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April 15, 1998

The Honorable Dan Burton
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lincoln Diaz-Balart
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Burton, Diaz-Balart and Ros-Lehtinen:

I welcome the opportunity to respond to your March 9 letter concerning the recent visit to Cuba by Caterpillar representatives along with others from the business community.

Caterpillar agrees with many members of the religious, humanitarian, agricultural, and business communities who are questioning America's policy toward Cuba because that policy simply isn't working. Rather than promoting freedom and positive change in Cuba, America's current policy of isolation and containment has tended to bolster a struggling regime, hurt the Cuban people, and isolate Cuban society from American influence.

There's no question that it is a failed communist system and a totalitarian government that is responsible for the poverty and repression in Cuba. It is also true that during the past 50 years, the United States has succeeded in spreading American ideas and ideals throughout the world by pursuing a full range of foreign policy options ranging from full engagement to intervention.

The essential question is ... how best to promote freedom and positive change in Cuba? Following Pope John Paul II's historic visit to Cuba many people of goodwill are trying to answer that question. The attached March 1 *Miami Herald* editorial calling for modest changes to the current policy is thoughtful and constructive. We urge you to study it. It may be the basis for common ground.

We also note that many members of the Cuban-American community are trying to encourage positive change in Cuba by seeking to ease the U.S. embargo. At Caterpillar, we believe engagement can be a positive force for change when pursued at all levels -- political, diplomatic, economic, charitable, religious, educational, and cultural. It is certainly working in many parts of the world.

If the *Miami Herald* is correct when it states that Cuba is "ripe for transition" and the current U.S. policy "only maintains the status quo," it would be a shame if an open discussion about a new Cuba policy didn't soon take place. To promote greater understanding there also needs to be more people-to-people and humanitarian contact with Cuba. But that can only occur if Americans travel to Cuba. That's one of the reasons why our representatives visited Cuba earlier this year.

While we recognize no one has a monopoly on wisdom, we plan in the months ahead to urge U.S. policy-makers to explore new initiatives to promote freedom in Cuba. We hope you will be supportive. But even if we end up disagreeing, we hope you will respect our views.

Sincerely,

Donald V. Fites
sm

attach.

THE MIAMI HERALD

GIVING HOPE A PUSH

Sunday, March 1, 1998
Section: Editorial
Page: 2L

SOURCE/CREDIT LINE: Herald Staff

In the wake of Pope John Paul II's visit to Cuba, competing bills in Congress vie to lift curbs on supplying medicine and food to Cuba. Either approach would modify the U.S. embargo, essentially unchanged for 36 years. These efforts, though, beg another response: Washington needs to examine embargo provisions that are overripe for overhaul.

The Herald always has supported the embargo's ban on U.S. business dealings with or in Cuba. We still do. This ban remains a valuable bargaining chip that the United States must not hand over to Fidel Castro without some quid pro quo. The embargo, if nothing else, is a brake against the Cuban tyrant's everlasting deviousness.

Times have changed, however. Cuba is ripe for a transition, as the Pope's visit well demonstrated. But the embargo is far too blunt an instrument for today's reality. Even worse is the Helms-Burton Act. It narrowed the President's options on Cuba policy while alienating U.S. allies with its extraterritorial reach.

Within these constraints, the current U.S. nonpolicy toward Cuba -- that is, to react rather than act -- only maintains the status quo . Opportunity to promote positive change is being wasted.

Follow the Pope's lead

The United States, by policy and action, should proactively encourage a peaceful transition, participative democracy, and fundamental human rights in Cuba. As the Pope wisely counseled, Washington should encourage Cuba to open itself to the world, and the world to open to Cuba. This requires changes in the embargo that would encourage people-to-people and humanitarian contact with individual Cubans. That would entail lifting certain restrictions on travel, remittances, and the sale of medicine and food.

President Clinton should take the lead. He can begin by taking actions not constrained by law. First, he should lift the prohibitions on direct flights to Cuba and on sending money to individuals there. Direct flights were banned two years ago after Castro's government shot down two Brothers to the Rescue planes, murdering four South Floridians. Today, however, this ban hinders both humanitarian efforts and people exchanges. U.S. Catholic Relief Services, for example, has $6 million in donated medicines to ship to Cuba.

But it must wait for approval from three federal offices to arrange a direct flight. A ban on using U.S. carriers for such flights further complicates aid efforts.

A ban on remittances is also counterproductive. Before, U.S. households could send up to $300 per quarter to people in Cuba. But President Clinton forbade even that in 1995. Did that stop remittances to Cuba? Hardly: They're now estimated at up to $800 million a year. Despite exile hard-liners who argue against sending any cash, countless Cuban Americans violate this ban regularly, and with impunity. While wrong to break the law, they do so to relieve their loved ones' suffering. Who can blame them? Blood is thicker than law. Always has been. Always will be.

These dollars from exiles and others in America pay for everything from children's milk to typewriter paper for independent journalists to soap for families. Yes, those dollars indirectly prop up Castro's atrophied economy. But the humanitarian benefits far outweigh the gains for Castro.

Such was the case with direct telephone calls to Cuba. Though Castro's government gets hard currency for the calls, the communications opening provides a communications lifeline between here and Cuba.

For the same reasons and more, restrictions on Americans' travel should be lifted -- totally. Americans with family members there, those on cultural exchanges, academics, journalists, and scientists are now authorized to travel to Cuba. Others may not go legally -- but they do, illegally, via third countries.

Americans have a constitutional right to travel where and when they please except to war zones or during national emergencies. Let them go see -- and by their presence undermine -- Castro's "socialist paradise." It would hurt Castro more than Washington.

Free up food, medicine

Finally, for humanitarian reasons, U.S. companies should be allowed to sell medicine and food in Cuba. Not that Cuba has the hard currency to buy either, thanks to Castro's ruinous economic policies. Indeed, the United States currently authorizes millions in food and medical donations to Cuba. Much is sent by South Florida exiles via parcels. Other donations are funneled though Catholic Relief Services, its ultimate distribution monitored by Caritas Cuba. The monitoring is wise, prevents ill use of aid, and should continue.

Allowing Cuba to buy food and medicine directly from U.S. companies really wouldn't change much at all. Whatever benefit Castro might obtain would be small compared with the devastating truth: Cuba no longer can feed and care for its people.

Cracks are visible in Cuba's system. The openings provide realistic hope for change now. To protect itself from the horror of a Ceausescu-style transition, and to plant seeds for future relations with a free, self-determined Cuba, the United States should waste no time in fine-tuning its overbroad embargo.

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 9, 1998

Mr. Donald V. Fites
Chairman and CEO
Caterpillar Inc.
100 NE Adams Street
Peoria, Illinois 61629

Dear Mr. Fites:

We are disappointed that press reports state that a representative of your company participated in a conference recently held in Cuba that promoted business opportunities on the enslaved island. The conference included meeting with Fidel Castro, the Cuban dictator, and other high ranking members of the Cuban regime.

Cuba remains the last bastion of totalitarian communism in our hemisphere. Cuban workers enjoy no labor rights and are denied the most fundamental and internationally recognized human rights. The Cuban people are treated as economic slaves, where the state, not the individual, is the sole owner of the means of production.

As a U.S. company built on the entrepreneurial spirit that characterizes American capitalism, it would be shameful for Caterpillar to consider business opportunities in a system that suppresses the freedoms that have helped Caterpillar and the American economy to be the world's envy. Cuba will undoubtedly be a great market for Caterpillar, but only after Castro and his thugs are out of power and Cuban workers are free. Moreover, the Cuban people will resent those companies which dealt with Castro in order to fill their pockets with profits while ignoring the suffering of the people.

We urge you not to have Caterpillar participate in forums which promote business opportunities in Cuba, and instead, stand in solidarity with the oppressed people of the island in their struggle to achieve political freedom and the liberty to pursue their economic dreams.

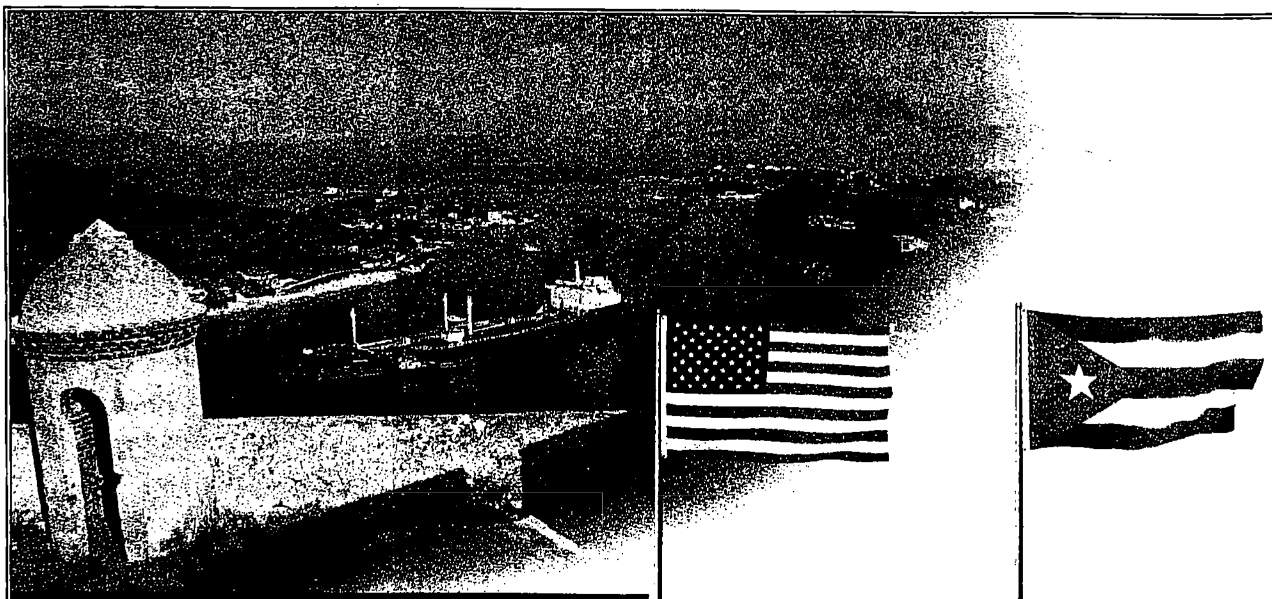
We would appreciate a written reply to our concerns.

Sincerely,

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress

Lincoln Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress

Dan Burton
Member of Congress



An Open Letter on Cuba from the American Business and Agricultural Communities

January 16, 1998

Dear President Clinton, Speaker Gingrich, and Majority Leader Lott:

For nearly 40 years, the United States has pursued a policy of containment and isolation toward Cuba. This outdated policy currently serves to bolster a struggling regime and isolate the Cuban people from American influence.

Next week, world attention will focus on Pope John Paul II's historic trip to Cuba. Already his trip is serving as a catalyst for change. Now the United States has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership through engagement as well. While there are no guarantees in foreign policy, **engagement can be a powerful force** when pursued at all levels — political, diplomatic, economic, charitable, religious, educational, and cultural.

We believe the time is right to explore new initiatives to promote freedom in Cuba. As a first step, we urge that you publicly commit — in the State of the Union Address and the Republican response — to end the ban on the export of U.S. food as well as lift the restrictions on the sale of medical products. We would hope that this opening will produce further opportunities for improved relations.

Leadership is something all Americans respect. We stand ready to support you in a new policy of engagement with Cuba.

Sincerely,

USA★ENGAGE

National Foreign Trade Council, Inc.
United States Chamber of Commerce
Small Business Exporters Association

Construction Industry Manufacturers Association
Automotive Parts and Accessories Association
Grocery Manufacturers of America
North American Export Grain Association
Computer & Communications Industry Association
Manufacturers Alliance
Petroleum Equipment Suppliers Association
U.S. Association for International Business and Trade
International Wood Products Association

American Farm Bureau Federation
National Association of Manufacturers
The National Grange

American Soybean Association
American Feed Industry Association
Emergency Committee for American Trade
International Association of Geophysical Contractors
Equipment Manufacturers Institute
Food Distributors International
Computing Technology Industries Association
European-American Business Council
American Association of Exporters and Importers
Americans for Humanitarian Trade with Cuba

USA★ENGAGE IS A COALITION OF 660 SMALL AND LARGE BUSINESSES, AGRICULTURAL GROUPS AND TRADE ASSOCIATIONS WORKING TO SEEK ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROLIFERATION OF UNILATERAL U.S. FOREIGN POLICY SANCTIONS AND TO PROMOTE THE BENEFITS OF U.S. ENGAGEMENT ABROAD. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON USA★ENGAGE AND THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF UNILATERAL TRADE SANCTIONS, CONTACT THE NATIONAL FOREIGN TRADE COUNCIL AT (202) 887-0278 AND **visit the USA★ENGAGE web site at http://www.usaengage.org.**

(Paid for by USA★ENGAGE)

April 22, 1998

U.S. Businesses See Vast Potential Market in Cuba

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- Panel Defeats U.S. Move to Censure Cuba on Rights
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- U.S. To Ease Curbs on Relief to Cuba and Money to Kin (March 20)
- Cuban Exile Group Wants Strings Attached to Aid (Jan. 30)
- Cuba's Weak Sugar Harvest Is Threat to Recovery (May 18, 1997)
- Cuba Measure Strikes Back at U.S. Over Helms-Burton (Jan. 11, 1997)

By JIM CARRIER

Last month, two Caterpillar Inc. executives had the kind of face-to-face meeting with a national leader that salesmen dream about -- except the leader was Fidel Castro, and they weren't allowed to sell him anything.

At a dinner the Cuban leader threw in Havana for several American business people, Castro asked the Caterpillar managers about bulldozers. They told him the largest Cat exceeded 1,000 horsepower. His bushy eyebrows shot up; Cuba's Russian machines are only 100 horse and are notoriously unreliable. "I can't comprehend" bulldozers like the ones his guests were describing, Castro said through an interpreter.

At about the same time, a high-ranking Cuban diplomat traveled to the world headquarters of the Radisson Hotels, a unit of the Carlson Cos., in St. Paul. He assured Peter Blyth, Radisson's president, that three sites eyed by Radisson years ago in Havana and Varadero, a resort on the northern coast, were still available for hotel development. The properties have no claims against them by foreigners forced out of the country after Castro took power in 1959, he added, and the Cuban government was eager to do business with Radisson.

These two recent contacts between capitalist America and Communist Cuba represent a small but growing movement by American companies to prepare for the day when doing business with Cuba is not trading with the enemy, as most such transactions are now legally defined. In spite of the 36-year-old U.S. embargo that prohibits all but a narrow range of commercial activity, and in spite of discouragement by the State Department, American executives are circling the island like Navy gunboats once did, and, in increasing numbers, actually landing.

Cuba's needs are certainly monumental. American executives who have visited Cuba recently estimate the market just for basic goods and services like food, medicine and road repair at $2 billion to $4 billion annually. Blyth of Radisson Hotels predicts Americans would flood Cuba in the unlikely event that travel restrictions were eased -- driving up the number of annual foreign visitors to 10 million from the current mostly European crop of 1.2 million. Under current law, Americans are free to travel to Cuba, but can't spend a dime unless they are licensed by the State Department or are the guests of officially designated hosts, like the Cuban government or some foreign company.

"You could run brake shoes over for '53 Chevys and make a fortune," said Rob O'Neill, manager of the Key West, Fla., harbor, who often talks with associates about the money-making opportunities that will open up when the embargo ends.

Before Americans can sign deals, however, Congress must lift the embargo. And that is unlikely to happen as long as Castro remains in power. "Castro has to leave, vertically or horizontally," said Marc Thiessen, press spokesman for Sen. Jesse Helms, the North Carolina Republican who is chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. Even so, he suggested, Castro's departure may not be so far off. "We're so close," Thiessen suggested. "Castro's revolution is dead."

Still, with the prospect of the bars coming down to the hemisphere's last forbidden market, an island of 11 million people just 90 miles south of the Florida coast, American business is straining at the leash. "It's not even controversial in our membership," said John Howard, director of international policy for the United States Chamber of Commerce. "There is a widespread and growing sentiment that our policy toward Cuba makes no sense."

For now, American business is pretty much limited to advocating a change in American policy, which has been dictated for decades by the mostly anti-Castro Cuban-American community, to slipping through the few fissures that Washington has allowed to develop in the ban, and to keeping up a dialogue with Cubans.

The number of American business representatives traveling to Cuba -- legally, but in most cases without State Department sanction -- has quadrupled to a projected 2,000 this year from 500 in 1994, according to the U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council of New York.

Just last month, a delegation of mid-level officers from major corporations -- including the Mobil Oil Corp., Texaco Inc., Pharmacia & Upjohn, Bristol Myers Squibb, Continental Grain, the Case Corp., a unit of Tenneco, and Caterpillar Inc. -- were the official guests of Castro and his top ministers in Havana, and a follow-up trade show is proposed in September, said organizer Kirby Jones of Alamar Associates. Another trade show for American companies, this one for medical products, is planned within the year by PWN Exhibicon International, based in Connecticut. For the most part, participants in such events describe them as fact-finding tours, though American companies are allowed to take such measures as signing nonbinding letters of intent with Cuban groups or registering trademarks and brand names.

Meantime, President Clinton has widened ever so slightly some small cracks in the trade embargo. On March 20, he announced a measure to expedite shipments of drug and medical equipment, which are already exempt from the ban. At the same time, he authorized the resumption of direct flights to Cuba and of remittances of up to $1,200 by Americans to relatives in Cuba, a measure that should boost sales for the approximately 100 American companies given special dispensation to trade with Cuba.

Those companies do a combined $100 million-a-year business in Cuba -- a drop in the bucket compared with the inroads being made by some of America's trading partners. The Cuban government reports that companies from 25 countries have committed $2 billion to 340 joint ventures and associations with the Cubans, and have announced other deals worth an additional $4.5 billion.

Canada is the biggest foreign investor, accounting for one-third of the money flowing into the country, followed by Italy, Mexico, Spain, France and Holland. The Sherritt International Corp. of Toronto is reportedly the single most active foreign company, with $800 million committed. The company produces 40 percent of Cuba's oil and is also involved in mining, power generation, cell phones, tourism and agriculture, said Patrice Merrin Best, senior vice president.

Castro, one of the world's last avowedly Marxist leaders, has made a series of concessions to the capitalist West since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of Moscow's $3 billion-a-year subsidy to his economy. He has liberalized agriculture, allowed tourists to spend dollars, and even invited the pope for a visit in February. In 1995, his government created free trade zones and allowed up to 100 percent foreign ownership in many sectors.

This year, the Cuban government will host 250 trade fairs, a turnabout 38 years after Castro began the nationalization of hundreds of foreign companies that led to the trade embargo. The first property seized, on June 29, 1960, was a Texaco refinery. The rest followed on Aug. 6. President Kennedy imposed the embargo Feb. 7, 1962.

Nearly 6,000 property claims have been certified by the United States; more than half of them, with a 1972 value of $1.8 billion, are held by 30 corporations. Under the Helms-Burton Act of 1996, the embargo can be lifted only after those claims are settled by a democratic government that does not include Fidel or Raul Castro.

Rather than cowing American companies keen on doing business in Cuba, however, that requirement has galvanized them to speak out against the embargo, according to John Kavulich 2nd, president of the U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council, a nonprofit business organization that describes itself as nonpartisan. "Large companies moved from just gathering information about Cuba to finding out what they could do in Cuba today, and then doing it," he said.

Even some companies with big compensation claims are cautious about making an issue of them as they eye the Cuban market. Texaco hopes to resolve its demand "if the opportunity represents itself," said Chris Gidez, director of external communications. Meantime, the company sent a member of its Latin American business team to Havana last month to meet with government officials.

Until now, most American corporations have feared approaching Cuba's shores, even when it was legal. Medical sales, for example, have been allowed for years, but only 40 transactions have been licensed since 1992, and medical companies have given away more than they've sold. Another 10 exploratory licenses have been issued.

Medical companies appear reluctant to jump into Cuba; Eli Lilly & Co. said it had no plans to apply for a license as long as the full embargo remained. Part of the reason for their hesitation is the endless paperwork that awaits them. Any pharmaceutical company wishing to exhibit products at the planned trade show by PWN Exhibicon International, for example, must first get a permit from the federal government, then a separate license to sell any product, be it an X-ray machine or a box of surgical gloves.

Even more daunting is a prohibition on high-technology exports so broad that it basically includes anything with a microprocessor. "They think it's going to be put in the nose of a cruise missile and sent back our way," said W. Bradford Gary, a board member of the Medical Device Manufacturers Association, who visited Cuba last month. As a result, he said, Cuban doctors wash and reuse surgical gloves and operate 1950s kidney-dialysis machines with no spare parts.

At the moment, the largest licensed transaction with Cuba is AT&T's annual payment of $23 million for access to the Cuban market, part of $66 million in fees from nine long-distance companies. (Most of the long-distance calls that AT&T makes money on originate in the United States.) American airlines pay another $6 million to fly over Cuban air space en route to South America.

Other transactions range from Western Union moneygrams to three charter flights a week from three Miami charter airlines, which last year were permitted to fly 17,000 journalists, academicians and humanitarians and 43,000 Cuban-Americans home for their once-a-year family visit.

After two American civilian planes were shot down by Cuba in 1996, direct flights to the island were banned, and American visitors had to travel first to Mexico or the Bahamas and board foreign airlines there for the final leg to Havana. President Clinton's reversal of that policy is expected to reduce the round-trip fare to about $300 from $400, while boosting the traffic handled by American charter companies by 50 percent, to 90,000 passengers a year, said Vivian Mannerud, president of the Airline Broker Co.

"Since the pope's visit, we've seen an increase in visa applications, nearly doubling," Ms. Mannerud said. "People are saying it's time to visit their families, some who have waited 30 years."

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April 22, 1998

Panel Defeats U.S. Move to Censure Cuba on Rights

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- Cuba Measure Strikes Back at U.S. Over Helms-Burton (Jan. 11, 1997)
- Europe's Call for Rights in Cuba Wins U.S. Approval (Dec. 4, 1996)

By ELIZABETH OLSON

GENEVA, Switzerland -- An effort led by the United States to rebuke Cuba for its human-rights practices was voted down Tuesday by the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

The defeat appears to reflect a growing sentiment, particularly among Europeans and Latin Americans, that Cuba cannot be isolated forever and that it is making efforts to meet its international human-rights obligations.

The U.S.-sponsored resolution called on Havana to "promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms" and to "release numerous persons detained for activities of a political nature."

Nineteen countries voted against the proposal -- including China and Russia -- and 16, including the United States, Britain, France and Germany, voted in favor. Another 18 members, including many Latin American countries, abstained.

"This vote has repaired a historic mistake and has ended selective and discriminatory treatment against us," Maria de los Angeles Florez, Cuba's chief delegate, said after the vote.

Also on Tuesday, the rights commission criticized Iraq, adopting a resolution that "strongly condemns the systematic, widespread and extremely grave violations of human rights," which it said resulted "in an all-pervasive repression and oppression sustained by broad-based discrimination and widespread terror."

The resolution was approved, 32-0, after Russia failed to muster support for diluting it by removing some of the tougher wording. Russia and China were among the 21 countries that abstained.

In Cuba's case, an independent U.N. investigator, Carl Johan Groth of Sweden, told the commission last month that President Fidel Castro's communist government systematically and brutally repressed its domestic critics.

But he added that the nearly four-decade-long U.S. economic embargo against Cuba was partly to blame for the situation, causing a "tragic shortage of material goods" and "untold hardships."

The U.S. effort to keep pressure on Cuba has been steadily losing allies. Beginning with the first U.S. resolution in 1992, support has been dwindling. This year Italy and France, which co-sponsored the U.S. resolution in 1997, refused to do so again, although they did vote for it.

France declined co-sponsorship because of Washington's hard line on Cuba, the French delegate, Marion Paradas-Bouveau, said. "Cuba has cooperated with the U.N. human-rights bodies," she said. Failure to include amendments sponsored by the European Union also weakened support, further isolating the United States on Cuba, she added.

Disenchantment with U.S. policy has been fueled by European objections to the Helms-Burton Act, which imposes penalties on companies that use U.S. properties in Cuba that were seized by the Castro government three decades ago.

Cuba's overtures toward the Roman Catholic Church, particularly the visit of Pope John Paul II in January, and the country's increasing acceptance at international and regional forums bolstered its campaign to portray itself as a victim of a vindictive United States, a diplomat said.

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31 March 1998
The Detroit News
Associated Press By George Gedda

Cuban-Americans lobby for easing of embargo

WASHINGTON -- Energized by Pope John Paul II's recent visit to Cuba, hundreds of Cuban-Americans went to Capitol Hill Tuesday to demand unrestricted sales of food and medicine to the island.

On a day featuring Miami-like heat, the Cuban-Americans sought to make their case in congressional offices and at a news conference, buttressing their arguments with a petition signed by 12,000 sympathizers.

The visitors, mostly from the Miami area, designated Tuesday as the "National Day of Education and Advocacy for Food and Medicine Sales To Cuba."

At present, food sales to Cuba are barred and licenses must be obtained for the sale of medicines and medical supplies. Bipartisan proposals in Congress to end the restrictions have been gaining momentum, but proponents of maintaining the status quo still appear to have the upper hand.

The visiting Cuban-Americans wore buttons saying, "End the embargo on food and medicine to Cuba." They claim the support of business, farm, labor, humanitarian and medical groups and also have made some minor inroads into Republican ranks, traditionally strongly supportive of maintaining the status quo with Cuba.

One such Republican, Sen. John Warner of Virginia, told the news conference the United States cannot project itself as a caring nation if it puts limits on humanitarian sales to Cuba.

Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., said the process of change following the papal visit already is under way in Cuba, pointing to the hundreds of prisoners who have been released.

Declaring that he does not want to see "the perpetuation of a dictatorship" in Cuba, Dodd said the United States can contribute to peaceful change by making humanitarian exceptions to the embargo.

At present, a Senate bill backed by Dodd has 26 co-sponsors. Similar legislation on the House side has 112.

Long overshadowed by more conservative exiles, Cuban-Americans who favor a less hostile approach toward the island have been more assertive following the visit of the pope, who opposes the nearly four-decade-old embargo.

Sensing a shift in the public mood, the administration came up with its own program two weeks ago for easing the humanitarian plight among Cubans without altering the embargo. Included in the initiative is an end to a 4-year-old ban on remittances by Cuban-Americans to family members on the island and a resumption of direct charter flights to Cuba.

Gen. John Sheehan, who recently retired from the military after serving as commander of U.S. forces in the Atlantic, said Tuesday the administration's proposals don't go far enough.

"Cuban-Americans -- and religious and humanitarian groups that currently send aid to Cuba -- are here today to push for sales of food and medicine because they know from experience that sending more charity alone simply cannot solve the problem," he said.

Sylvia Wilhelm, of the Miami-based Cuban Committee for Democracy, said, "Months of haggling over how to get more aid to Cuba will just delay what Cuban women, children and the elderly need now. We plan to work around the clock to get this legislation passed."

Before the news conference, the head of Cuba's diplomatic mission in Washington, Fernando Remirez, said the Clinton administration seemed to be of two minds about how to deal with Cuba.

"On the one side, you are giving aid and on the other side you are trying to strangle the Cuban economy," Remirez told reporters at a breakfast session unrelated to the activities on Capitol Hill.

He called the administration announcement of two weeks ago a positive step but said Cuba prefers the legislation supported by Dodd and Warner. He added that the ultimate solution to the U.S.-Cuban impasse is the lifting of the whole embargo, not just a small part of it.

USA*ENGAGE

For Immediate Release
March 20, 1998

USA*ENGAGE Hopeful U.S. on Threshold of New Cuba Policy

Washington, D.C. -- In the wake of President Clinton's announcement easing some restrictions on flights to Cuba, among other minor measures, USA*ENGAGE today reiterated its call for a new Cuban policy.

"Today's action is a good first step, and we congratulate President Clinton. We are hopeful that the easing of these restrictions will mark a new policy of engagement with Cuba," said Frank Kittredge, President of the National Foreign Trade Council and Vice Chairman, USA*ENGAGE.

In addition to allowing direct charter flights, the United States will now allow Cuban-Americans to send limited financial aid to families in Cuba, and will ease the restrictions on the sale of medical supplies for humanitarian purposes.

"Family-to-family financial aid is important, however the new policy doesn't go far enough. U.S. dollars will now be more readily available to Cubans to spend -- but only on non-U.S. goods. Establishing trade ties and eliminating travel restrictions, in addition to private financial aid, is the best way to engage the Cuban people and set the wheels in motion for a new relationship with Cuba," Kittredge continued. "It's time to end the 'cold war' with Cuba and embark on policies that will promote human rights, education, and political and economic reforms." Now 669

USA*ENGAGE is a coalition of ~~661~~ small and large businesses, agriculture groups and trade associations working to seek alternatives to the proliferation of unilateral U.S. foreign policy sanctions and to promote the benefits of U.S. engagement abroad.

Contact: Eric Thomas 202/822-9491

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USA★ENGAGE

For Immediate Release
March 12, 1998

USA*ENGAGE Calls For A New Cuba Policy

Washington, D.C. -- USA*ENGAGE cited today's hearing of the House International Economic Policy and Trade Subcommittee as a perfect opportunity to review U.S. policy towards Cuba. USA*ENGAGE believes the Helms-Burton law is proving to be counterproductive by strengthening the Castro regime, hurting the Cuban people, and undermining American relations with our closest allies.

"U.S. policy toward Cuba is outdated," remarked Frank Kittredge, Vice-Chairman of USA*ENGAGE. "The U.S. has the chance to encourage positive change in Cuba by promoting a policy of engagement and opening a dialogue with the Cuban people and the Government. It is time for Congress and the Administration to recognize that as a result of Pope John Paul II's historic visit changes are occurring in Cuba."

Kittredge noted that "Just last week, over 50 U.S. businessmen traveled to Cuba to meet with top Cuban officials. The American delegation saw first hand the harmful effects of a society isolated from American influence. It's time to completely overhall America's policy toward Cuba."

"We agree with the Miami Herald that it's time to lift all curbs on travel and remittances to Cuba as well as end the ban on the sale of food and restrictions on the sale of medical products."

U.S. policy toward Cuba is losing support even in Representative Illeana Ros-Lehtinen's own state of Florida. According to a recent Miami Herald editorial, "Cuba is ripe for a transition, as the Pope's visit demostrated. But the embargo is far too blunt an instrument for today's reality. Even worse is the Helms-Burton Act."

USA*ENGAGE is a coalition of 661 small and large businesses, agriculture groups and trade associations working to seek alternatives to the proliferation of unilateral U.S. foreign policy sanctions and to promote the benefits of U.S. engagement abroad.

Contact: Eric Thomas 202/822-9491

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USA★ENGAGE

For Immediate Release
January 16, 1998

THE PRESIDENT NEEDS TO GO FURTHER

Washington, D.C. -- USA*ENGAGE today supported President Clinton's waiver of Title III of the Helms-Burton law and called for his leadership in formulating a new policy towards Cuba.

"As we said today in our open letter to President Clinton, Speaker Gingrich and Majority Leader Lott, we believe that now is the time to explore new initiatives to promote freedom in Cuba," said Frank Kittredge, President of the National Foreign Trade Council and Vice Chairman of USA*ENGAGE. "Next week, Pope John Paul II will visit Cuba. This is the right time for the United States to demonstrate further leadership. We urge our leaders to publicly commit to ending the ban on the export of U.S. food and medical supplies and to use our most effective tool for positive change: engagement at all levels."

USA*ENGAGE is a coalition of 660 small and large businesses, agriculture groups and trade associations working to seek alternatives to the proliferation of unilateral U.S. foreign policy sanctions and to promote the benefits of U.S. engagement abroad.

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USA★ENGAGE

For Immediate Release
January 15, 1998

IT IS TIME FOR A NEW CUBAN POLICY

Washington, D.C. -- American business and agricultural communities have joined USA*ENGAGE in sending President Clinton, Speaker Gingrich, and Majority Leader Lott an open letter calling for a change in U.S. policy toward Cuba.

In anticipation of Pope John Paul II's historic trip to Cuba, the letter calls for a public commitment -- in the State of the Union Address and the Republican response -- to end the ban on the export of U.S. food and medical supplies to Cuba as a first step toward engagement.

"The Pope's pastoral visit to Cuba is an historic event that lays the groundwork for new opportunities in promoting human rights, education, political and economic reform," said Frank Kittredge, President of the National Foreign Trade Council and Vice Chairman of USA*ENGAGE. "It is time for us to put 'cold-war' policies behind us and begin to actively influence and promote change in Cuba through constructive engagement."

The letter will appear in *The Wall Street Journal* as an advertisement on Friday, January 16, 1998. Click here to view the letter as it will appear.

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