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Eliezer Valentin-Castanon <EValentin@UMC-GBCS.ORG>

09/29/2000 11:33:31 AM

Record Type: Record

To:

cc: Maureen T. Shea/WHO/EOP

Subject: FW: Congress abuse of power

For your Information.

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Eliezer Valentin-Castanon

> Sent: Friday, September 29, 2000 11:30 AM

> To: 'Bill Clinton'

> Subject: Congress abuse of power

>

> September 29, 2000

>

> President William J. Clinton

> The White House

> Washington, DC 20500

>

> Dear Mr. President:

>

> I write to you in order to express my support for your sensible &
> effective policy encouraging people-to-people contacts between the United
> States and Cuba, by the same token I would like to express my concern and
> dismay about current Congressional efforts to push back some of the
> progress already obtained in facilitating travel to Cuba by U. S.
> Citizens. I would like to urge you to lift your voice together with other
> members of Congress to speak up against those efforts that would like to
> maintain U.S.-Cuba relations stalled for generations. I believe that the
> interest of democracy and freedom for the people of Cuba are better served
> by policies that lead to dialogue instead of isolation. In addition, I am
> appalled by the clear intent of curtailing presidential powers to modify
> regulations on travel to Cuba as circumstances may require. This is a
> clear violation of the separation of powers guaranteed by the
> Constitution.

>

> I urge you to oppose House Republicans in their efforts to pass language
> on the Agriculture Appropriations bill (or any other bill) that frustrate
> the will of the Congress as demonstrated in recent actions and that, in
> fact, contradict the perspective of the American people as gauged in
> recent polls regarding travel and other issues regarding relations with
> Cuba.

>

> Your strong voice in this regard will be very appreciated by the United
> Methodist Church and many other denominations. Our Church has many

- > significant relations with the churches in Cuba that we need to continue
- > cultivating and strengthening.
- >
- > Thank you for your support.
- >
- > May the Lord bless you and keep you, and make His face
- > shine upon you, and be gracious unto you, and give you peace.
- >
- > Rev. Eliezer Valentin-Castanon
- > The General Board of Church and Society
- > The United Methodist Church
- > 100 Maryland Ave., NE
- > Washington, DC 20002
- > 202-488-5657
- > 202-488-5663 (Fx)
- >

Fund for Reconciliation and Development

475 Riverside Drive, Suite 727, New York, NY 10115

phone 212-367-4278 fax 212-367-4366 jmcauliff@igc.org

www.usirp.org http://uscuba.home.igc.org

TO: *Maureen Shea*

DATE: *10/12/00*

FROM: John McAuliff

TOTAL PAGES: *4*

RE:

*Bob Edgar's office has also given
me your e-mail address so
I'll send the first two pages as
an attachment in case electronic
distribution works better.*

John McAuliff

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October 12, 2000

President William J. Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Clinton;

I am attaching a letter that we have been circulating for several weeks urging use of your power to let Americans travel freely to Cuba. Unfortunately the Republican leadership of the Senate and House have defied the will of their own bodies in order to strip this power from the Executive.

Given this is an election year and given how many important programs are funded by the Agricultural Appropriations Bill, the conventional wisdom is that you will not veto it, despite the strong reservations you expressed about the Cuba language in your press conference last week.

I believe you should exercise your veto on the grounds that the travel language in the bill rises to the level of Congressional infringement on the Constitutional authority of the President.

I presume it would be the sentiment of most of the signers of the attached letter that you should exercise your veto for foreign policy if not for Constitutional reasons. Some may be more "realistic" and only hope that you use your signing statement to strengthen your previous remarks. This will lay the basis for renewed efforts to modernize Cuba policy in the next Congress and, one hopes, by the next President*.

In particular it would be useful to put on the record a view from the White House that national security and foreign policy concerns cannot justify a law that codifies restrictions on travel to Cuba.

Sincerely,



John F. McAuliff
Executive Director

* Regrettably, although I personally support the election of Vice President Gore and Senator Lieberman, I see little so far to differentiate them from their opponents on Cuba policy or to make me optimistic that they will follow your leadership on this issue.

October 12, 2000

**President William J. Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C.**

Dear President Clinton,

After four decades of confrontation, mutual misunderstanding and needless human suffering, the US badly needs a new approach to Cuba.

It is in your power to restore to all Americans the freedom to travel to Cuba, in conformity with the expressed sentiments of Congress. Let Americans witness for themselves the good and bad aspects of life in a very close neighbor a decade after the end of the Cold War.

Demonstrate faith in our own values of freedom. Allow average Americans through interaction with average Cubans to decide for themselves whether it benefits either country to prolong forty years of economic blockade and political conflict. Our national debate must go beyond partisan special interests.

Mr. President, your final months in office provide a unique opportunity to bring to US-Cuba relations the same courageous vision you have asked of parties in conflict in Northern Ireland and the Middle East.

Cooperating Organizations:

**American Civil Liberties Union
American Association for the Advancement of Science,
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Cuban Studies
Cuban Committee for Democracy
Fund for Reconciliation and Development
Global Exchange
Operation USA**

Individual signers:

**Dr. Craig Calhoun, President, Social Science Research Council
Dr. John Coatsworth, Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard
University
Marc B. Cohen, Member, Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Dr. Bernd Crasemann, Professor Emeritus of Physics, University of Oregon
Richard Erstad, Director, Latin America and Caribbean Region, American Friends
Service Committee
Paul Hawken, author
Dr. Leon Lederman, Professor of Science, Illinois Institute of Technology, 1988
Nobel Laureate in Physics
Dr. Irving Lerch, Director of International Affairs, American Physical Society
Raymond C. Offenheiser, President, Oxfam America
Wayne Smith, Director, Cuba Project, Center for International Policy**

(organizations listed for identification purposes) (additional signers on accompanying pages)

**Letter Coordinator: John McAuliff, Executive Director, Fund for Reconciliation & Development,
475 Riverside Drive, Suite 727, New York, NY 10115; phone 212-367-4278; fax 212-367-4366**

Additional Signers to the Letter to President Clinton as of 12 October 2000

Elena A.	Alvarez		Chevy Chase	MD
Alfred	Amery		Pepperell	MA
Eisa	Auerbach	Prof. of English, U.Mass Boston	Boston	MA
Natylie	Balbwin		Pittsburg	CA
Harry W.	Baltzer	Retired USFS Surveyer	Huron	SD
Baird	Brown		Chicago	IL
Doris M.	Carino		Everett	MA
Julia	Charlesworth		Bettendorf	IA
Nancy H.	Chilton		Tucson	AZ
Meg Barden	Cline		Keene	NH
Robert E.	Cole	Retired Chief Economist, Botswana Ministry of Finance	Fort Lauderdale	FL
David E.	Cox		Bellport	NY
Donald S.	Creery		Seattle	WA
Susan	da Silva		Benicia	CA
Jeffrey M.	Dickemann		Richmond	CA
William J.	Dickson		Middletown	CT
Rosanne	Donahue	Assistant Dean, U.Mass Boston	Boston	MA
Harvey	Donegan		New York	NY
Susan M.	Eisenhal	Professor	Boston	MA
Cynthia	Foster	The Community Church of Boston	Boston	MA
Lawrence	Foster	Prof. of Philosophy, U.Mass Boston	Boston	MA
Eleanor	Franzke		Racine	WI
K.C.	Frederick	Prof. of English, U.Mass Boston	Boston	MA
Julia M.	Fusco		New York	NY
Donald	Gilpin	Teacher, West Windsor-Plainsboro H.S.	Princeton Junction	NJ
Chellis	Glendinning		Chimayo	NM
Joseph Mario	Goncalves		Boston	MA
Tom	Goyens		Williamsburg	VA
Robert A	Greene	Prof. of English, U.Mass Boston	Boston	MA
Kathryn	Harrison		Berkeley	CA
Alan	Harwood	Assoc Dean for Undergraduate Ed. U.Mass Boston	Boston	MA
Paul J.	Hauben	Retired Professor	Stockton	CA
Barbara	Hellering		Riverhead	NY
Alan	Helms	Professor, U. Mass. Boston	Boston	MA
James F.	Hopgood	Northern Kentucky University	Independence	KY
Richard A.	Hordley	Distinguished Prof. Liberal Arts & Religion, U. Mass	Boston	MA
Joseph A.	Jechenthal III		Crown Point	IN
Esther	Kingston-Mann	Prof. of History, U.Mass Boston	Boston	MA
Ursula M.	Kinzel		New York	NY
F.S.	Kobritz		Baltimore	MD
John	Kyper	Washington Street Corridor Coalition	Boston	MA
Arthur	Lambert		New York	NY
Lynne	LeBlanc		Newton	MA
Christina M.	Lertz		Mauldin	SC
Jean	MacGowan		Boston	MA
Joely	Malke		Chesaning	MI
Margaret A.	Marsfield		Boston	MA

Additional Signers to the Letter to President Clinton as of 12 October 2000

Linden P.	Martineau		Ventnor	NJ
William A.	Maxwell	Associate Professor of English, University of Illinois	Urbana	IL
Nancy	Mikelsons		Chicago	IL
Lisa M.	Murdoch		Daytona Beach	FL
Douglas S.	Murray	Retired Commander, U.S. Navy	Virginia Beach	VA
Marysa	Nayarro	Dartmouth Latin American, Latino & Caribbean Studies	Dartmouth	NH
Joe	Nelson		Kentwood	MI
Christopher	Nelson		Ann Arbor	MI
June C.	Nelson		Kentwood	MI
Harry	Nier	Denver-Havana Friendship/Sister Cities Project	Denver	CO
Martine	O'Connor		Bellport	NY
Maryland	O'Garro, Jr.		Hampton	VA
Octavio	Obergon	Profesor, Universidad de Guanajuato	Leon	Gto.
Kathleen K.	Oser	Octogenarian Activist	Clinton	NY
David R.	Peck		Laguna Beach	CA
Bettie	Petth		Roma	
Ted	Pietras		Boston	MA
Catherine G.	Powers		Windsor	CA
Jennifer	Radden	Prof. of Philosophy, U.Mass	Boston	MA
Albert	Resis		De Kalb	IL
Jeffrey	Rink	Dir. Orchestral Activities, U.Mass Boston	Boston	MA
Marie Armande	Ripley		Newark	NJ
Judith	Roberts		Boston	MA
Nora	Robertson		Portland	OR
Lois	Rudnick	Director, American Studies, U.Mass	Boston	MA
Nicholas	Russo, Jr		Boston	MA
Lloyd	Schwartz	Professor of English	Boston	MA
Robert K.	Shope	Professor, U. Mass Boston	Boston	MA
Barbara	Shrodes		New York	NY
Rachel C.	Skvirsky		Boston	MA
Andrew P.	Smith		York	PA
Lucy S.	Smith		Dinwiddle	VA
Louise Z.	Smith	Prof. of English, U.Mass Boston	Boston	MA
Sid & Sandy	Socular		New York	NY
Laura	Speuce		Boston	MA
Wesley	Stromberg		White Plains	NY
Don	Timmerman	Casa Maria Catholic Worker	Milwaukee	WI
Lorenzo	Torrez	Amigos de Cuba	Tucson	AZ
Ross	Vachon		Pacific Palisades	CA
Amy	Vail		Ann Arbor	MI
Wendy	Volkmann		Santa Fe	NM
Daniel	Warner		Oakland	CA
Hal	Wedel		Laramie	WY
Hilda M.	Wilcox		Cooperstown	NY
Vivian	Zamel		Boston	MA



FAX TRANSMISSION

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE AND PEACE

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To: Maureen Shea
Date: October 6, 2000
Fax #: (202) 456-6218
Pages: 6, including this cover sheet.
From: Tom Quigley, *TQ*
Subject: U.S. Catholic Bishops and Cuba

Maureen:

Attached are the more recent USCC letters/statements on Cuba. More can be found on our website:
www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/international/latinamerica/cuba.

Best wishes.

Tom



Department of Social Development and World Peace
3211 4th Street N.E. Washington, DC 20017-1194 FAX (202)541-3339



September 27, 2000

Dear Representative,

I write once more to urge that the language approved by the Senate that would lift all unilateral sanctions on the sale of food and medicine (the "Dorgan language") be retained in the conference report for the FY 2001 Agricultural Appropriations bill. We are primarily concerned with the impact this will have in ending U.S. sanctions against Cuba.

The Catholic Bishops of Cuba are under no illusion that the end of the sanctions imposed by our government will usher in a time of economic prosperity for their people. They do know, however, that retaining the sanctions continues to hurt only the most vulnerable sectors of that society, and provides the regime with propaganda advantages it does not deserve.

In his historic visit to Cuba in 1998, Pope John Paul II characterized "the economic measures imposed from outside the country," that is, the United States embargo against Cuba, as "both unjust and morally unacceptable." It is time to leave aside a policy that, whatever moral justification it may once have had, has clearly outlived its purpose.

With thanks for your attention to these concerns, I am

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Bernard Cardinal Law".

Bernard Cardinal Law
Archbishop of Boston
Chairman, USCC Committee
on International Policy



Department of Social Development and World Peace
3211 4th Street N.E. Washington, DC 20017-1194 FAX (202)541-3339



May 12, 2000

Dear Member of the Rules Committee,

In their major pastoral letter issued for this Jubilee Year, the Catholic Bishops of Cuba addressed the many problems facing the Cuban people at this time, and singled out the economic embargo imposed by our country:

Unfortunately, there still remain "the economic measures imposed from outside the country, both unjust and morally unacceptable" (John Paul II, departure speech, n.4), which ought to cease, as we have been saying now for many years.

With Pope John Paul and the Cuban Bishops, the Catholic Bishops of the United States also believe that this embargo, which harms only the most vulnerable in Cuba, not the regime, should be ended. Aware that the political realities of our country make the outright termination of these measures unlikely at this time, we do urge that restrictions presently in effect that limit the commercial sale of food, feed, medicine and medical equipment be lifted now.

The language offered by Mr. Nethercutt and accepted by the Appropriations Committee last Thursday in their decision to reject an amendment to strike the sanctions language was, in our view, a valuable step in the right direction. I urge you to protect that provision and oppose any action that would amend this desired legislation.

With sincere thanks for your attention to these concerns, I am

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bernard Cardinal Law".

Bernard Cardinal Law
Archbishop of Boston
Chairman, USCC Committee
on International Policy



Communications

National Conference of Catholic Bishops / United States Catholic Conference

'Outmoded' Cuban Embargo Should Be Lifted; Cardinal Commends Congressional Efforts

WASHINGTON (July 13, 2000) -- The 40-year old U.S. embargo against Cuba should be lifted, according to the Chairman of the Bishops' International Policy Committee, who praised recent efforts in the U.S. House and Senate to end restrictions on food and medicines.

"The embargo imposed by the United States has, in my view, long exhausted the moral legitimacy it may once have had and should be abandoned," said Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston in a statement released today.

Cardinal Law singled out efforts by U.S. Rep. George Nethercutt (R-WA) and U.S. Sen. John Ashcroft (R-MO). In an effort to open up new markets for the agricultural goods produced in their states, each introduced legislative language in their respective Appropriations Committees to ease restrictions on the sale of food and medicines to Cuba. The full House omitted the sanction reform language in its version of the agriculture appropriations bill, but Cardinal Law expressed optimism that it would be restored in the conference committee that will work out differences between the House and Senate versions.

"Whatever the motives some members may have for seeking an end to restrictions on the sale of food and medicines to Cuba, any measures that relieve the present unjust shortages of basic foods and medicines for the average Cuban, especially the poor, are to be commended," he said.

He called the embargo against Cuba, imposed soon after President Fidel Castro's rise to power, "outmoded and unjustified," and expressed hope that the lifting of the Cuban embargo would prompt a review of all "punitive measures that have either served their purpose or have shown their inability to serve any justified political goal."

NOTE: Full text of Cardinal Law's statement.

Office of Communications
National Conference of Catholic Bishops/United States Catholic Conference
3211 4th Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20017-1194 (202) 541-3000

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Communications

National Conference of Catholic Bishops / United States Catholic Conference

Statement on the Economic Embargo Against Cuba

Bernard Cardinal Law
Chairman, Committee on International Policy
United States Catholic Conference

July 12, 2000

I welcome the recent moves in the Congress to end part of the U.S. embargo against the Cuban people and commend the leadership especially of Representative Nethercutt and Senator Ashcroft in these efforts. Whatever the motives some Members may have for seeking an end to restrictions on the sale of food and medicines to Cuba, any measures that relieve the present unjust shortages of basic foods and medicines for the average Cuban, especially the poorest, are to be commended. Unfortunately, the House of Representatives failed to include the sanction reform provision in its version of the Agriculture appropriations bill. It is my hope that this omission will be resolved in conference and that the compromise will not impose conditions that frustrate the humanitarian goals of the new measures.

The Church's moral teachings lay down specific criteria for judging the ethical legitimacy of economic sanctions. The embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba has, in my view, long exhausted the moral legitimacy it may once have had and should be abandoned. At present, the only significant beneficiaries of this embargo are the leaders of the Cuban government for whom it provides an endlessly invoked excuse for the devastating failure of its economic system, and harms mostly the poorest and those without access to the dollar stores. Means other than punitive sanctions should be pursued to promote Cuba's adherence to international norms of human rights and religious freedom.

The present lifting of parts of the embargo against Cuba should lead quickly to a thorough re-evaluation of all such punitive measures that have either served their purpose or have shown their inability to serve any justified political goal. While they are clear about the need for positive change, the Catholic Bishops of Cuba have long insisted that any measures designed to harm the government but which mostly harm the people are to be rejected. The Holy Father, in his historic visit of January 1998, affirmed that position and appealed to the world community to open to Cuba as he called on Cuba to open to the world. Neither has yet truly happened, but it is time for our government finally to end the outmoded and unjustified economic embargo against Cuba as a step towards achieving these goals.



ACTION ACTION ALERT

USCC Department of Social Development and World Peace
3211 Fourth Street N.E., Washington, DC 20017-1194
Tel: (202) 541-3180 Fax: (202) 541-3339

CUBA ACTION ALERT -- JULY 2000

POLICY ISSUE. Contrary to the usual view that policy changes are not likely during election years, Cuba policy is moving this year. In both Houses, there have been important measures to lift certain restrictions on the sale of food and medicine. An amendment by Rep. Nethercutt (R-WA) to the Agricultural Appropriations bill that would eliminate most unilateral sanctions on the sale of food and medicine worldwide, was first weakened in a compromise agreement with the House leadership, and then struck from the bill on procedural grounds. Attempts to attach it as an amendment to the Military Construction Appropriations bill, now in conference, failed as several Senators, including Dodd (D-CT) and Dorgan (D-ND), threatened to filibuster the bill when it comes to the floor if the weakened Nethercutt language was attached..

Senator Dorgan has now attached to the Senate Agriculture Appropriations bill the earlier sanctions language of Senators Ashcroft (R-MO) and Hagel (R-NE), parallel to the original Nethercutt language, which we hope can be passed without being struck, weakened or replaced with the Nethercutt compromise.

USCC POSITION. The Bishops' Conference has strongly supported these efforts to gradually chip away at the economic embargo.

- During his 1998 visit to Cuba, the Holy Father appealed to the world community to open up to Cuba as he called on Cuba to open up to the world. With the Catholic Bishops of Cuba, we are clear about the need for positive change in Cuba just as we are persuaded that the principal effects of the U.S. embargo, apart from providing the Cuban government with an excuse for every failure of its economy, are to deprive the neediest people of essential foods and medicines.
- The bills currently before the Congress will not automatically hasten the return of democracy and respect for human rights in Cuba nor will they end all shortages of food and medicine in Cuba. However, by acknowledging the suffering that many in Cuba today are experiencing and offering to reverse, at least in principle, certain measures that have contributed to their suffering, we can send an important and needed signal that we wish no ill to the Cuban people and that we have grave moral and practical concerns about the Cuba embargo as a whole.

ACTION REQUESTED. Please contact your senators, urging them to support the original Dorgan sanctions language on the Agriculture Appropriations bill, which represents the Ashcroft-Helms compromise, and not weaken it with the Nethercutt compromise language.

More Information: Tom Quigley, 202-541-3184 (ph), 202-541-3339 (fax)
www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/international