate Release

September 9, 1994

STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

The United States and Cuba have reached agreement in the migration talks in New York. This agreement requires the Government of Cuba to take effective measures to prevent unsafe departure of Cuban citizens. In addition, the Cuban government agreed that arrangements for those Cubans who have recently left and wish to return can be made through diplomatic channels.

The United States has agreed to admit at least 20,000 Cubans from Cuba per year under existing authorities. Additionally, the U.S. estimates that approximately 6,000 Cubans currently on the visa waiting list will be admitted into the U.S.

The President, who directed that these talks on migration issues take place, is pleased at their outcome. "This agreement, when carried out, will help insure that the massive flow of dangerous and illegal migration will be replaced by a safer, legal and more orderly process," the President said.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

August 20, 1994

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Over the past two weeks, the government of Cuba has taken actions to provoke a mass exodus to the United States. These actions have placed thousands of Cuban citizens at risk in small boats and rafts, and have had a direct impact on our national interest.

I want to thank the Cuban American community for their courageous restraint in not taking their own boats to Cuba to fuel the exodus, and thank the officials of Florida -- Governor Chiles, the congressional delegation, the people from Dade County and others -- who have worked so closely with us.

Yesterday, I announced steps to counter Castro's efforts to export his problems by provoking an exodus. Today, I'm announcing additional actions consistent with the Cuban Democracy Act to limit the ability of the Cuban government to accumulate foreign exchange and to enable us to expand the flow of information to the Cuban people.

Specifically, cash remittances to Cuba will no longer be permitted. Family gift packages will be limited to medicine, food and strictly humanitarian items; and transfer of funds for humanitarian purposes will require specific authorization of the Treasury Department. Second, the only charter flights permitted between Miami and Havana will be those clearly designed to accommodate legal immigrants and travel consistent with the purposes of the Cuban Democracy Act. Third, the United States will use all appropriate means to increase and amplify its international broadcasts to Cuba.

The solution to Cuba's many problems is not an uncontrolled exodus, it is freedom and democracy for Cuba.

The United States will continue to bring before the United Nations and other international organizations evidence of human rights abuses, such as the sinking of the tugboat "13th of March." Meanwhile we will pursue this course with vigor and determination.

END

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

August 19, 1994

PRESS CONFERENCE BY THE PRESIDENT

The East Room

1:30 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon. In recent weeks the Castro regime has encouraged Cubans to take to the sea in unsafe vessels to escape their nation's internal problems. In so doing, it has risked the lives of thousands of Cubans, and several have already died in their efforts to leave.

This action is a cold-blooded attempt to maintain the Castro grip on Cuba, and to divert attention from his failed communist policies. He has tried to export to the United States the political and economic crises he has created in Cuba, in defiance of the democratic tide flowing throughout this region.

Let me be clear: The Cuban government will not succeed in any attempt to dictate American immigration policy. The United States will do everything within its power to ensure that Cuban lives are saved and that the current outflow of refugees is stopped.

Today, I have ordered that illegal refugees from Cuba will not be allowed to enter the United States. Refugees rescued at sea will be taken to our naval base at Guantanamo, while we explore the possibility of other safe havens within the region.

To enforce this policy, I have directed the Coast Guard to continue its expanded effort to stop any boat illegally attempting to bring Cubans to the United States. The United States will detain, investigate and, if necessary, prosecute Americans who take to the sea to pick up Cubans. Vessels used in such activities will be seized.

I want to compliment the Coast Guard and the Immigration and Naturalization Service for their efforts. And I want to thank Florida's officials, including Governor Chiles and the Florida congressional delegation, for their help in protecting and saving the lives of Cubans who seek to escape the regime.

Now I'd like to speak just for a moment about the crime bill. In the last week I have fought hard to put this crime bill back on track. After extensive talks with members of both parties, I have indicated my support for strengthening the provisions that require sexual predators to report to the police and make sure their communities are notified of their presence. And I support cutting overall spending in the bill by 10 percent.

These cuts will ensure that every dollar authorized in the bill will actually be paid for -- not with new taxes, and not by diverting dollars from other needed programs, but, as I have always insisted, with the savings we will gain from reducing the size of the federal government by over a quarter of a million people over the next six years, to its lowest size in over 30 years since President Kennedy was here. And all these historic savings will go back to the American people to make their streets and their homes, their schools safer.

MORE

I have insisted that we keep the most profoundly important elements of the crime bill -- to keep it tough by putting 100,000 police officers on the street, building more prisons, putting violent criminals away for good, by making three strikes you're out the law of the land, and by other stronger provisions on sentencing. And we're going to keep it smart, with the sensible crime prevention programs that steer our kids away from drugs and from drugs and gangs, and give them things to say yes to.

The crime bill must ban handguns for juveniles and take assault weapons off our streets. Even though we've come under intense pressure from forces that will apparently say anything to take the assault weapons out of the bill, I have refused to do so.

Let's keep in mind what this crime bill is all about. It's about removing fear from our streets, our schools, and our home. Innocent Americans should not have to fear being preyed upon, as so many do today. Innocent children should not have to fear losing their childhoods, as so many do today. We owe it to the American people that do the work and pay the bills in this country to make sure that people who commit crimes get caught, that those who are guilty get convicted, and those who are convicted serve their time. We also owe it to them to do whatever we can to prevent crime in the first place. That's what the police and the prevention programs are all about.

That's why it is so important, and why I have worked so hard to make sure that do not turn this crime issue into yet another Washington partisan issue. This is a grass-roots mainstream nonpartisan issue, and so it should remain. It must be an American crime bill. We have worked hard on it, and I call upon Congress to pass it without delay.

Helen.

Q Mr. President, on behalf of all the press corps, we want to wish you a happy birthday. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

Q And now -- (laughter) -- (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you could all do a lot to make it happy. (Laughter.) That is not a guilt trip; feel no pressure. (Laughter.) Thank you.

Q Mr. President, in the last 35 years we've had an embargo against Cuba and increased the economic burden on them. I understand that's why the refugees are coming in. What is the problem with taking a few small, albeit brave, steps to negotiate a possible movement toward democracy with Cuba? We've dealt with many communist countries through the last 35 years, and we're dealing with them now.

THE PRESIDENT: There aren't many left. I support the embargo, and I support the Cuban Democracy Act, which was passed in 1992. And I do not believe we should change our policy there.

The fundamental problem is, democracy is sweeping the world, democracy and freedom are sweeping our hemisphere. In the Caribbean alone, and in Central and South America and all of this region, there are only two countries now not democratically governed with open societies and open economies. The real problem is the stubborn refusal of the Castro regime to have an open democracy and an open economy. And I think the policies we are following will hasten the day when that occurs, and we follow those policies because we believe they are the ones most likely to promote democracy and ultimately prosperity for the people of Cuba.

Q But that's not true of North Korea or China, and you're dealing with them every day.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the circumstances are different and I think our policy is correct.

Q Mr. President, recognizing that you're slowing down the process, do people fleeing Cuba still get automatic entry to the United States as political refugees if they're not criminals or ill?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q You're ending --

THE PRESIDENT: The people leaving Cuba will not be permitted to come to the United States; they will be sent to safe havens.

Q The people who reach here.

THE PRESIDENT: The people who reach here will be apprehended and will be treated like others. They will be -- their cases will be reviewed. Those who qualify can stay, and those who don't will not be permitted to. They will be now treated like others who come here.

Brit.

Q Mr. President, under the law it has always been clear that the Cuban refugees had a certain priority on staying here. The policy, of course, has been that anybody who got here got to stay. What restraints are you operating under in terms of the law in changing this policy? Or are you likely, sir, to be sued over this?

THE PRESIDENT: No -- let me -- I'm glad you asked that question in contradistinction to the one you asked right afterward. The Cuban Adjustment Act will continue to be the law of the land. But we are doing our best within that -- we will detain the Cubans who come here now, they will not simply be released into the population at large. And we will review all their cases in light of the applicable law, including the Cuban Adjustment Act.

Q Do you know how long it will take, how long --

THE PRESIDENT: It depends on how many there are, of course. And we don't know.

Andrea.

Q Can you give us some more details? Are these people going to be taken to Guantanamo? What kind of strain might this place on our naval forces, the Coast Guard? Already we're being told that drug interdiction is being cut back. And can you respond to criticism already from Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich? In particular, Mr. Gingrich said that your new policy is appalling, it's an example of mixed morality, and that he thinks it is illegal under the act.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first, let me answer the factual questions. The refugees, those who are fleeing, will be taken first to Guantanamo where we will seek safe havens for them. That is plainly not illegal under international law, nor do we believe it is illegal under the Cuban Adjustment Act.

Secondly, as to whether it is immoral, I just would say it is my belief that the American people and that the Cuban American people and the people of Florida -- but the people of the entire United States -- do not want to see another Mariel Boatlift. They do

not want to see Cuba dictate our immigration policy. They do not want to see Mr. Castro able to export his political and economic problems to the United States.

Now, that is what is plainly being set up. We have gone through that once. We had 120,000 people sent to this country as a deliberate attempt -- not because they themselves initially wanted to flee; they were encouraged to flee, they were pushed out; we had jails open, we had mental hospitals open -- all in an attempt to export all the problems of Cuba to the United States. We tried it that way once. It was wrong then, and it's wrong now. And I'm not going to let it happen again.

Q Can you respond to that other question?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that's my answer to them.

Q What about the naval forces, the Coast Guard? Are they up to this -- will it affect drug --

THE PRESIDENT: I think the Coast Guard is plainly up to it. We may have to have a little more Navy support. I met with the Secretary of Defense this morning; we discussed it at length. He is confident that we can do what we have to do without undermining our fundamental mission.

Q President Clinton, previously you said that the crime bill was something that you supported, that you wanted to sign as it was. Now you're saying you can take 10 percent out of it. Why shouldn't the American people believe that there's still a lot of fat that can come out of it?

THE PRESIDENT: First of all, anytime you start a -- I've never seen a bill that started new programs that you couldn't cut some and maintain its fundamental integrity. I said that crime bill was a strong and good bill as it was, and it was a strong and good bill.

But one of the things that happened in conference that has, I think, been largely overlooked is that in an attempt to get as much money as possible for police officers and law enforcement and for prisons and for border patrol, funds were appropriated or were authorized in the crime bill that came out of conference in an amount greater than we could provide in the trust fund.

Keep in mind, the great beauty of this crime bill is it's the first major program in American history that's being financed entirely by reducing the size of the federal bureaucracy and taking all the savings from the federal government and putting it in a trust fund to help grass-roots Americans get better control over their own lives.

The practical impact of what we are doing by cutting 10 percent of this will be to be able to put everything that's left into the trust fund. So, in terms of real dollars, I believe there will be more money actually appropriated and spent for tough law enforcement and for police officers. And I believe that all the fundamental important things in the prevention strategy will be maintained at a very high level, and dramatically higher than now.

The principles of the bill are intact -- it's the biggest increase in police in the history of the country; it's the toughest increase in punishment in the history of the country; it's the biggest increase in prevention programs in the history of the country.

I am not a member of the Congress. They have to work out all the details. If they produced this bill out of the

conference, I would have happily supported this, as I did the other one.

Q Wouldn't you just be getting into politics then, by accepting the original bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Now, that's one of those questions designed to spoil your birthday. (Laughter.) Because it's something else -- it's designed to confuse the American people about what really goes on up here.

The President is not a member of the Congress. The Congress made a decision that they had a bill that they all wanted. They accommodated the interests as best they could. It met all my fundamental criteria -- assault weapons ban, ban on handgun ownership by kids, tougher penalties, longer imprisonment, more prevention. So does this bill. This bill has the added virtue of being able to be fully funded in the trust fund that we are creating by reducing the federal government to its lowest size in 30 years.

And if, in fact -- let me just say, Rita -- if, in fact -- there has been no conference. If in fact, the conference proceeds along the lines that I generally believe it's going on, and it has the added virtue of some strengthening of the language which was put in involving this whole sexual predator issue -- so, in that sense, I think it is a fine bill that meets all the criteria, and it doesn't just gut the prevention programs, which I was determined to see not happen.

Q Mr. President, you say that you're not going to allow Fidel Castro to dictate U.S. immigration policy. But hasn't he just done that by forcing you to reverse three decades of a policy? And secondly, what do you say to Cuban Americans, especially in Florida, who feel betrayed by this change in policy?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I believe that most Cuban Americans want us to be very firm. The Cuban Americans that I know, without regard to their party, supported the Cuba Democracy Act, and they remember how awful it was for the United States when the Mariel Boatlift occurred. They remembered what it did in this country and how -- the feelings it engendered in this country. And I do not believe they want another Mariel Boatlift. And I do not believe we can afford to do that. And so my own view is that most Cuban Americans will support what we're trying to do and wish us to be firm.

I would remind you that the Attorney General, who is in charge or oversees the INS, who has done a lot of work on this and who will have a press conference, I think, when I finish to answer some of the details of this policy was the prosecuting attorney in Dade County. I talked to the governor last night at some length about this -- of Florida.

I think my own feeling is -- and I've talked to Cuban Americans, of course, exhaustively for years now, and we've been in touch with them and with the Florida congressional delegation. I believe this policy will have broad support. I will be surprised if it does not have broad support.

Q By telling Cubans basically to stay home and at least temporarily to stomach conditions there, does that make it incumbent on you to be more active in seeking to oust Castro?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, what we are telling Cubans is that we have a provision for their coming to the United States through in-country processing. And at least as of this date, we have no evidence that the Castro has done anything to discourage Cubans from coming to the in-country processing, applying for the visas if

they're eligible to come here, and getting them. That's what we're saying to them. That is, we do not have any evidence that would justify believing that that that process won't work in Cuba as it has in other places. And, indeed, the Castro government has encouraged Cubans to go down and apply to come here. But we don't object to that, that's the policy we have everywhere and that's the policy we should have there.

Q But doesn't that make it incumbent on you to unilaterally or multinationally press for the ouster of Castro in some way -- military, economic -- whatever?

THE PRESIDENT: The United States has done more than any other country to try to bring an end to the Castro government. We have done it through the Cuban Democracy Act. We have done it through the embargo. We have worked hard, often laboring almost alone, to that end. And we will continue to do that by whatever reasonable means are available to us.

Q Mr. President, one of your fellow Democrats in the Senate, Sam Nunn of Georgia, said yesterday that it would be months if not years before a health care reform bill is produced. And the Congressional Budget Office said that a possible moderate compromise didn't cost out. There's a growing feeling in Washington that this health care crusade is hopelessly bogged down in Congress at this point. What is your view of the situation?

THE PRESIDENT: That they should keep working at it; that if we don't move there's a chance that it won't happen at all. You know, the congressional timetable is often different from the American timetable. I mean, it took seven years to pass the Brady Bill and seven years to pass family leave.

But for 60 years people have acknowledged that not covering all Americans and having no system for dealing with the explosive costs and the inequalities in the health care system were a problem. They have reached a significant crisis stage here, with five million more Americans losing their health insurance in the last five years alone, with the costs exploding in the last 12 years. And I believe that the time has come to deal with this.

Now, Senator Nunn simply observed what I think is clearly a fact, which is that in the Senate there is unlimited debate and you can have unlimited amendments. But a lot of these issues do need to be worked through.

I think the comments Senator Kennedy and Senator Mitchell made today about the fact that this bipartisan group was at least attempting to work with them, and in the process of so attempting, finding out how hard it is -- it's easy to stand on the sideline and lob brick bats at these efforts, and quite another thing to produce your own effort. But their comment made me believe that there is still a chance that people will work together and resolve this. So I would say to them, keep working, keep working at it, because if you delay, you may lose it altogether.

Q Well, at this point, would you take something less than what Mitchell or Gephardt has proposed just to keep the process moving, since, as you say, if we don't get it now, we probably --

THE PRESIDENT: I think that, for one thing, that's not so easy to do, because as we've also seen from the studies of the Catholic Health Association and others, the so-called "something less" approach often does more harm than good; that when you just try to patchwork this, often you lead to more people without insurance and higher insurance rates.

What I would say to you is, give the process time to unfold. I know for a you it's been going on a long time, since we first began to debate this a year and a half ago. I think for the American people, it's almost like the baseball season -- the pennant's just begun. I hope we can have the pennant in the other one, too, and the series. But I think we need to let this thing unfold a little more; I wouldn't prejudge it yet.

Q Mr. President, back to the crime bill. If the approach you're offering now, the changes you're offering now, does not produce enough votes to pass the bill, will you under any circumstances agree to sever the assault weapon ban for a separate vote in the House and the Senate?

THE PRESIDENT: I won't agree to that because I think it's a mistake. And let me say -- I don't want to overly comment on it, but let me try to describe what the problem is. The bill has already passed the House. But in the Senate, as you know, we could have 55, 56, 57, 59 votes for that bill in the Senate and it could still be filibustered. And we should not permit that to happen.

I also believe that there is a chance that this whole process in the last few days -- we may look back on this in a year or so and think that this was the beginning of an effort, again, in other areas to work in good faith across party lines. I have shown my good faith. I have taken the risk that all people take when they talk to people who are opposed to them of being asked the questions like Rita asked me. But in this town it won't work if we have American problems unless we try to reach out across party lines. A lot of these issues don't work like that.

So if we can work through this in good faith, my view is that we'll maybe be setting the stage to have more things like NAFTA, and the Brady Bill, and the education bills, and then this one where we can work together. So I don't believe we will have to do that, and I am against doing it. I think it would be a real error.

Q Mr. President, Fidel Castro has been very high on the list of American demonology because he is a national security threat. I think of the Cuban missile crisis; he would provide a base for the Soviet Union. That's all ended now. Do you foresee a form of government, democratic government, in Havana with free elections that includes Fidel Castro? Or is it a case that Castro must go before there's any normalization?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, in any democracy it's up to the people to make their own decisions. The United States does not pick leaders or delete leaders for other countries; we let people make their own decisions.

I don't want to get into that. I think what we need is a movement toward democracy and a free economy.

Q Mr. President, when the legal defense fund was set up for you to handle the costs of defending against the litigation, Lloyd Cutler said he was intervening in that as Presidential Counsel because it threatened the presidency, these tremendous costs. Since then, the fund has decided it cannot legally solicit, leaving no explanation since then of, a, how will the money be raised to pay these bills and, two, in lieu of enough funding to do it, what other options do you have to protect the presidency from the threat that he was talking about?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I don't know the answer to that. I'll just have to let you ask Mr. Cutler that. I'm just trying to stay away from that whole issue of the fund, and I can't answer those questions.

Q Mr. President, I hate to ask you one of those questions that might spoil your birthday again, but in light of problems that you have been having up on Capitol Hill, many people are wondering if changing your communication strategy, shuffling your staff might not be really addressing the problem; that perhaps I was wondering if you've thought about this -- that as a President elected with 43 percent, you may be trying to do too much too fast. And Democrats on Capitol Hill may be trying to take too much of a partisan advantage of having control of the entire government and perhaps exceeding your mandate.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first, I don't want the Democrats to take partisan advantage, I just want us to get what's necessary for the country done. I do not believe the country believes that we should sit still up here.

And for all your talk about trouble, let me remind you that every objective survey says that in 1993 this administration got more support from Congress than any administration since World War II except President Eisenhower in 1953, when he had a less ambitious agenda, and President Johnson in 1965, when he had a bigger mandate and more support from the Congress. So I think we're doing quite well with the Congress if you look at it in any kind of historic pattern.

Now, I realize the fights and the conflicts and the delays endure more than the achievements. But we reversed Reaganomics. We passed an economic program that was part of a strategy that has given us three years of deficit reduction for the first time since Truman, over four million jobs. We have the most advances in trade than we've had in a generation in the last year and a half. This economic program is working. We broke seven years of gridlock with the Brady Bill. We passed NAFTA, which was deadlier than a doornail when I became President; we revived it and passed it.

So I believe this Congress is capable of working together, often on a bipartisan basis. And they still have some great opportunities here. They have the crime bill; the campaign finance reform bill; the lobby reform bill; the bill that passed the House last week that has not yet passed the Senate to require the Congress to live under the laws it imposes on the American people, which I think is a very good bill; and, of course, the health care challenge.

But I believe what I have to do is to keep trying to change things. Anytime you try to provoke as much change as I have, you're going to have resistance. And you will be criticized. Is it more difficult that I had 43 percent of the vote? Perhaps it is. But I think you can make another argument, which was that 62 percent of the American people voted for fundamental change in the things that we were doing and in the way government works.

If anything, I would say that I've been most disappointed, looking back, not so much in my inability to get things done, because once people look at the list it's a very long and impressive list, but I haven't been as successful in changing the way it works -- that is, in trying to get the Democrats and Republicans to reach across to each other in good faith and work through these things. That's why I think this crime bill could be an important thing. It could be a way of people in both parties saying, we're putting you first for a change, not ourselves.

Q Mr. President, the Federal Reserve raised interest rates again this week. Some Democrats are saying that it could cause an economic slowdown. How many more rate increases will you take before you also criticize the Fed?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, when the Federal Reserve raised rates this week, the Chairman, Mr. Greenspan, said that he thought that this would be sufficient for a time. The truth is that our economic strategy has produced more rapid growth than they thought it would and that we thought it would. We are even doing better than we thought we would. We have got over four million jobs already in the last year and a half, and we've got rapid growth in the economy, dramatic new investments in the private sector. So they're worried about inflation. When it is apparent to me that the drag on the economy will be more about slowing the economy down than stopping inflation, I will do what I can to influence that policy. But I think my policy of letting them do their job and having me do mine has worked out rather well.

And I would remind you that from the time we announced -- let me just go back through a little history here -- from the time we announced that we would have a serious assault on the deficit after the election in November, from that day for a very long time thereafter, we had dramatic drops in interest rates which fueled last year's expansion. So I think that we have to recognize that the Fed did respond to the efforts we made, and what they're responding to now is a robust and growing economy. Of course, it could be slowed down too much, but we don't have any evidence at this time that that has, in fact, occurred.

Q Mr. President, happy birthday. Next Sunday, Mexico is going to have presidential elections. Can you give us your assessment, what do you think, what do you expect, and what is going to be the impact in the relations of Mexico and the United States? Do you expect continuity?

THE PRESIDENT: I expect the elections to be free, open and fair. And I expect them to produce a result which will be accepted by the people of Mexico. And I expect the United States to continue its deepening friendship with Mexico. I think that our relationships are growing. I think, in spite of the political changes and the economic difficulties of Mexico in the last two years, we have had great success. I think NAFTA clearly was a great success, if you look at the economic benefits to the United States and what has happened. So I'm looking forward very optimistically to the future with Mexico.

Q Mr. President, on the Middle East, sir, progress continues between Israel and the Palestinians, but there is still violence. But I wondered, sir, if you have an assessment on that. What -- is there any update on the Syrian front? Have you heard recently from President Assad? And also, has any progress been made in countering worldwide terrorism?

THE PRESIDENT: You've asked me a lot of questions there. Let me try to answer them all. I believe we are still on a path of steady progress in the hope of achieving an agreement that resolves the differences between Israel and Syria. Syria's problems remain, but I would say significant advances are being made.

With regard to the Palestinian agreement, I think everyone always knew there would be some operational difficulties because the PLO had -- to be fair to them -- never had been in charge of a country. That is, they had never had to operate a government and to deal with all the mundane and maybe sometimes even boring day to day problems that, unless they are properly managed, you can't keep a society together. I think we're making some headway there. I don't want to minimize the difficulties, but I do not expect them to be so great as to derail what we're doing.

On the terrorism front, I can tell you that every week, several times a week, I get an update on our efforts. And while -- as you could appreciate, I cannot discuss many of them in great

detail. I believe that we are making progress, but I believe this is a problem we'll all have to be very vigilant about for years to come.

Q Mr. President, can we turn the subject to your birthday today? What stirs within you as you celebrate another birthday? And if you could have three wishes fulfilled today, what would those three wishes be?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I woke up this morning just grateful to be here. That's what I'm feeling -- I mean, grateful to be alive, grateful to have my health, grateful to have my family, grateful to have the chance to serve. And, you know, I like the tough fights, so this is an exhilarating period for me. I like the big challenges. I think we're all put on this earth to try to make a difference.

If I had three wishes, I would wish for the crime bill to pass -- (laughter) -- one; I would wish that I would make more progress on the way we do things around here as well as on the substance, because if we can open our minds and hearts to each other and play a little less politics, we can solve the health care problem, too, and other things.

And I would wish that I won't have to give up my whole vacation -- (laughter) -- because I still have dreams of breaking 80 on the golf course before I'm 50. (Laughter.)

Let me say, I feel that I -- this is not an easy job for you either, so since it's my birthday, if we adjourn here, let's go into the dining room and we can have some cake and whatever else is in there.

Thank you very much. Come on, let's have some cake.

END

2:06 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

August 24, 1994

PRESS BRIEFING

BY

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM PERRY,
ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO,
UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS PETER TARNOFF,
AND
COMMISSIONER OF THE INS, DORIS MEISSNER

The Briefing Room

12:07 P.M. EDT

MS. MYERS: Good afternoon. The following will be a briefing from Secretary Perry, Attorney General Reno and Under Secretary Tarnoff from the State Department. They will each make a brief opening and then be available for your questions. Doris Meissner, the Commissioner of the INS is also here to take questions should you have any. We'll take a brief break after this, and I'll come back and answer any questions you have on other topics. So, Secretary Perry.

SECRETARY PERRY: Thank you, Dee Dee. On Monday I made a trip to have a surveying assessment of the ongoing migration of Cubans and the way we're handling that problem. I flew to Key West and reviewed with the Coast Guard officials there the programs they have underway. Then I went to Guantanamo and observed the activities of our joint task force which is handling both the Haitian and the Cuban refugees there. On the way between Key West and Guantanamo I flew over the areas and made very low passes over the areas where the Coast Guard cutters and the Navy ships are picking up the boat people.

I have to say my heart went out for the people in those rafts. These are makeshift, homemade rafts -- some of them made out of steel drums, innertubes. They've been in those rafts for two or three days by the time they have drifted out to the area where the Coast Guard ships were picking them up. This was very dangerous journey -- shark-infested waters. Some of those people are dying en route -- those who are not picked up by the cutters -- and then drift with the Gulf Stream and go on out to the open oceans. So anything we can do to discourage people from making that very dangerous trip, we are trying to do.

The Coast Guard and the Navy are conducting basically a search and rescue operation in that area -- this area is about 25 to 30 miles off the coast of Cuba, roughly north of Havana. It's a very difficult operation, but it's being conducted very, very well -- very professionally. We have, all told, more than 30 Coast Guard ships, cutters, involved in this operation and seven Navy ships. By the

next day or two, there will be 10 Navy ships involved.

They are being picked up on the smaller cutters and then transferred to larger cutters and Navy ships for the transport to Guantanamo. That's a long trip. It takes almost two days to go from where they're picked up to get to Guantanamo for unloading at the camps there.

To date, we have picked up about 9,000 Cubans, 7,000 of them who are on board ship as we speak, and another 2,000 that have already been dropped off at Guantanamo.

The pipeline, if you think of it that way, is two or three days drifting before they're picked up, and then another two days to get -- to make the journey to Guantanamo. People who are being picked up in the last few days were people who set out on their journey over the weekend.

We don't believe that the message of how dangerous this is or the message that they're going to end up not in the U.S. but Guantanamo has fully gotten through to the people who are on the boats that we have picked up in the last day or two. And we hope that that message does get through.

So we have a flood of boat people on the way to Guantanamo now. We stand by our new policy to Cuba. And we will not be intimidated by Castro's cynical attempt to solve his domestic problems by encouraging people to flee. We are doing our best to discourage these people. But if we -- to the extent we fail to do that, the next thing we're doing is we're doing our best to save lives -- the people who actually go to sea and then taking them to Guantanamo.

At Guantanamo we are expanding the facility to accommodate that. I don't want to cover this in great detail, but this is a map of the Guantanamo area. This is the airfield. This is the fence on the United States's side. And this is the fence on the Cuban side. In between those two fences is a no-man land in which the Cubans have put thousands, literally thousands of mines.

The camp where we have the Haitians located is right here at McCalla Field. We're putting the Cubans in new camps which are located more than a mile from the Haitian camps on the other side of these ridges -- Camp Bulkeley, Radio Hill, and what's called Rifle Range.

The joint task force, the military joint task force, is doing in my judgment an excellent job in putting these new camps together very quickly.

We have as of today facilities for more than 23,000 refugees in these two camps -- the Haitian and the Cuban camp. By the end of the week we will have facilities for 30,000. And by the end of next week we'll have facilities for 40,000. We have significant capacity beyond that and will expand beyond that if necessary.

While we are concerned about the large number of migrants fleeing Cuban boats, we are confident that we have the resources to deal with this outflow. We will expand as necessary the

facility at Guantanamo, as I have indicated. In addition to that, we continue to work with our friends in the region to provide safe havens for Cuban migrants in third countries.

Final comment to make about the situation at Guantanamo, it has been suggested that the Cuban government might encourage hundreds or even thousands of refugees to flood the gates here and into Guantanamo through the back door. We see no evidence that that's happening. I flew over this fence line on Monday, and there's no activity of any kind there. If it were to happen, it would be very dangerous because of the mines in this area, mines which have not been maintained for years and which I believe the Cubans have probably lost track of their location. It would be irresponsible of the Cuban government to encourage this. Indeed, it would be -- we would regard this as being an unfriendly act towards the United States and would take appropriate actions.

I want to summarize by stressing three things. The first is that a message to the Cuban people is we discourage you from getting on these boats. It's a very dangerous trip, and you will only end up in Guantanamo if you do it. Secondly, that we will do -- we are doing what I believe is a first-class, professional search and rescue operation to saving the people who do go on the boats, rescuing them. And finally, we are building up the capacity for Guantanamo; and between Guantanamo and the safe haven facilities, we believe we can accommodate for the indefinite future the flood of boat people that are coming out.

I'd like now to turn the podium over to Attorney General Reno.

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I want to speak directly to families in Miami -- to Cuban families in Miami who may be talking to their loved ones in Cuba. Some people feel that if you get to Guantanamo, you're going to be able to come to the United States. That is simply not so.

We've received calls saying, well they'll be processed at Guantanamo. They will not be processed for admission to the United States. They will be registered there; they will be counseled concerning their location in a safe haven; but they will not be coming to the United States. And you should urge your family not to make such trips. It is unsafe. They risk their lives. And we are doing everything we can to ensure that the legal migration procedures are available for those in Cuba who can legally come to this country.

I want to speak to the people in Cuba: Do not risk your lives. It is too dangerous. You have heard Secretary Perry describe these little rafts in the open ocean. It is not something that should be done. And you should not expect that you will come to the United States. You are going to Guantanamo or to other safe havens, and you will not be processed -- not be processed -- for admission to the United States.

We will continue efforts to ensure in-country refugee processing and legal migration procedures.

Now, I'd like to call on Under Secretary Tarnoff.

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: Thank you. What I would like

to do very briefly is to put the actions we've been taking into a foreign policy context and to say that as has been the case for more than 30 years, all aspects of our policy are directed at promoting peaceful and democratic change in Cuba.

At a time when Democracy and free markets are sweeping the hemisphere in Russia and other countries of the former Warsaw Pact, which have traded communist dictatorship for freedom and democracy, a totalitarian communist state is an anachronism. The current wave of Cubans fleeing the island is a clear demonstration of the frustration and despair of the Cuban people over the regime's unwillingness to provide basic human freedoms and a hope for a better future. And the solution to the crisis in Cuba lies in Cuba itself and the unwillingness of the Castro government to heed the desires of its people for reform and open market system and democracy.

On the question of safe havens, we are giving a high priority to this. And we are working well with other nations in the hemisphere primarily to identify some additional safe havens. First of all, we hope to conclude shortly an agreement with the Turks and Caicos islands to open a safe haven there. Secondly, Panamanian President-elect Perez Balladares released the statement in Panama yesterday, indicating that he is prepared to cooperate with the United States to seek a solution to the problems created by the large number of Cubans leaving the island. And third, in Suriname, the construction of safe havens for Haitians is underway, and we are discussing with that government the possibility of their taking Cubans as well.

Q Mr. Secretary, first of all, are you going to have to send more Marines, more personnel, more equipment to Guantanamo to handle this expansion? Secondly, are you thinking of moving the civilians from Guantanamo or any of the other personnel to make room for more Cubans?

SECRETARY PERRY: The answer to both questions, Andrea, is yes. We will have to add additional security forces to accommodate the large number of refugees that are coming into Cuba, a large of migrants that are coming into Guantanamo. And we are already beginning a managed drawdown of some of the dependents who are at Guantanamo.

Q Can you give us the numbers in each case?

SECRETARY PERRY: No, I cannot.

Q Have you got any estimates of how much its costing between the search and rescue missions and the housing of refugees at Guantanamo on a weekly basis even?

SECRETARY PERRY: No, I cannot give you that figure right now. Any numbers that I have at this stage are for -- segments of it do not include the whole operation.

Q Is anybody figuring that out?

SECRETARY PERRY: Yes. Yes, we will have that number shortly.

Q Secretary Perry or Under Secretary Tarnoff, you're

warehousing Haitians at Guantanamo with the expectation that that government will change in the near future by itself or with our assistance and then they can go home. But if the outlook for change in Cuba is not good, which all analysts seem to suggest is the case, then what is the ultimate fate of the people you are taking to Guantanamo? Are you going to be running a Cuban colony there for months or years?

SECRETARY PERRY: We are preparing to maintain that base indefinitely, if necessary, until such time as the people can be repatriated to Cuba. Let me ask Secretary Tarnoff to comment further.

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: Well, with respect to change in Cuba, only we can point out, and I think it's evident to Castro himself, is that something very dramatic and important is happening -- that the people of Cuba are demonstrating their despair in increasing numbers, and they are asking for change. These are people who want to stay in their country to work for a democratic society and a free market economy. And we just hope that those very strong messages will be heeded by the government of Cuba.

Q Could you explain, are you basically saying that these people who flee by boat and are picked up by the United States are going to be kept in detention camps until Fidel Castro is gone?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: Our policy is that they are to be detained for an indefinite period of time.

Q Are any of those, Mr. Secretary, saying -- you have described conditions at Guantanamo as being pretty bleak when you looked down there. What, if any, of these Cubans want to go home, or would you encourage any of them who want to go home to Cuba again and not make this a permanent colony?

SECRETARY PERRY: Yes, we will encourage them to repatriate. We will make provisions for them to repatriate, just as we're doing with the Haitians who are in this colony.

Q Has that happened at all to date?

SECRETARY PERRY: They've only been there for a day or two at this point.

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: On that question I can say that over the past decade or so some of the Cubans who have arrived in the United States, legally and otherwise, have asked to be repatriated to Cuba -- again, asked to be repatriated to Cuba. In those cases we have been able to notify the Cuban government, and they have been allowed to repatriate. And we expect that the same arrangements would obtain again.

Q Can you change any of the immigration process to make it less desirable to try to escape by sea and more desirable to seek legal entrance?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: What I have discovered in these weeks is that people have very little understanding of the process that is available; that they can seek asylum in-country; that almost 3,000 people a year are granted asylum and come to this country

through the in-country process. And we need to make people aware of that. That will be available to them. Likewise, we are reviewing the immigration procedures, the legal immigration procedures, to do everything consistent with the law, to let people know what is available so that they can use those procedures, legal immigration procedures, to come to the United States.

We are also encouraging families who want to reunify with their families in Cuba, who want to bring them to this country, to undergo the naturalization procedures so that they will be in a better position to seek the reunification. We are working at all levels to ensure that people understand what is available in the legal immigration procedure and the fact that it has been underutilized.

Q Mr. Secretary, if we could just ask you about this notion, the Cubans used to think that it would take them 90 miles to get to the United States, a dangerous 90 miles; now if they get 12 miles out into international waters, Coast Guard cutters, Navy ships, are going to be saving them. So they think that they only have to go 12 miles. Has your policy encouraged Cubans to flee in these record numbers, as opposed to discouraging them? Secondly, how do you convince them, because there seems to be a huge credibility gap, that they have no chance of getting into the United States? They seem to be convinced that if they get to Guantanamo that's the first step to the United States, that their Cuban American relatives and friends will eventually convince the U.S. government to let them in.

SECRETARY PERRY: The pickup is not a 12-mile point, it's a 25 to 40-mile point. And it's a long and dangerous two to three days' drift to get to that point in these homemade rafts. Secondly, we are explaining every way we know how, including this press conference, that they will end up not in the United States but in Guantanamo in a holding camp. That is not an attractive alternative. We will make it as feasible and as attractive as we can for people, but it is not an attractive alternative.

Q The U.N. ambassador from Cuba said that the concentration of large numbers of Cubans at Guantanamo was a dangerous and illegal act -- that the Cuban government would protest. How do you respond to that accusation? And secondly, the bigger question -- why not get to the source of this problem, as he and others have suggested, and have a dialogue at a high level with Fidel Castro, since you do have a high level dialogue with other leaders in North Korea and in China?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: I would agree that the source of the problem is in Cuba itself. It's in the actions taken by the Castro government over the last 35 years. That's why people are leaving. They're leaving because they are fed up with the government itself. Now, we should keep in mind that we have had U.S. government offices in Cuba for 17, 18 years. And the Cubans have been represented here. So there's no lack of opportunity to communicate officially and through other ways with the Cubans.

The point of the matter here is that the way for things to change in Cuba is for Castro to adopt radically different policies. We have said that publicly. He has heard that from leaders throughout the hemisphere. And it is clear, I think, to everyone on his island what he needs to do.

Q Mr. Tarnoff, is the administration willing to consider high-level talks with the Castro government on this and other issues that it wants?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: We have, as I said, had government offices to deal with --

Q I'm sorry, I didn't mean those -- that level; I meant a more senior level --

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: We see nothing to be gained from the kind of talks you're referring to, because it should be clear after 35 years to Fidel Castro and his government that the way he has been managing the affairs of the island is a failure. He's being told that by his own people -- that's why they want to leave -- and by leaders from around the world.

Q You didn't make any mention of the use of aviation assets in the search and rescue mission. Are you going to use any aircraft? And number two, to what extent does this operation affect or complicate your contingency planning for an invasion should it be necessary in Haiti?

SECRETARY PERRY: That was an oversight on my part. We are using aviation assets -- we, in this case, being the Coast Guard, has a substantial number of both helicopters and fixed wing aircraft that are part of their ordinary search and rescue operation. They're being used to spot the rafts and point them out to the cutters, and the cutters then go to find them.

I might say that these rafts are trying very hard to be found. They're sending up smoke signals; they're using mirrors -- every way they can to attract the attention of the cutters.

In terms of the diversion of resources from Haiti, we have moved -- most of the ships that are coming into that area -- the Navy ships -- are coming from other resources. Only one ship has come over from Haiti so far. We continue the interdiction operation in Haiti, essentially uninterrupted. We continue to maintain the facility for an emergency evacuation at Haiti unencumbered. We continue to maintain the ability to conduct an invasion if that were to be directed.

Q Can we ask about the quota, Attorney General Reno? Are you going to increase the quota, or what are you going to do to try to get up to the quota? Are you going to change the threshold or the regulations --

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: What we're trying to do right now is to make sure people understand that there is a process, and that we are trying to go through the process and make sure that people understand how they access that process. And we're reviewing all the categories to make sure that we are doing everything we can to ensure legal immigration and that anybody can come to the country legally if it is consistent with the law.

Q In your backlog of those who have been cleared but are relatives -- not children or wives, but brothers and sisters of American citizens and relatives of the illegal aliens -- there's a

10-year backlog, not just for those people but for refugees of that type for -- I mean, for --

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: We are reviewing that and we are urging everyone who seeks family reunification to pursue naturalization procedures in Miami.

Q And can you parole, can you use your parole powers to allow some of those people in on humanitarian grounds, perhaps more than you have in the past for Cubans?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: We are again reviewing everything that we can do consistent with the law.

Q How many legal immigrants can there be? What is the quota for the annual legal immigrations? Because we've heard 20,000, 28,000 --

COMMISSIONER MEISSNER: At this point for Cuba, it's about 28,000. It used to be 20,000 before changes were made in the 1990 law. That's a number that floats now on a formula that's written into the law.

Q Are you thinking of expanding that number? Can you increase that number?

COMMISSIONER MEISSNER: That is set in the law, and Cuba has not come up to that level. So there --

Q -- only been 3,000 out of the 28,000?

COMMISSIONER MEISSNER: Out of the -- up to the ceiling of 28,000 this year, there will be almost 3,000 legal immigrants and almost 3,000 refugees.

Q Well, can you categories. What can you do within the law to have more people qualify?

COMMISSIONER MEISSNER: Well, as the Attorney General said, the first and foremost thing is that Cubans in the United States naturalize because that gives them the ability to apply for more relatives who are in Cuba. Beyond that, as the Attorney General said, we are looking at the full range of possibilities.

Q As I understand the law, the immigration law, there really isn't any way to expand eligibility requirements under the categories that you admitted into the United States legally without going to Congress and asking them to change the law. Is that correct?

COMMISSIONER MEISSNER: There is the continuing question of whether people who are -- the law is essentially based on family members in the United States applying for their family members in the other country. And there's the continuing question whether the Cuban community is fully utilizing those opportunities to petition. So we're working first and foremost on being sure that Cuban Americans understand their ability to bring their relatives here through naturalization and through the petitioning process.

Q But in terms of the stories that are out there that

the President may try to expand eligibilities, that's not possible is it?

COMMISSIONER MEISSNER: We want to first be sure that the avenues that are available are being fully utilized.

Q There are two things I don't understand. Who's going to be paying -- one of them is, who's going to be paying for whatever the cost may be -- feeding, clothing, sheltering -- however many thousand Cuban refugees it may be, either at Guantanamo or at safe havens?

And the second thing that I don't understand is and have asked before, what sort of incentive is there anywhere in this policy for Fidel Castro to put the clamp on these people leaving if the people -- if he's being able to get rid of people that somebody else is going to pay for to ease the pressure on him? Where is there any sort of incentive for him to stop letting people go or assisting people to leave?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: On the second question, first, I think the incentive to him should be that he is once again demonstrating that some of the people who have been born and brought up during his reign in Cuba are giving up on his society. And if there are people in these current numbers willing to risk their lives to leave the island, it means that there is an enormous deterioration in Cuba itself. And that's directly attributable to the way he has governed the island. That's a realization that we hope and expect he will come to because it's a demonstrated failure for him to lose people, many of whom have been born and educated and done relatively well in the Cuban system.

On the first issue, we, of course, have to assume that there is a high level of U.S. responsibility with respect to the financing of the safe havens that are established for either Cubans or Haitians around the hemisphere.

Q -- the different categories we're talking about. You talked about the legal immigration. When you flew over those boats floating in the water, is it your impression that most of those who in recent days are trying to make the break out of Cuba are those who would not qualify for legal immigration and that's why the desperation in their flight, and that any change in the immigration or expediting of the immigration would not affect those who are trying to flee right now?

SECRETARY PERRY: I wouldn't have any basis for making a judgment on that. Would either Janet or Doris.

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: What we have been told is that there are significant number of family connections. Again, we don't have the full picture, and we obviously can't tell based on who is in the water, but of initial interviews. And I think that the most effective process will be to address the family reunification issue through whatever means we can consistent with the law.

Q Why are charter flights not stopped yet, even though we were told last weekend that they would.

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: As I understand it, that is --

it is a complex process because one of the things that has to be done is to ensure that the media has access to Cuba. And as I understand it, the FAA and State are working on those regulations, and they should be --

Q When do you think those sanctions will kick in?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I think those regulations, as I understand it, will be published shortly.

Q Ms. Reno, do you foresee any circumstances that would lead to the opening of federal facilities on the mainland to take in these Cubans?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: There will be no Cubans coming from Guantanamo to the United States, either to federal facilities or to any other place.

Q -- the Cubans that are picked up at sea? None of them -- you mentioned Guantanamo, so the ones at sea also will not be brought to federal facilities --

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Cubans picked up at sea are being taken to Guantanamo and they are being -- they may be relocated to other safe havens, but Cubans that are being picked up at sea are not being brought to the United States.

Q What about those who are already at Krome? What is the plan for them?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: They are being served with the appropriate papers to initiate appropriate proceedings. That is underway now, and they will be treated just as any other detainee is consistent with the law. As is necessary, we will use other INS detention facilities for those that are able to come into this country by avoiding the Coast Guard or in any other manner.

Q At what point do you expect that they might be released into the community?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I don't know. Many of them may not be eligible for release. We're going to look at each case and do it according to the law. They have the opportunity, if they think they are eligible, to apply for asylum, and we will process these matters consistent with the law.

Q General Reno, speaking of political asylum, you say you aren't going to be processing people in Guantanamo to let them into the country. And I think you're talking about paroling them, which has been the traditional route by which Cubans have gotten into the United States, but what ---

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I'm talking about doing what?

Q Paroling them in.

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I am not --

Q No, no. You are saying you're not going to parole

--

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I am not going to parole them in.

Q That's right. And you have the discretion in that regard. But what if they apply for political asylum, and what if they apply for it in large numbers. Do you still have the discretion --

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: They are being provided as -- if they claim refugee status, they will be provided with safe haven status.

Q Will you process those applications --

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: They will not be processed. They are in safe haven status.

Q Secretary Reno, in regards to encouraging, you said you might ask the Cubans or in the near future -- I think it was Secretary Perry maybe had said it -- in asking them to go back to Cuba. Will you actually encourage them to go back under the circumstances that you are all describing as being bleak and repressive?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: No, I think our policy has been that if Cubans voluntarily express a desire to return to Cuba, there are ways that in the past have provided for their return.

Q And are you in a position of having the Cubans detained in the safe havens at Guantanamo for more than six months a year? I mean, is that a --

SECRETARY PERRY: We are making provisions to maintain them indefinitely in Guantanamo. We certainly hope we won't have -- will not have to maintain them for that long a period of time. But we are making -- we have the physical provisions for it and are planning for an indefinite stay.

Q Mr. Perry, who's budget is this coming out of? Is it all out of your budget?

SECRETARY PERRY: All of the cost to date have been, for all of these operations we're talking, have come out of the Navy and the Defense Department and the Coast Guard operating budget. Where the ultimate cost will come will depend on whether we seek a supplemental, and whether the Congress would grant us a supplemental for the cost. That has not yet been determined.

Q -- cost so far?

SECRETARY PERRY: I don't have -- I can't give you an up-to-date figure on total costs as I stand here today.

Q -- two technical points. Are any Cubans getting through this so-called picket fence to U.S. territorial waters? Are any Cubans managing to evade the cutters and get to the United States?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Yes, some have been picked up

and they are being placed in detention.

Q How many are they?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I don't have the precise number.

SECRETARY PERRY: Small number.

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: It is a very small number.

END

12:40 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

August 25, 1994

PRESS BRIEFING

BY

PETER TARNOFF, UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS

The Briefing Room

1:42 P.M. EST

MS. MYERS: Under Secretary of State Peter Tarnoff will answer any questions you may have about Cuba. And I think I will suspend any further briefing as the Senate is making progress on the crime bill, so -- or about to vote on the Crime bill. And we may come back to it later.

Q Are you or he coming back?

Q (inaudible)

MS. MYERS: Well, we're hopeful. We hope that they'll go an actually vote on this sometime very soon. It looks like they're making progress toward that. But in the meantime --

Q You think he'll win? I mean, will --

MS. MYERS: Well, we keep hoping we'll win. We'll have to wait and see how the vote comes out, so --

Q -- one way or the other will the President come out?

MS. MYERS: We'll have to see. We haven't made any plans. We're just waiting to see what happens on the floor of the Senate. Now, they're sort of talking through it, and we're hopeful that they'll vote on the point of order and then vote on the conference report should we win.

Q -- been talking to the leaders at all?

MS. MYERS: Not today. Not today.

Okay, without any further ado, Under Secretary Tarnoff.

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: Thank you. Why don't I begin with some general statements about the current status of the migration issue and a few words about our policy and then open it up to questions.

On the current migration status, the average flow is still high. We're all seeing the same numbers, but it has remained high. But I have to say that as some of you have heard from Jack Sheehan in the Pentagon in the last hour or so, we're coping with it extraordinary well. There are more than 70 U.S. vessels, naval and

Coast Guard, out there. And I think all of us in the administration -- I hope the American people are proud of the way the United States has responded to this humanitarian situation involving these people who are, of course, at great risk leaving Cuba and the kinds of conditions you're aware of.

We are in the process of increasing our broadcasts, both quantitatively and qualitatively to Cuba. The message is beginning to get through to even those parts of the islands which did not receive the signal heretofore. We are readying safe havens. And we expect announcements in the next day or two from some of the countries ready to receive Cubans. And shortly after that, there will be Cubans in places other than Guantanamo.

We also are considering ways and hope to be able to have something shortly to increase legal immigration as the President announced we would do over the weekend.

Now, as far as policy is concerned, what we are doing again is consistent with the desire of U.S. administrations over the past 30, 35 years to promote peaceful and democratic change in Cuba. I want to come back once again to the Cuba Democracy Act of two years ago, which provides the basis for this policy and which received overwhelming support in the Congress and the country.

This act does two things. It tightens the embargo in some respects, but it also provides the opportunity for certain kinds of increases in communications between the peoples of Cuba and of the United States.

Consistent with the Cuba Democracy Act, we will be announcing tomorrow the regulations implementing the President's decisions that were announced last Saturday, namely to restrict somewhat the remittances and gifts but with humanitarian exceptions with licenses that will have to be provided in some cases, and also his announcement there would be certain limitations on travel, again with humanitarian and certain other exceptions that will be described tomorrow morning at the Treasury Department.

Finally the Cuba Democracy Act envisions a day when there can be normal relations between the United States and a democratic Cuba. And I can tell you that we look forward to that time as well.

Why don't I take your questions.

Q You're still resisting, however, any movement toward talks with Cuba. Didn't you at one point help out Senator Muskie at the time when he was Secretary of State and actually try this before?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: No. I did travel to Cuba in the late 1970s, but for a very different purpose. There were political prisoners, including several Americans in detention in Cuba. We had had an indication from the Cuban government that if someone went down from the United States to talk about the issue of political prisoners, including Americans, might be possible to obtain their release. And I did so -- and they were eventually released. So it was in that very narrow connection that I made those trips.

Q But you were able to make progress. And isn't -- a lot of people now are saying that this is a time -- Senator Dodd, some other people who have followed Cubans -- are saying, put politics aside, maybe this is the time if you can negotiate with China and North Korea, why can't you talk to Fidel Castro?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: I think, again, the circumstances of my going down to Cuba were very different because I was concerned primarily with the release of Americans who were detained illegally by the Castro regime. Now I think our position is very clear. The dialogue that has to take place is one between Castro and the Cuban people. The United States is not part of the problem. This is not a situation which has been brought on by American actions. We are often criticized by the Castro officials for being responsible because of the blockade. But let me point out that while there is a blockade in place with respect to trade in the United States, Cuba has the opportunity to trade freely with virtually every other country in the world, and this has not done much good.

Q Well, why aren't you talking to them? You've talked to communists all over the world since 1933.

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: For the simple reason that we do not want to divert Castro's attention from the real issue. And the real issue is internal reform, a dialogue between himself and --

Q Well, maybe a dialogue with help that.

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: -- a dialogue between himself and the Cuban people. And the Cuban people who are coming out on these rafts are telling us and telling him what they need. They need democratic reform. They need the liberation of political prisoners. They need economic --

Q And aren't you recommending they stay there and put the pressure on him to get the dialogue there?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: We're not telling the Cuban people what to behave. Those who wish to come to the United States should have the recourse that is available to come out through the legal means. It's up to them to decide, but overwhelmingly they have a view and that's the important view of how change should occur in Cuba.

Q Mr. Castro gave a speech last night, a long one; what is your reaction to it?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: I listened to the speech, and I found it, once again, there was an attempt by the Cuban leader to lay the responsibility for the crisis in Cuba at the foot of the United States. We simply reject that premise. And that is the reason that we do not believe it is useful to have a dialogue with Castro. His responsibility is to engage with his people and to provide reform and change in Cuba itself.

Q Mr. Secretary, why should the American people, whom you suggest should perhaps feel proud about all this, not view a policy which on the one hand seeks to squeeze Cuba and Cubans economically, and on the other hand tells them, whatever you, do don't come here? Why is that not utterly contradictory?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: That's not our policy. Our policy is to point out to the government of Cuba that they will not be allowed to benefit from some of the privileges which they have enjoyed over several years -- namely, the financial remittances, which did, at least indirectly, benefit the government of Cuba.

What we're saying to the people of Cuba is that it is up to them to decide what they want to do. If they want to stay in Cuba and work for change, that is fine. If they wish to come to the United States, there is a legal way for them to do so, and they should avail themselves of that responsibility.

Q How is it an incentive -- how is cutting off money that might reach them from the United States an incentive for them not to flee?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: I think what we want to point out to the government of Cuba is that the benefit that they have been deriving -- not only the people, the government of Cuba has derived a direct benefit --

Q Well, what about the people, sir? I'm asking you -- the question is in the context of the people.

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: The people of Cuba, I think, understand that change must occur. That is what they are doing when they come out, by coming out, because they do not have a way to express themselves by remaining in the country. And I think the people of Cuba overwhelmingly are in favor of change and understand what the United States is trying to do to promote it.

Q What evidence do you have, if any, that any of the efforts you're making to squeeze the Cubans will have any effect at all on Castro since none of it has seemed to have affected him over the past 30 years since he can trade with the rest of the world and since he has this safety valve to let dissidents out of the country?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: I would think that when he looks at the -- not only the nature of the flow or the size of the flow, but the composition of the people who are leaving Cuba, and he sees many who are well-educated, most of whom as I said yesterday were actually born and brought up during his tenure as president, and he asks himself about the future of his country and how he can ensure his own legacy, he will begin to realize that now is the time to modify what he has done over the last 30, 35 years.

It has happened in former communist countries around the world that leaders brought up under the old system have realized that they have to change. I'm not making a prediction with respect to Castro, but I think the evidence for change is overwhelming.

Q Don't you think that he -- that there's any evidence that he cares about his legacy?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: I have no doubt that he cares about his legacy. Whether he cares about, whether he understands the best way to preserve that legacy is still an open question.

Q Mr. Secretary, the United States seems to be

totally isolated in this policy of no talk with Fidel Castro's -- at a high level with Fidel Castro's government. Most of the countries in the hemisphere, most of the U.S. allies say this is a ridiculous, absurd policy. How do you justify a policy that has virtually no support among the closest U.S. allies around the world?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: It's interesting that in talking to the hemispheric leaders who have met with Fidel Castro -- and you're right, several of them have sought him out over the past several years -- the responses that we receive, the reports that we receive from these leaders are quite clear. And that is there is very little inclination on his part to move significantly. And therefore, to move significantly. And therefore, we don't see any reason to try to divert the attention of the Cuban government or the Cuban people to the U.S.-Cuban relationship. His responsibility is to deal with his own people.

Q Aren't you contradicting what you just told me?

Q Is the American policy not to speed the downfall of Fidel Castro?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: Our policy is to promote peaceful and democratic change. That's been the policy for the last 30 --

Q Do we want to speed it up or do we want to --

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: We want that change -- we want that change to take place as we always have, and quickly as possible.

Q Is it true that the Caribbean nations are going to take -- like the little island nations, St. Lucia and so forth -- are going to take some of the Cubans in?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: I can't now tell you because these governments will have to make an announcement exactly who will be providing safe havens for Cubans.

Q You said that the problem was not created by the U.S., that the problem has landed on the doorstep of the U.S. in the form of these refugees. Are you suggesting that the U.S. would not negotiate with Cuba on this refugee problem until there are elections in Cuba? Or what do you need to see before you would begin some kind of dialogue with the Cuban government?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: No, as a matter of fact, starting in 1984, a process for dialogue over immigration matters was established. And since that time, roughly twice a year there have been working level meetings between officials of the U.S. government and the Cuban government, both in this country and in Cuba, to deal with immigration matters and migration matters.

We said last week and announced that we had told the Cuban government in connection with notifying them of what the President had decided that we were prepared to hold another round of these talks, which have taken place roughly twice a year. We have not received a response from the Cuban government, but it is conceivable that there could be another round of these talks.

Q But what would it take to ratchet those talks up one notch to the higher level? Those are --

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: We're not interested in having a higher-level political dialogue with Cuba for the reasons that I stated before.

Q But, Mr. Secretary, wouldn't it be possible to do that unilaterally? Bernard Aronson, among others, has called for cutting back -- offering to ratchet back the economic sanctions against Cuba in return for concrete political steps by Castro. If you're not willing to sit down with Castro, would you be willing to state categorically and specifically what moves we would take in response to specific actions by Castro, such as freeing political prisoners and the like?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: Here, again, the problem is not whether it's done publicly or privately. Our position is that we are not going to enter into a dialogue with Castro or the Cuban government over the pace and nature of change in Cuba. That is something that he is hearing every day increasingly from the Cuban people, and the people who are coming out are telling it more publicly than they did before. That's where the dialogue should take place.

Q You spoke just now of restricting remittances somewhat. The President spoke of cutting them off with a couple of occasional exceptions.

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: Well, there will not be -- again, I am going to let my colleagues at the Treasury Department explain in detail to all of you tomorrow what it means. They will be restricted, but they will not be cut off completely because there will be provisions for licenses and exceptions. But I'd rather defer to them for the details.

Q Mr. Tarnoff, we know that there is opposition to Castro, however muted within Cuba. What is the administration's message to those people -- people in Cuba -- who do oppose him?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: Well, our message to them is that we agree with their objectives insofar as they, too, favor peaceful and democratic change in Cuba. As a matter of fact, under the Cuban Democracy Act, it has been possible for a certain number of those people to come to this country, for us to meet with them -- when I say us, I don't mean the U.S. government -- the American people, NGO organizations, human rights organizations -- and we certainly encourage what they're doing to the extent that they also favor democratic change in Cuba.

Q Would you encourage it to the extent of calling for the overthrow of Fidel Castro?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: As I say, our policy has been consistent for 30 years -- and that is, we are in favor of democratic and peaceful change in Cuba. The nature of that change, the way the modalities are operated is for the Cuban people to be given a chance to decide.

Q Where is Secretary Christopher this week? And to

what extent is he in the loop on Cuban policy?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: Oh, he's very much in the loop. We've been talking on a daily basis and he has indicated in the last couple of hours that he would, rather than spend an excessive amount of time on the telephone with all of us, it probably is more efficient for him to come back here. So he will be doing that later in the day. And he and the President have an understanding that it would be more efficient for him to be back in Washington.

Q President-elect Zedillo has suggested that Mexico would lend its good offices to serve as a mediator between Cuba and the United States. Would the administration consider a third party serving as an intermediary in indirect talks?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: Again, let me say what our policy is. We are not looking for a way to establish a dialogue on political matters with the Cuban government. We have this device for the discussion of migration issues, this commission which has been in existence for the last 10 years. And we think that's the appropriate channel for discussion of this issue.

Q Mr. Tarnoff, since Castro does not appear willing to bend anytime soon, isn't the only effective choice for the Cuban people is to launch a revolution or take to the boats?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: It's not up to the United States to dictate or suggest to the Cuban people what their choices are. What they are telling us is that they want change and we certainly support every effort that they are making for a peaceful and democratic change.

Q Mr. Tarnoff, to what extent are political considerations, domestic political considerations, at issue in the decision not to begin a dialogue with the Castro regime?

UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF: I don't think that they really are a factor in what we're talking about. Because if we were to enter a political dialogue with the Castro government to discuss some of the issues which have been talked about here, that would be a recognition, implicit or otherwise, on the part of the United States that we bear some responsibility for the situation in Cuba. We do not accept that.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

2:00 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

BACKGROUND BRIEFING
BY
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL

August 26, 1994

The Briefing Room

1:40 P.M. EDT

MS. MYERS: The following will be a BACKGROUND BRIEFING.

Last Saturday, you all will recall, the President announced there will be additional restrictions on travel including charters to Cuba, as well as the elimination of remittances. The new regulations were published today in the Federal Register at 11:00 a.m. We have three pieces of paper for you -- one is the actual Department of Treasury document that was published; two is a fact sheet that will help walk you through that; and three will be a statement from Rick on the record, which just gives a brief statement which you can use.

Again, his briefing will be on background. I will follow and answer any policy questions you might have on Cuba, the vacation, or any other burning topics.

Q Can we get his on-the-record statement on camera?

MS. MYERS: No, we'll just put it out on paper. He'll do the -- this will be all on background.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thank you. On August 20, President Clinton announced further steps which the United States government would take to respond to the Cuban government's attempt to export a problem of its own making to the U.S., and risking the lives of Cuba's own countrymen in the process.

The additional steps announced by the President, and effective at 11:00 a.m. today, will deny the Cuban government badly needed foreign exchange. The implementing measures, which I'm prepared to discuss in more detail, will further restrict travel to Cuba for Americans and people residing in the United States. Travel aboard charter flights between Cuba and the U.S. will be limited to legal immigrants from Cuba, those covered by general license, government officials and journalists, and those covered by special license. That is traveling for clearly defined research, religious and humanitarian purposes.

Specific licenses in cases of exceptional humanitarian concern may be issued to visit family members. Additionally, licence to recognized human rights groups for purposes of investigating specific human rights violations may also be issued.

Remittances from U.S. relatives to Cuba nationals will no longer be permitted, although, again, there will be exceptions for humanitarian reasons and to facilitate the travel of lawful immigrants to the United States. Gift parcels and humanitarian donations will still be permitted, but their permissible content will be more clearly and narrowly defined.

These measures will severely curtail the flow of U.S. dollars into Cuba. The Cuban economy will no longer benefit from travel-related transactions originating in the U.S. and from cash remittances sent from the U.S. The Cuban government will no longer have access to these U.S. dollars which have for so long helped to sustain the Castro regime.

Q What do you say to those who will argue that Cubans who are -- individual Cuban families are going to suffer the most as a result of this, and that Castro is not going to feel the pinch; that you're punishing individual Cubans as opposed to the Cuban government?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: What is happening in Cuba is the failed economic policy of Fidel Castro. People in Cuba have lost hope. Castro's repressive political regime and lack of economic freedoms and other freedoms -- freedom of speech and assembly -- have essentially denied this to the Cuban people.

Q There have been various estimates --

Q Wait a minute, whoa -- is that what you say to the people who suffer? What do you say to the people who are not going to have medicine, who are not going to have money to buy things that they need, who have become used to this kind of subsidy from relatives in Florida?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: These humanitarian type situations will be dealt with on an extreme need, case-by-case basis. When needs are demonstrated, we certainly will institute -- we have a licensing policy in place to address the specific concerns of the types of situations that you're addressing. But let's be very clear about this major contribution to the Cuban Castro economy of up to \$50 million a year or more documented going into Cuba, of which Fidel Castro is able to make significant economic use.

On top of that, the amounts generated into the economy from the travel is \$100 million or more that will now be deprived to the Cuban economy. So the amounts now not going into the economy are the focus of this program, and we will be able also to address those humanitarian concerns on a case-by-case basis when demonstrated and documented.

Q What's the annual GNP of Cuba?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It's in the neighborhood of \$10 billion, perhaps. But I will say, I'd like to check that and get back specifically. But let me say that this is

the culmination of a long-term look at steps that might be taken to further restrict hard currency going into Cuba, and this comes at a time when there's been a particularly bad sugar harvest and the economy is particularly suffering.

Q I understand that, but 1.5 percent of GNP of your significant, and your this and your that -- I mean, I think we ought to head back to the question. It's 1.5 percent of Cuba's income, and it's going to be like 100 percent of some old lady in Camaguey, Cuba. What do you say to her?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: What we say is that when these are documented as specific humanitarian problems then on a case-by-case basis, relief will be provided.

Q What would Cuba have to do in order for you to lift these new restrictions?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, let me say, the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 was enacted after 33 years and eight Presidents, following a continued policy toward Cuba where the embargo was the cornerstone of that policy. The Cuban Democracy Act had clear parameters laid out for steps that the United States might take to use the embargo and loosen the embargo. It was a carrots and sticks approach, incentives for the Cuban people, humanitarian relief, medicine, food and adequate telecommunications; but at the same time, recognizing that sanctions were an effective tool, they could be used when it was important to enhance our policy and if some of the repressive measures of the Castro regime -- free and fair elections would be permitted -- then that could be reconsidered. But that's very clearly laid out in the CDA, which this, we believe, is consistent with.

Q What are your estimates of the total amount of remittances sent to Cuba each year from the United States? Also, do you know how many Americans travel each year to Cuba -- what breakdown they are in categories? And lastly, which people who now can travel to Cuba will not be allowed to under these new regulations?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Okay, go through those and I'll answer.

Q Remittances.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Remittances -- approximately \$50 million a year through travel, remittance forwarders and through banks. That is specific documented; there may be more than that that are going through other circuitous routes. Your second question.

Q How many Americans travel to Cuba each year?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Approximately 50,000.

Q And do you have a breakdown -- what percentage of family, what percentage other categories?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: My guess is as much as 90 percent of that travel will be eliminated. My estimate is that 90

percent will be eliminated.

Q And lastly, which of the people who have been able to travel will no longer be able to?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Travel to Cuba in the past had been limited to essentially six categories. Those that could be generally licensed were family travel, research, government officials on government business, those specifically licensed, those that are fully hosted -- that is, paid for by a government other than the United States.

Now, the change that has been effectuated by this regulation is that there is no travel to Cuban generally licensed for family visits; no travel to Cuba generally licensed for professional research. As to the charter flights, legal immigrants are now able to come from Cuba to the United States when there is a visa in their possession. U.S. and foreign government officials will still be permitted under general license to go to and from Cuba. Those are foreign government officials on official business, and U.S. government officials on official business.

Journalists had in the past been permitted to travel to Cuba under general license. They will still be permitted to travel to Cuba under general license, so long as they're on business related to journalistic activity.

Then there are a series of categories of special licenses which can be granted and that can use the charter flights when they are available. These are where there's a compelling humanitarian need -- that is where it's demonstrated, a terminal illness, life-threatening kind of situation, to go to and from Cuba; where there's a clearly-defined educational or religious activity; where there is an investigation of human rights violations by a recognized human rights organization to do professional research where the research is specifically related to Cuba, and when there is a likelihood the results of that research will be disseminated; for telecommunications purposes to establish and adequate and effective telecommunications system between the United States and Cuba consistent with the Cuba Democracy Act, and for the purchase and dissemination of informational materials as laid out in the Free Trade and Ideas Act.

Very important is that fully hosted travel -- that is where a third country or the government of Cuba pays for it -- that will no longer be permitted on the charter flights.

Q What kind of cooperation are you getting from the Canadians and the Mexicans on all of this?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, historically, the embargo on Cuba has been an embargo of the United States. We traditionally have always worked with our allies in seeking cooperation or minimizing any difficulties that might exist between us and any other country, whether in Europe or in North America. We continue to work that, but for its life, at least in recent decades, this has been a U.S. embargo.

Q Of the \$50 million in annual remittances that were provided, how many Cubans were benefitting from that \$50 million?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Your question is how many recipients were there of the \$50 million? Well, there were \$300 a quarter per household, meaning \$1,200 a year. And so it would be something along that line. I can't give you the exact number. I can check it --

Q So we're talking about tens of thousands of Cubans.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I would say in the low tens of thousands.

Q Now, these people are not going to have the money that they used to have, almost all of them, unless there is some exceptional humanitarian consideration. Won't they now be encouraged to flee? Aren't you, in effect, promoting the kind of emigration policies that you're trying to prevent?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think what this is is a culmination of a long series of restrictions that have been under review for a period of time, looking to additional steps, additional sanctions that could be taken with regard to the Castro regime and affect the Cuban economy. Two or three years ago, the level was \$500. Before that, it was not as tightly regulated as it is. We regulate all family remittance forwarders; we regulate all financial institutions. So this is the culmination of years of look at this remittance issue and the value these remittances we're giving to the Cuban economy.

Q How do you see that regulation? Can you stop people from stuffing money in an envelope and mailing it out? What are the specifics?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, first, there's no direct mail service between the United States and Cuba, so it all goes through third countries. The principal source of mail goes through third countries. The principal source of remittances is through the 100 or so financial remittance forwarders that are regulated by the Treasury Department, mostly located in Miami and the Miami area, South Florida, and other locations throughout the United States.

They file quarterly reports with us and we audit from time to time activities that we may be suspect of. Also, financial institutions are generally licensed to transmit monies so long as they meet the very clearly defined guidelines we have as far as remittance going to Cuba.

We use the financial regulators, federal regulators and state regulators to regulate these institutions. So we have a very good handle on what is going. I am very confident that the financial institutions who have already been notified today of these requirements have this program in place. I have personally written letters to the 100 or so financial remittance forwarders, and I am confident that this is in place as well.

Q What about third countries, though? What's to prevent his question basically? Why can't they just route these things through Mexico or Canada or --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, you know, international embargoes or embargoes have been a tool of governments worldwide from time to time, and everything is not fool-proof. Clearly, that can be done. The mails are very slow, and that can be a disincentive.

There are ways to get around this or virtually any other program, but we do have enforcement programs in place. We're working with the U.S. Postal Service; we're working with the Customs Service as far as foreign mail, what's permissible under law. We have as comprehensive an enforcement regime in place with regard to these remittances, to this travel program, and to other shipment of goods, both imports and exports, or transmission of currency in any manner whatsoever.

Q Is there a penalty for violating this?

Q Is the aim of the United States to provoke an uprising in Cuba, or civil war, or what do you expect of these measures? If the people are not happy in Cuba, are they going to riot against Castro?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The embargo has been the cornerstone of United States policy for 35 years. Eight presidents have endorsed it. The question of hard currency flow into Cuba has been an issue that's been studied and restudied over time. The notion of a sanction being an effective remedy against this regime was specifically addressed in the Cuba Democracy Act, debated in the Congress, and in the findings and the purposes of the Cuba Democracy Act, was recognized as a purpose legitimate to pursue.

Q But what do you --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Someone different. Yes, in the back.

Q I have a clarification question. The remittance agencies that you're talking about in Miami, some in New York, if their only sole purpose of business was to send money to Cuba, does that mean that they are out of business? And number two, can the U.S. government keep them from maybe charging Cuban Americans to send the money via Canada, Santo Domingo or Mexico?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, it does not necessarily mean that these companies are out of business. Where they have other activities that they have been pursuing, clearly they can pursue those other activities. We weren't regulating the concern, we were regulating the cash flow.

To the extent that they were dependent on cash flow for their business, they will be out of business unless they are able to send the remittances that are permitted -- namely, for purposes of lawful immigration. Whether or not they're able to sustain themselves is a growing concern, and that question is a business question for them not for me. But it is not the intent to put anyone out of business. It's the intent to regulate cash flows to Cuba.

Now, your follow.

Q The other question was will you be able to regulate

them from encouraging Cuban Americans to send the money via Canada, Mexico, Santo Domingo, or even traveling to those countries in order to get into Cuba?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We have and will have a comprehensive enforcement program in place. We have people in Miami now. We intend to continue to work with the law enforcement community and the Miami community to make these requirements clear and to address the enforcement concerns of circumvention and the use of third countries to avoid the requirements of the law and will do that. So we'll deal with that on an ongoing basis.

Q Is this an unprecedented case? Has this ever been tried before on any other country, this strategy?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Of regulating cash flows and remittances?

Q Yes.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Oh, yes. We have embargoes in place against Libya, against Yugoslavia. Each embargo is different because of the time it was imposed, because of the foreign policy and because of the unique foreign policy needs and goals we're trying to achieve.

But the notion of regulating remittances is not new. We've used it traditionally from time to time in other places. And the notion of regulating travel is also a traditional embargo measure that has been taking over the years.

Q Well, suppose that a family in Miami decides to send an envelope to their relatives in Cuba however. Can they get arrested? What is the penalty for violating this?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The potential penalty -- there's civil and criminal penalties available. The criminal are up to \$250,000 and 10 years. But let me be real clear on this point. In pursuing a rigorous enforcement policy, we will be looking at those who would encourage wholesale circumvention. We would be interested in pursuing those who would organize a commercial venture for large-scale movements of money. And that is where we will be focusing our resources.

But at the same time, I think it's important that all Cuban Americans need to recognize that this will work so long as we have voluntary compliance and a comprehensive willingness to pursue this kind of program.

Q I never heard the answer to the question before, which seemed rather direct in terms of what it is specifically you hope to accomplish with this; what it is that you hope this does or want this to do.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: What I can do is answer it to the extent I can and then it becomes a political question, which I would defer to my colleagues at the State Department and the White House.

But it is a recognized, respected embargo measure that

has traditionally been taken in other contexts and the purpose is to deny hard currency to the Castro regime in the amounts that I've specifically stated today.

Q This is a culmination of a long study. What percentage of the \$50 million and what percentage of the \$100 million in travel do you think will be diverted by individuals through third countries? How much is now just going to go to Bahamas and Cayman?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: That's hard to say, I mean, that's a very open-ended type of question. What I can say -- there no doubt has been that type of diversion at this point. What we have done is we've raised the stakes. It's going to be more difficult; new mechanisms will need to be set up. And we do and will continue to work with financial regulators, with the law enforcement community and with our own people in the Miami area to see that that doesn't happen.

Q There were suggestions in the Washington Times and perhaps some other news media today that these regulations have actually been softened over what were originally proposed, perhaps by NSC objection. What softening, if any, is there in these final --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me be real clear on that. There has been no softening in the President's statement. This is a comprehensive, fair, even-handed, across-the-board approach to addressing the policy statement the President had made.

Q By how much to you expect travel to be reduced as a result of these new restrictions?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Between 80 and 90 percent.

Q What about gift packages? You didn't address that.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The gift packages has now very clearly defined categories it will fit in. It's in the regulations. I would just direct you there. It is specifically laid out by specific item. So it's there. What that means is these gift packages can only contain those items.

Q Typically the remittances that were provided -- correct me if I'm wrong -- sons and daughters sending money back, elderly parents in Havana or elsewhere in Cuba. Is that the typical remittance?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The typical remittance was from one family member to another family member and the amounts varied between families. It was not always at the maximum; there were a lot more people that made these remittances than there were amounts to be given.

Q Do you see this as being permanent, or do you see this as just a response to the immigration issue that might be lifted if that clears?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Again, that's a question for the President --

Q Notice how your statement itself says this is to respond to Cuban government's attempt to export a problem of its own making. --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Do I see it as permanent? This is the embargo enforcement policy, and we will enforce it so long as it is the policy. Thank you.

END

2:00 P.M. EDT