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SUBJECT: Daily Digest 11/18: LATIN AMERICA'S 'COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY'

TO: Laura D. Schwartz (Laura D. Schwartz@eop [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

A roundup of Latin American, Caribbean and European views on the
Ibero-American

summit of November 10-11 in Chile, last week's visit to Argentina by
Mexican

President Zedillo, elections in Nicaragua and the progress achieved in
solving

the Peru-Ecuador border dispute revealed that the media believes the
region's

"will to consolidate democracy" remains strong, as does its commitment to
free

trade, economic development and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

IBERO-AMERICAN SUMMIT--The development capturing the most attention at
the

annual gathering of heads of state of Latin America, Spain and Portugal
was the

meeting's "firm rejection" of the Helms-Burton Act, the U.S. anti-Castro
trade

legislation. With few exceptions, most writers hastened to stress that
rejection of the U.S. measure does not entail "solidarity toward the

Castro

regime," but "the decision to safeguard the principle of freedom of trade
and

respect for (the)...international legal order." Nevertheless, Havana's

Radio

Rebelde hailed the summit statement as "one of the most categorical
rejections

of the Helms-Burton Act." The brouhaha over the summit's stance on the

Castro

dictatorship sparked many arguments among analysts, with some agreeing
with

centrist Diario 16 of Madrid that the participants' handling of the
situation

had, "regrettably," turned the spotlight on the Cuban leader and turned
the

occasion into another "Castro summit." Others doubted that the

Ibero-American

leaders had sufficiently impressed upon Mr. Castro the need for democracy
in

Cuba. La Paz's pro-business La Razon chided the summit participants for
their

"cowardice," adding they were "lukewarm...in telling Castro that if he
wants to

remain in the company of democratic governments and countries...the only
path

he has left is to really democratize." Dailies in Chile and Argentina

emphasized the meeting's objective of showcasing its members' desire to

contribute to a "new international order on the basis of shared development."

The independent Buenos Aires Herald saw the challenge for area governments as that of addressing the problems of poverty, corruption and drug trafficking, all of which might undermine Latin American democracies.

THE NEW ORDER: DEMOCRACY, TRADE, PEACEKEEPING AND 'CLINTON II'--The November

12-14 visit of Mr. Zedillo to Argentina was seen in Buenos Aires's papers as a

sign that Mexico and its southern neighbors might work for an "expansion of regional agreements," principally through NAFTA and MERCOSUR.

Commentators

welcomed the holding of democratic elections in Nicaragua, but said its problems of national reconciliation and poverty are not helped by the "indifference" of the U.S. and Latin America. Pundits in Ecuador and Peru looked positively on the Santiago accord on their countries' border dispute,

stressing that its solution is important to a continent that helped mediate the

crisis. Journalists called attention to the need by the second-term Clinton

administration to turn "a new page" on Cuba and Haiti, and to negotiate with

Panama on the canal question. Nevertheless, leading Clarin of Buenos Aires

feared that Latin America, the "forgotten continent during the campaign," will

continue to be ignored during the next four years.

This survey is based on 42 reports from 15 countries, Oct. 22-Nov. 17.

EDITOR: Mildred Sola Neely

IBERO-AMERICAN SUMMIT

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

CHILE: "Spain, Following Its Proposal On Castro"

An editorial in influential, conservative El Mercurio (11/17) said,

"Following

the line set forth by (Spanish Prime Minister) Jose Maria Aznar in a conversation with Fidel Castro during the recent VI Ibero American Summit held

in Santiago, Spain has proposed the European Union harden its policy toward

Cuba, to achieve tangible progress toward a participatory democracy and more

respect for human rights in (Cuba)....

"Aznar's initiative is congruent with the participatory democracy embraced

by

the rest of the countries in our hemisphere, and of all European Union members. For this reason, it is of merit that his government proposes the application of such principles to Cuba, where they don't exist. However, it seems unlikely that Fidel Castro will modify the character of his government in response to foreign political pressures."

"Ibero-America's Ability To Contribute To New International Order"

Conservative, mass-circulation La Tercera (11/7) observed editorially, "It is believed that some Chilean groups have made obvious efforts to center the Ibero-American summit on Fidel Castro. Spokesmen for these groups have even acknowledged receiving funds from Miami-based anti-Castroist groups to promote the campaign to be unleashed on occasion of Fidel Castro's presence in Chile.... The fact that Chile is hosting a meeting of countries with a population of 500 million, spread over two continents which share traditions spanning over 500 years of history, is a very important event that should not be tarnished. This is why the government should have reasserted that it will not allow any type of demonstrations, either in favor or against, that do

not
comply with the law.

"These summits have been instrumental in showing the rest of the world
that the
Ibero-American community of nations is able to contribute effectively to
outline a new international order on the basis of shared development.

Within

this context, the summit on this occasion will approve agreements to
strengthen

regional and multilateral organizations, particularly the United Nations,
and

empower it to prevent and resolve conflicts, combat extreme poverty,
define

strategies for sustainable economic and social development, and to defend
democracy. In sum, the Chilean people must, once again, be cordial with
their

guests and avoid making Chile the site of conflicts that must be resolved
by

those responsible for them."

ARGENTINA: "It's Not Cuba That Matters, But Social Neglect In Region"

An editorial in the independent, English-language Buenos Aires Herald
(11/14)

opined, "Since (Argentine) President Carlos Menem insisted on renewing
his

onslaught against Cuban dictator Fidel Castro,...it is high time to
inform him
of the counterproductive nature of this obsession.... All Menem has
achieved
is to shed more limelight on a Cuba already receiving attention out of
all
proportion to its importance at the Santiago summit. A despot of 37
years'
standing like Fidel Castro was already lucky to be allowed to be signing a
joint statement with his elected colleagues.... As an extra bonus, Castro
received the summit's support against the Helms-Burton U.S. embargo
against
Cuba....

"In fact, Cuba hardly matters outside the Caribbean area. The real
challenge
facing Latin America's democracies is not so much to bring the region's
last
surviving dictatorship to an end as to address the social neglect which
has
been the inevitable price of economic liberalism. Failure to lend
socio-economic substance to democracy runs the risk of leading not so
much to

(Chile's) Pinochet-style military dictatorship or Castro's socialism as,
perhaps, toward an equally pernicious and insidious danger: populism."

"Ibero-America's Will To Consolidate Democracy"

An editorial in daily-of-record La Nacion said (11/13), "The 23 chiefs of state and government who participated in the Sixth Ibero-American Summit held in Chile, confirmed their countries' commitment to 'democracy, the rule of law, pluralism, respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.'... Beyond the paradoxical fact that such a declaration has been signed by Fidel Castro,...it should also be celebrated that the community of Ibero-American nations has emphasized, once again, its will to consolidate democracy as a way of life.

"It is also encouraging to see progress in the exchange of ideas regarding what is being called the 'governability of democracy,' revealing the growing concern of many political leaders about the difficulties occasionally encountered by the democratic system, frequently threatened by the lack of successful economic policies or the governments' inability to stop the increase of corruption, drug trafficking, terrorism or other equally destabilizing scourges.

"The Cuba issue has become, once again, the source of controversy. On one

hand, Fidel Castro's presence caused strong demands--headed, as on other occasions, by (Argentine) President Carlos Menem--in favor of a change of conditions on the island that would lead to the substitution of the present totalitarian state by a regime that would guarantee respect of human rights and the establishment of democracy. Such claims emphasized again Castro's isolation from the international community....

"In spite of this, the heads of state...reiterated their protest against the Helms-Burton law.... It would be a mistake to suppose that the position taken by the summit on this issue expresses or covers up an attitude of solidarity toward the Castro regime. What has prevailed is the decision to safeguard the principle of freedom of trade and respect for an unquestionable international legal order.

"On the other hand, even if it can be considered that, objectively speaking, Castro came out ahead through this declaration, it is evident that other statements of the summit far from benefit him. A point that has been definitely hostile (toward Castro)--even if neither Cuba nor its

government is

clearly named--is the one that defines the indispensable elements of all democracies, 'the independence of powers, their mutual control, an adequate representation of majorities and minorities, freedom of expression and free, periodic and transparent elections.'"

"Upholding Commitment To Democracy"

The independent, English-language Buenos Aires Herald's editorial held (11/12)

"Perhaps the major underlying theme of this summit has been political, inasmuch as the countries have largely committed themselves to upholding the principle of democracy for the Latin American region. Yet little progress has been made in finding sustainable ways to redress the chronic scourges that undermine democracy throughout the continent, such as poverty, corruption or drug trafficking. Unless these very immediate challenges can be met and successfully dealt with, the region has very little chance of ever getting into a position from where it can concentrate solely on integration.

"The challenge is there and must be faced, and, while it would be suicidal to

push ahead at an unrealistic pace, letting unresolved disputes drag on endlessly is unlikely to serve any useful purpose. Ultimately Latin America will probably have to break new ground slowly where it can, and if this slow but relentless process can be kept for long enough, it should ultimately be successful.

"This must be good news for all countries involved, despite the deep historical differences that still exist."

BOLIVIA: "Missing: An Adequate Message For Castro"

In the editorial view of La Paz's pro-business La Razon (11/14), "As was expected from the beginning, condemnation of the American Helms-Burton law, which affects trade with Cuba, was a kind of counterweight to the explicit or implicit censure that Fidel Castro's dictatorship would have received.

"But the topic of the Castro dictatorship perhaps would have gone almost unnoticed had it not been for Jose Maria Aznar, since it is clear that a poor understanding of solidarity or prudence, or consideration on the part of the

host and even, perhaps, a certain cowardice with regard to the firm presentation of the principles in which they believe--all the Ibero-American countries are today democratic except for Cuba--led Chile...and the rest of the participants to show themselves to be too weak, insecure or lukewarm in telling Castro that if he wants to remain in the company of democratic governments and countries in these meetings, the only path he has left is to really democratize his regime. Therefore, an adequate message was missing in the final summit declaration."

"Castro's Presence: Incredible And Cynical"

Samuel Mendoza maintained in conservative El Diario of La Paz (11/14),

"The presence of Cuban Communist dictator Fidel Castro at the sixth Ibero-American Summit, which took place in Chile and which had as its central theme 'governability for an efficient and participatory democracy,' was, from all points of view, incredible and certainly cynical. What business did a sinister character like [Castro], who has tortured the Cuban people for more than 35 years through a regime that understands nothing about democracy,

have
there?

"Incredibly, it would seem that the Santiago summit was custom-made for Fidel Castro, since a lot was said about the American Helms-Burton law, condemning it for being against the Cuban regime, and very little about the importance and need to return liberty to the Cuban people by democratizing the country....

Apparently, the Ibero-American presidents, who are democrats in effect, do not care much about the dramatic situation of the Cuban people, whose elemental rights and liberties continue to be trampled by the dictator and his clique."

"Stubborn U.S. Embargo Incomprehensible"

La Paz's left-leaning Presencia commented editorially (11/8), "American stubbornness in maintaining an economic embargo against Cuba is, at this time in history, incomprehensible. Cuba has given signals of its willingness to normalize its relations with the United States, but it has always...run into a wall. During that time, all the American presidents predicted the fall of

the

Cuban regime, while reality showed that they were the ones who were changed.

Aside from that, Latin America has overcome old fears and prejudices with regard to Cuba and has adopted, with more and more firmness, solidarity with the Cuban people."

BRAZIL: "Cuba Poses No Threat To Continent"

An editorial (11/12) in Brasilia's pro-government Correio Brasiliense maintained, "The sixth Ibero-American summit held in Santiago has dealt a harsh blow to the U.S. economic embargo on Cuba.... It has been a long time since the U.S. government has faced such strong criticism.... International rejection of the embargo on Cuba proves that Clinton will have to reconsider his policy as soon as possible. Otherwise, the United States will no longer be the indispensable nation of the re-elected president's dreams....

"For a long time now, Cuba has posed no threat to the stability of institutions. The revolutionary who worried many chiefs of state of the continent has changed. The beard of the Sierra Maestra subversive has grayed,

and so have his political ideas."

CUBA: "Positive Results Of Ibero-American Summit"

Havana's Radio Rebelde aired these remarks (11/12) by Orlando Contreras
from

Santiago de Chile: "The sixth Ibero-American summit yielded positive
results

regarding certain fundamental principles of coexistence between countries,
and

left on record one of the most categorical rejections of the Helms-Burton
Act.... The heads of state and government of 21 Latin American countries
also

vowed to honor the principles of sovereignty, nonintervention and
juridical

equality of the states, which are the basis of international law.

Regarding

self-determination, the sixth summit recognizes the right of all peoples
to

freely construct their political system

and institutions in peace, stability and justice....

"For his part, Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar may have felt that
Fidel's realistic assessment of the current world situation was alarmist
[catastrofista]. Aznar then called for a full democracy in all countries
of

the continent, without exception, apparently alluding to the fact that

Cuba

does not assume the full democracy that Aznar fancies. The facts, not rhetoric, show Aznar's democracy favors the rich and falls short in emotion and social solidarity.... Socialism has shown it is imperfect, but capitalism is not only imperfect but also unfair."

ECUADOR: "Time For U.S. To Reconsider Cuba Policy"

Leading, centrist El Comercio commented (11/11): "In Santiago, once again, this democratic exercise allowed...the presence of Fidel Castro--the only dictator of the region--and, moreover, permitted him to end up a victor, thanks to the condemnation of the U.S. Helms-Burton law. It is, apparently, a sui generis situation. The disagreement among the Ibero-American majority is only explicable by their fear that the Cuban blockade might be extended and affect other countries. Aside from this, it is time for the United States to analyze the increasing opposition to this law, reluctantly approved by President Clinton in a crucial moment during his electoral campaign. Now that the elections are over, certain surprises in the relations between those two countries might be expected."

MEXICO: "Non-Intervention, Cuba And Helms-Burton"

In the editorial view of centrist Excelsior (11/12), "President Zedillo rejected in Chile any possibility that Mexico might use 'its political and economic muscle' to provoke an alleged transition to democracy in Cuba....

Non-intervention has been the key to sovereignty and independence for Latin

American nations. As a matter of fact, it represents a very important shield

against the stupid attitudes of economic powers such as the United States,

which try to impose their will on other countries beyond their borders.

President Zedillo expressed his rejection of the implementation of the Helms-Burton law.... Only unity will be able to stop the arrogance of an empire that is obsolete."

URUGUAY: "Castro's Anachronistic Words Refuted"

Business-economic El Observador's editorial (11/12) said, "Castro's views, which, like his dictatorship, belong to an anachronistic past, were clearly

refuted by (Uruguayan President) Sanguinetti, who described Latin America as a

continent striving forward, a continent with great achievements during the

last

few years, and one which confronted corruption as well as many other essential

issues with decisiveness and realism. His words were like a response to those of Fidel Castro, who had described Latin America's situation as gloomy

and exploited by a two-headed monster: the United States and the big international companies."

EUROPE

SPAIN: "The Castro Summit"

Centrist Diario 16 argued (11/14): "Once again, the Ibero-American summit has

regrettably become the 'Castro summit.' It condemned the Helms-Burton legislation, basically rebuking Clinton for a law which Ibero-American, as well

as European countries, reject. Although the goal of democratizing Cuba is shared by all, Aznar, the Spanish prime minister, has gone too far in his frontal opposition to Castro, which breaks from the official Spanish diplomatic

line...and gives the impression of following Washington in its support of the

most extreme of the Cuban opposition groups."

"Pressuring Castro While Objecting To Helms-Burton"

An editorial in independent El Mundo (11/13) concluded, "By establishing limits on economic aid from Spain to Cuba based on an authentic democratization of Cuba, the Spanish prime minister is advancing (the cause of) freedom in Cuba.... However this increased firmness must not be confused with bowing to the United States or Mas Canosa's extremist positions....

"A policy of diplomatic and political pressure on Castro is perfectly compatible with rejecting the Helms-Burton legislation, which violates the principle of sovereignty of nations. It is also compatible with maintaining economic and trade relations and supplying humanitarian aid to ease the misery of the people."

"Aznar Made Summit Focus On Cuba"

Liberal El Pais countered (11/12) in an editorial, "Spanish Prime Minister Aznar has managed, with his comment, 'I have nothing against Cuba, but everything against its regime,' to make the summit once again focus on Cuba.... Whether it was his intention or not, Aznar is favoring not only Mas Canosa, through the Cuban-American Foundation, but the United States,

which is

never very sympathetic to meetings to which it has not been invited."

"Vina del Mar Final Declaration"

Under the headline above, conservative ABC (11/12) insisted, "Nobody can ignore

that there is something extraordinary in the fact that, among all of the authentically democratic leaders of Ibero-America, Fidel Castro confirmed, just

before signing (the final declaration), his desire to uphold a Communist dictatorship supported by a single party and the police. Castro's farce of

repeatedly signing commitments he will never fulfill raises the need for Ibero-American governments to think about the uselessness in believing what he

(Castro) signs. Castro, by himself, will never initiate a democratic transition, and it is time that this reality be accepted as fact and to end the

charade of believing that only by talking to the dictator can tyranny on the island be eased."

"Little To Do With Reality"

Readers of independent El Mundo (11/12) saw this editorial: "The final document

of the Ibero-American summit is a perfect combination of vague and general topics for whose achievement nothing and nobody is accountable. This final text has little to do with reality."

BRITAIN: "Singeing Castro's Beard"

Under the headline above, the independent weekly Economist (11/16) suggested that Castro, by attending the summit, "got more than he bargained for.

"What he wanted was condemnation of the U.S.'s siege of Cuba's economy. Most Latin American governments dislike that kind of bullying and they duly decried it.... But they also dislike Mr. Castro's dictatorship. And this time they said so with unusual clarity."

RUSSIA: "Latin American Democracy Still Illusionary In Many Ways"

Centrist Nezavisimaya Gazeta (11/13) carried an article by Karen Khachaturov on the recent sixth meeting of heads of state and government of

Ibero-American

states in Chile: "The participants in the summit discussed American-Cuban relations, first of all the negative impact of the Helms-Burton Act on the economies of Ibero-American countries. Spain, for instance, holds first place among European investors in Cuba and, together with the Latin American countries, rightly demands an abolition of this unlawful legislation which, to boot, is extra-territorial in its application. That is why the sanctions against Cuba were roundly condemned."

Assessing the summit, the author writes: "The discussion of the main theme [of the forum] in Chile showed that in Latin America democracy is still illusionary in many ways."

THE NEW ORDER: DEMOCRACY, TRADE, PEACEKEEPING AND 'CLINTON II'

ARGENTINA: "Mexico And MERCOSUR: Difficult Four-Plus-One Sum"

Left-of-center Pagina 12 (11/13) ran this assessment by political analyst

Maria

O'Donnell: "President Zedillo's visit to Argentina marks a change in

Mexico's

foreign policy. Diplomats agree that, until the 'tequila crisis,' Mexico did

not appear too interested in the rest of Latin America.... Before traveling to

Buenos Aires, Zedillo tried to achieve a 'rapprochement' with Fernando Cardoso

and proposed starting a 'special relationship' between Mexico and Brazil. But

Cardoso answered evasively.... Only after his failed attempt with Cardoso did

Zedillo aim at Menem,...who also favors MERCOSUR but is easily tempted by shortcuts which lead to the United States."

"Argentina And Mexico, MERCOSUR And NAFTA"

An editorial in leading Clarin said (11/13), "President Zedillo's visit, with

the purpose of creating a political and economic alliance with Argentina, is a

good opportunity for both nations to strengthen their historical links and

achieve better relative conditions vis-a-vis the world market. The importance

of the Mexican economy to Latin America is undoubted, and the clearest example

of this was the shock resulting from the...'tequila effect' in countries of the

region. Argentina, precisely, was one of those which suffered most from the

drain of capital by frightened investors.

"Nevertheless, trade relations between the two countries are far from significant.... Part of President Zedillo's proposal is to change this situation of trade imbalance, caused partially by Mexico's accession to NAFTA...and the expansion of trade horizons.... The consolidation and extension of MERCOSUR and the expansion of regional agreements with countries as important as Mexico must help Argentina, therefore, to generate better possibilities of growth."

"A Good Starting Point"

Daily-of-record La Nacion (11/15) stressed, "Mexico's positive wish (to join MERCOSUR) may contribute to the improvement of regional organization and also leave the door partially open to move forward later on to new proposals of association between MERCOSUR and NAFTA, already outlined as long-term political goals, in the North and here... The fact that Mexico has looked South with interest...on this region is a good starting point."

"Latin America, A Forgotten Continent"

Araceli Viceconte, on assignment in Washington for leading Clarin (11/5) remarked, ".Latin America has been a kind of forgotten continent during the campaign...and the absence of the territory south of the Rio Grande from the American policy may continue whichever the winner of these elections may be....

"There are hopes that...the trade issue may be picked up again, but it will be slow and depend on the composition of the Congress. Beyond the good will expressed by Bill Clinton as well as by Bob Dole, and the consensus of the moderate sectors of both parties, times do not seem to forecast great initiatives. Chile may join NAFTA, although it is not a very large nor attractive market. Cuba will continue to be a headache, especially regarding the enforcement of the last clause of the Helms-Burton law that strengthens the economic embargo. The main American frustrations, those related to drug trafficking and security, may bring either complications or news. Of the rest, little is to be said.

"(Secretary of Defense) Perry said 'There is mistrust in Latin American countries. Argentina's position five years ago, or even three years ago,

could
have allowed it to join NAFTA together with Chile, or after Chile. But,
even
with MERCOSUR, South Americans will never be a big trade bloc. Besides,
in a
bloc with Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, there is not a 'big'
helper
should problems arise.' (Perry) emphasized that the political
instability in
those countries (either President Menem's succession, or Brazil's
post-Cardoso
era) is another key factor that prevents any kind of negotiation."

"New Faces In Central America"

An editorial in leading Clarin said (10/25), "Neither threatening
military
hierarchies nor former guerrilla commanders are the political
protagonists in
Central America today. The presidential elections in Nicaragua...add
their
characteristics to this new scene--civilian, and, at the same time,
notably
incomplete....

"The first transition to elected governments in the history of Nicaragua
was a

clear example of this difficult learning process as much as of its limited results.... Neither the Sandinistas' nor Violeta Chamorro's governments were able to introduce structural changes to overcome extreme underdevelopment and this explains the victory...of Arnoldo Aleman, a lawyer and coffee planter businessman who ran with the advantages of his relative novelty, Managua's regulatory administration and the promise of economic investment.

"Everyone is aware, anyway, of how much is still to be done outside the parameters of these imperfect political systems: Sectors that are excluded from pluralistic exchange and constitutional legislation, the portions of society that are deprived of political order and production, the realities that are not represented in their institutions. It is here, rather than in their administrative centers, where the biggest challenges to Central American countries lie."

"A Hard Task Awaits Aleman"

Managua correspondent Patricio Bernabe filed for daily-of-record La Nacion (10/25), "Governability will be Arnoldo Aleman's greatest challenge once

he

takes over power in January next year. Aleman's Liberal Alliance must

face

unpredictable opposition from the Sandinistas, which suffered on Sunday

their

second consecutive defeat in the ballots.... Aleman is also regarded as

the

most capable candidate to tackle upcoming economic challenges, receive

support

from private enterprise, Nicaraguans in exile, in Miami, and from the

Catholic

Church.... A hard task awaits the next president: to finally reconcile

his

country and fight unemployment and poverty, two scourges which are

affecting

Nicaragua relentlessly."

"An Uncertain Future"

Telma Luzzani, on special assignment in Managua for leading Clarin, opined

(10/22), "If the victory of the Sandinista revolution in 1979 marked the

decline of lifelong dictatorships in Latin America, the predictable

victory of

Arnoldo Aleman is the confirmation that the new millennium will find a

world

ruled by the right wing.... Social differences will deepen in the

world. In

Nicaragua, such social division is also the result of its history of confrontation. Aleman's eventual presidency opens a new cycle of fear for a large portion of Nicaraguans: The return from exile of the former Somoza elite and the possibility of the redistribution of confiscated property....

"Even though Daniel Ortega's defeat is a hard blow to him as a national political figure, the FSLN has not lost its appeal nor its political power.

Nevertheless, another uncertainty these elections present is the future of the Front."

BARBADOS: "What Will Clinton II Bring For Caribbean?"

Columnist Rickey Singh commented in the moderate Nation (11/8), "A question of immediate relevance for us in the Caribbean is whether this return in U.S. politics will mean much of the same old 'trade and aid' problems we have been facing from a Clinton administration in its choreography with a Republican Congress for political survival. Or will there be a more flexible and sympathetic approach in Washington to our concerns?"

"What Clinton and a Republican-controlled Congress seem to have in common is hardly comforting for us in the Caribbean. That includes a hostile policy towards Cuba, with all its attendant consequences of political tension and instability in a region that bridges the two Americas.... On other trade and economic issues, there remains the insistence by the United States on dismantling of the EU's banana imports regime, which gives limited preferential treatment to bananas from the Caribbean. There is also CARICOM's desire to access long-sought after parity concessions with NAFTA.... The Community's heads of government have also considered for priority action a first-ever CARICOM-U.S. summit. Such a summit could result in a useful contribution by small Caribbean states to helping President Clinton honor his campaign pledge to 'build bridges' into the 21st century."

CHILE: "Sandinista Defeat In Nicaragua"

Mass-appeal, conservative La Segunda (10/22) said in an editorial, "What affects Nicaragua the most is the indifference regarding its desperate situation, especially from the United States, whose historical responsibility

was crucial in the support of dynastic dictatorships which, for a long time, were convenient to North American politics. Reagan's efforts towards helping Nicaraguans gain back their freedom have not been followed up adequately in terms of economic cooperation by the Clinton administration. The rest of the continent has not shown much solidarity with Nicaragua either.... We can only hope that Alemán's strong victory is adequately appreciated by the international financial system in order to assist in the restoration of Nicaragua, the second poorest country of the continent after Haiti."

ECUADOR: "Time Favors Peru"

In his opinion column, Pedro Saad wrote in Guayaquil's center-left Expreso (11/3), the most anti-Peru paper among the major dailies: "Like it or not, Ecuador has recognized the force of the Rio Protocol. There is no turning back.... Ecuador enjoyed a big enough success during the military conflict in the Cenepa to irritate Peru, but not big enough to modify the relation of forces in the long run.... Time favors Peru. It is the stronger structurally and might achieve military superiority if enough resources are earmarked and it has time to re-educate its top

officers in the handling of state of the art technology.... Consequently,
we
have little time to achieve a negotiating framework on the level with our
military success in the Cenepa....

"This is reality. And, after freely accepting the force of the protocol
and
abandoning the idea of papal arbitration, the only thing left in this
scenario
is that the guarantors demand the closing of the border, providing (maybe)
a
small territorial concession to Ecuador. But it is going to be almost
impossible to have this path lead us to 'compensation,' such as a
sovereign
corridor to the Amazon."

"The Need To End The Ecuador-Peru Conflict"

Quito's leading, centrist El Comercio (10/31) noted, "If the signature of
the
Santiago agreement between the ministers of Ecuador and Peru was
expedited, it
was not a coincidence. The guarantors have performed detailed work and
have
exercised pressure. There are various results: Aside from the statements

of

various diplomats and the visits of Luigi Einaudi--the U.S.

representative--to

Quito and Lima; the proposal of the four guarantor countries (Argentina,

Brazil, Chile and the United States) was the foundation for the signature

of

the document in Chile. These actions, as well as their good will, make

evident

the need to end the conflict between Ecuador and Peru, because of its

interconnection to the whole continent."

"Unite Behind Accord"

The front-page editorial of influential, center-left Hoy of Quito (10/31)

said,

"The conflict with Peru is a century old and finally we are about to

arrive at

a solution, which should find the country reasonably unified. Not so much

around one idea--there is no uniformity in a democracy--but with every

sector w

illing to talk and listen, to disagree but also to understand. The border

negotiations are a matter of state and not one of government. Friends and

enemies of the administration should act in harmony, without political

maneuvering and partisanship."

"U.S. Has Been Especially Important"

Quito's leading, centrist El Comercio (10/30) remarked, "The guarantors succeeded in adjusting the clocks of Ecuador and Peru in order to initiate important territorial negotiations. The United States has been especially important, through its representative, Luigi Einaudi, who performed a detailed job coordinating with the diplomats of the six countries."

JAMAICA: "Clinton's Opportunity To Write New Page On Cuba, Haiti"

Barbados-based journalist Rickey Singh wrote in the moderate, influential Sunday Gleaner (11/10), "The Caribbean region...offers the challenge to a victorious second-term President Bill Clinton to make a remarkable impact on U.S. foreign policy in the Western hemisphere as the last American president of the 20th century. That challenge is linked to future U.S. policy initiatives on Cuba and Haiti.... Mr. Clinton now has the opportunity to write himself into U.S. history as the politician who succeeded in restoring normal relations between the United States and Fidel Castro's Cuba....

"The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), though small in size and resources, is nevertheless in a good position to help in fostering improved Cuba-U.S. relations and also play a role with the United States in encouraging the growth

of democratic institutions and political stability in Haiti."

PANAMA: "Canal Negotiations: One Of First Tests For Second Term"

Washington correspondent Henry Raymont filed for conservative El Panama
America

(11/15), pointing out that, even though relations are still good,
prospects
are less favorable now than

they were a year ago for arriving at an agreement on a post-2000 U.S.
presence

in Panama: "The general opinion is that the delay has allowed criticism
to

build domestically and with prominent foreign opinion leaders....
Panamanian

sources say the Clinton administration has not yet signaled it is ready
to

start serious discussions.... Clinton is not interested in reaching a
consensus in the Pentagon to keep the bases.... It is expected that the
negotiations will be one of the first tests of the new bipartisan foreign
policy hoped for in the second Clinton presidential term. Ironically, one
possible and positive step in this direction is the re-election of
Senator

Helms, the author of the resolution urging the administration to
negotiate a
continued U.S. military presence in Panama."

"Clinton's Re-Election Will Not Bring Major Changes For Us"

Conservative El Panama America (11/9) front-paged this editorial, "For Panama,

Clinton's re-election will not represent major changes in its relationship....

Historically, foreign policy in the United States has been independent of the party living in the White House. The appointment by Clinton of Republican Negroponte confirms this."

PERU: "A Step Forward"

Economic Gestion (10/31) commented, "The Santiago accord...is a step forward.

(It represents) the end of the border demarcation (as defined by the) Rio Protocol and the end of the echoes of the last military conflict.

However, the

end of the road is still long and difficult. It is easy to foresee that

Ecuador will insist on some of its previous demands. This will probably be the

crucial moment of the negotiations. It is (also) evident that Peru will uphold

its position of not granting territorial concessions, and therefore respecting

the Rio Protocol."

"White House Satisfaction With Santiago Accord"

The editor-in-chief of center-right Expreso, Manuel D'Ornellas, wrote in his daily column (10/31), "The White House has shown its satisfaction with the signing of the Santiago accord in an unusual press communique. Less than one week before the U.S. elections, U.S. pleasure with the outcome seems to be part of Bill Clinton's re-election 'final push.' Clinton wanted this Peru-Ecuador joint decision--to begin 'conversations of a substantive nature' before the end of the year in Brasilia--as a new foreign policy 'feather in his hat.' The electoral objective is obvious.

"For the Ecuadoreans, what is under discussion is the 'delimitation,' while for Peru it is 'demarcation.' The U.S. government--which is obviously the most important among the guarantor countries--at last has supported the Peruvian thesis in this crucial point. The above will necessarily mean that either (the United States) will abandon Luigi Einaudi's efforts to get Peru's granting of territorial concessions to Ecuador or (Ecuador's will) to submit the

drafting

of the border line to the ukase of an 'eminent person,' such as the Pope

or

Jimmy Carter."

##===== ATTACHMENT 1 =====
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X' hp x (##Xn\ P6Qy&P#Monday, November 18, 1996

X' hp x (#%

LATIN AMERICA'S 'WILL' TO UPHOLD 'COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY'

X' hp x (#A roundup of Latin American, Caribbean and European views on the Ibe

roAmerican summit of November 1011 in Chile, last week's visit to Argentina by Mexican President Zedillo, elections in Nicaragua and the progress achieved in solving the PeruEcuador border dispute revealed that the media believes the reg ion's "will to consolidate democracy" remains strong, as does its commitment to free trade, economic development and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

IBEROAMERICAN SUMMITThe development capturing the most attention at the annua

I gathering of heads of state of Latin America, Spain and Portugal was the meet

ing's "firm rejection" of the HelmsBurton Act, the U.S. antiCastro trade legisl

ation. With few exceptions, most writers hastened to stress that rejection of

the U.S. measure does not entail "solidarity toward the Castro regime," but "th

e decision to safeguard the principle of freedom of trade and respect for (the)

...international legal order." Nevertheless, Havana's Radio Rebelde hailed the

summit statement as "one of the most categorical rejections of the HelmsBurton

Act." The brouhaha over the summit's stance on the Castro dictatorship sparke

d many arguments among analysts, with some agreeing with centrist Diario 16 of

Madrid that the participants' handling of the situation had, "regrettably," tur

ned the spotlight on the Cuban leader and turned the occasion into another "Cas

tro summit." Others doubted that the IberoAmerican leaders had sufficiently im

pressed upon Mr. Castro the need for democracy in Cuba. La Paz's probusiness L

a Razon chided the summit participants for their "cowardice," adding they were

"lukewarm...in telling

Castro that if he wants to remain in the company of dem ocratic governments

and countries...the only path he has left is to really demo cratize."

Dailies in Chile and Argentina emphasized the meeting's objective o f

showcasing its members' desire to contribute to a "new international order on the basis of shared development." The independent Buenos Aires Herald saw the challenge for area governments as that of addressing the problems of poverty, corruption and drug trafficking, all of which might undermine Latin American democracies.

THE NEW ORDER: DEMOCRACY, TRADE, PEACEKEEPING AND 'CLINTON II'

The November 1 visit of Mr. Zedillo to Argentina was seen in Buenos Aires's papers as a sign that Mexico and its southern neighbors might work for an "expansion of regional agreements," principally through NAFTA and MERCOSUR. Commentators welcomed the holding of democratic elections in Nicaragua, but said its problems of national reconciliation and poverty are not helped by the "indifference" of the U.S. and Latin America. Pundits in Ecuador and Peru looked positively on the Santiago accord on their countries' border dispute, stressing that its solution is important to a continent that helped mediate the crisis. Journalists called attention to the need by the second-term Clinton administration to turn "a new page" on Cuba and Haiti, and to negotiate with Panama on the canal question. Nevertheless, leading Clarin of Buenos Aires feared that Latin America, the "forgotten continent during the campaign," will continue to be ignored during the next four years.

This survey is based on 42 reports from 15 countries, Oct. 22-Nov. 17.

EDITOR: Mildred Sola Neely

IBEROAMERICAN SUMMIT

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

CHILE: "Spain, Following Its Proposal On Castro"

An editorial in influential, conservative El Mercurio (11/17) said, "Following the line set forth by (Spanish Prime Minister) Jose Maria Aznar in a conversation with Fidel Castro during the recent VI Ibero American Summit held in Santiago

go, Spain has proposed the European Union harden its policy toward Cuba, to achieve tangible progress toward a participatory democracy and more respect for human rights in (Cuba)....

"Aznar's initiative is congruent with the participatory democracy embraced by the rest of the countries in our hemisphere, and of all European Union members.

For this reason, it is of merit that his government proposes the application of such principles to Cuba, where they don't exist. However, it seems unlikely that Fidel Castro will modify the character of his government in response to foreign political pressures."

"IberoAmerica's Ability To Contribute To New International Order"

Conservative, mass-circulation La Tercera (11/7) observed editorially, "It is believed that some Chilean groups have made obvious efforts to center the Ibero-American summit on Fidel Castro. Spokesmen for these groups have even acknowledged receiving funds from Miami-based anti-Castroist groups to promote the campaign to be unleashed on occasion of Fidel Castro's presence in Chile.... The fact that Chile is hosting a meeting of countries with a population of 500 million, spread over two continents which share traditions spanning over 500 years of history, is a very important event that should not be tarnished. This is why the government should have reasserted that it will not allow any type of demonstrations, either in favor or against, that do not comply with the law.

"These summits have been instrumental in showing the rest of the world that the Ibero-American community of nations is able to contribute effectively to outline a new international order on the basis of shared development. Within this context, the summit on this occasion will approve agreements to strengthen regional and multilateral organizations, particularly the United Nations, and empower it to prevent and resolve conflicts, combat extreme poverty, define strategies for sustainable economic and social development,

and to defend democracy. In sum, the Chilean people must, once again, be cordial with their guests and avoid making Chile the site of conflicts that must be resolved by those responsible for them."

ARGENTINA: "It's Not Cuba That Matters, But Social Neglect In Region"

X' hp x (#An editorial in the independent, Englishlanguage Buenos Aires Herald (11/14)

opined, "Since (Argentine) President Carlos Menem insisted on renewing his onslaught against Cuban dictator Fidel Castro,...it is high time to inform

him of the counterproductive nature of this obsession.... All Menem has achieved is to shed more limelight on a Cuba already receiving attention out of a

proportion to its importance at the Santiago summit. A despot of 37 years'

standing like Fidel Castro was already lucky to be allowed to be signing a joint

statement with his elected colleagues.... As an extra bonus, Castro received

the summit's support against the HelmsBurton U.S. embargo against Cuba....

X' hp x (#

"In fact, Cuba hardly matters outside the Caribbean area. The real challenge facing

Latin America's democracies is not so much to bring the region's last surviving dictatorship to an end as to address the social neglect which has

been the inevitable price of economic liberalism. Failure to lend socioeconomic substance to democracy runs the risk of leading not so much to

(Chile's) Pinochetstyle military dictatorship or Castro's socialism as, perhaps

, toward an equally pernicious and insidious danger: populism."

"IberoAmerica's Will To Consolidate Democracy"

An editorial in dailyofrecord La Nacion said (11/13), "The 23 chiefs of state

and government who participated in the Sixth IberoAmerican Summit held in Chile

, confirmed their countries' commitment to 'democracy, the rule of law, plural

ism, respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.'... Beyond the paradox

ical fact that such a declaration has been signed by Fidel

Castro,...it should
also be celebrated that the community of IberoAmerican
nations has emphasized
, once again, its will to consolidate democracy as a
way of life.

"It is also encouraging to see progress in the exchange of ideas regarding
what
is being called the 'governability of democracy,' revealing the growing
conce
rn of many political leaders about the difficulties occasionally
encountered b
y the democratic system, frequently threatened by the lack of
successful econo
mic policies or the governments' inability to stop the
increase of corruption,
drug trafficking, terrorism or other equally
destabilizing scourges.

"The Cuba issue has become, once again, the source of controversy. On one
hand
, Fidel Castro's presence caused strong demands headed, as on other
occasions,
by (Argentine) President Carlos Menem in favor of a change of
conditions on the
island that would lead to the substitution of the present
totalitarian state
by a regime that would guarantee respect of human rights
and the establishment
of democracy. Such claims emphasized again Castro's
isolation from the inter
national community....

"In spite of this, the heads of state...reiterated their protest against the
H
elms Burton law.... It would be a mistake to suppose that the position
taken by
the summit on this issue expresses or covers up an attitude of
solidarity tow
ard the Castro regime. What has prevailed is the decision to
safeguard the pri
nciple of freedom of trade and respect for an unquestionable
international lega
l order.

"On the other hand, even if it can be considered that, objectively speaking,
Ca
stro came out ahead through this declaration, it is evident that other
stateme
nts of the summit far from benefit him. A point that has been
definitely host
ile (toward Castro) even if neither Cuba nor its government
is clearly named is
the one that defines the indispensable elements of all

democracies, 'the independence of powers, their mutual control, an adequate representation of majorities and minorities, freedom of expression and free, periodic and transparent elections.'"

"Upholding Commitment To Democracy"

The independent, Englishlanguage Buenos Aires Herald's editorial held (11/12)

"Perhaps the major underlying theme of this summit has been political, inasmuch as the countries have largely committed themselves to upholding the principle of democracy for the Latin American region. Yet little progress has been made in finding sustainable ways to redress the chronic scourges that undermine democracy throughout the continent, such as poverty, corruption or drug trafficking. Unless these very immediate challenges can be met and successfully dealt with, the region has very little chance of ever getting into a position from where it can concentrate solely on integration.

"The challenge is there and must be faced, and, while it would be suicidal to push ahead at an unrealistic pace, letting unresolved disputes drag on endlessly is unlikely to serve any useful purpose. Ultimately Latin America will probably have to break new ground slowly where it can, and if this slow but relentless process can be kept for long enough, it should ultimately be successful.

"This must be good news for all countries involved, despite the deep historical differences that still exist."

BOLIVIA: "Missing: An Adequate Message For Castro"

In the editorial view of La Paz's probusiness La Razon (11/14), "As was expected from the beginning, condemnation of the American HelmsBurton law, which affects trade with Cuba, was a kind of counterweight to the explicit or implicit assurance that Fidel Castro's dictatorship would have received.

"But the topic of the Castro dictatorship perhaps would have gone almost unnoticed had it not been for Jose Maria Aznar, since it is clear that a poor understanding of solidarity or prudence, or consideration on the part of the host and even, perhaps, a certain cowardice with regard to the firm presentation of the principles in which they believe all the IberoAmerican countries are today democratic except for Cuba and Chile...and the rest of the participants to show themselves to be too weak, insecure or lukewarm in telling Castro that if he wants to remain in the company of democratic governments and countries in these meetings, the only path he has left is to really democratize his regime. Therefore, an adequate message was missing in the final summit declaration."

"Castro's Presence: Incredible And Cynical"

Samuel Mendoza maintained in conservative El Diario of La Paz (11/14), "The presence of Cuban Communist dictator Fidel Castro at the sixth IberoAmerican Summit, which took place in Chile and which had as its central theme 'governability for an efficient and participatory democracy,' was, from all points of view, incredible and certainly cynical. What business did a sinister character like [Castro], who has tortured the Cuban people for more than 35 years through a regime that understands nothing about democracy, have there?"

"Incredibly, it would seem that the Santiago summit was custommade for Fidel Castro, since a lot was said about the American Helms-Burton law, condemning it for being against the Cuban regime, and very little about the importance and need to return liberty to the Cuban people by democratizing the country.... Apparently, the IberoAmerican presidents, who are democrats in effect, do not care much about the dramatic situation of the Cuban people, whose elemental rights and liberties continue to be trampled by the dictator and his clique."

X hp x (#

"Stubborn U.S. Embargo Incomprehensible"

X' hp x (#

La Paz's leftleaning Presencia commented editorially (11/8), "American stubbornness in maintaining an economic embargo against Cuba is, at this time in history, incomprehensible. Cuba has given signals of its willingness to normalize its relations with the United States, but it has always...run into a wall. During that time, all the American presidents predicted the fall of the Cuban regime, while reality showed that they were the ones who were changed. Aside from that, Latin America has overcome old fears and prejudices with regard to Cuba and has adopted, with more and more firmness, solidarity with the Cuban people."

BRAZIL: "Cuba Poses No Threat To Continent"

An editorial (11/12) in Brasilia's progovernment Correio Brasiliense maintained, "The sixth IberoAmerican summit held in Santiago has dealt a harsh blow to the U.S. economic embargo on Cuba.... It has been a long time since the U.S. government has faced such strong criticism.... International rejection of the embargo on Cuba proves that Clinton will have to reconsider his policy as soon as possible. Otherwise, the United States will no longer be the indispensable nation of the reelected president's dreams...."

"For a long time now, Cuba has posed no threat to the stability of institutions

. The revolutionary who worried many chiefs of state of the continent has changed. The beard of the Sierra Maestra subversive has grayed, and so have his political ideas."

X' hp x (#

CUBA: "Positive Results Of IberoAmerican Summit"

Havana's Radio Rebelde aired these remarks (11/12) by Orlando Contreras from Santiago de Chile:

"The sixth IberoAmerican summit yielded positive results regarding certain fundamental principles of coexistence between countries, and left on record one of the most categorical rejections of the HelmsBurton Act...."

The heads of state and government of 21 Latin American countries

also vowed to
honor the principles of sovereignty, nonintervention and
juridical equality of
the states, which are the basis of international law.
Regarding selfdeterminat
ion, the sixth summit recognizes the right of all
peoples to freely construct t
heir political system
X' hp x (#and institutions in peace, stability and justice....

"For his part, Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar may have felt that
Fidel
's realistic assessment of the current world situation was alarmist
[catastrofi
sta]. Aznar then called for a full democracy in all countries of
the continent
, without exception, apparently alluding to the fact that Cuba
does not assume
the full democracy that Aznar fancies. The facts, not
rhetoric, show Aznar's d
emocracy favors the rich and falls short in emotion
and social solidarity....
Socialism has shown it is imperfect, but
capitalism is not only imperfect but a
lso unfair."

ECUADOR: "Time For U.S. To Reconsider Cuba Policy"

Leading, centrist El Comercio commented (11/11): "In Santiago, once again,
th
is democratic exercise allowed...the presence of Fidel Castrothe only
dictator
of the regionand, moreover, permitted him to end up a victor,
thanks to the con
demnation of the U.S. HelmsBurton law. It is, apparently,
a sui generis situat
ion. The disagreement among the IberoAmerican majority
is only explicable by t
heir fear that the Cuban blockade might be extended
and affect other countries.

Aside from this, it is time for the United
States to analyze the increasing o
pposition to this law, reluctantly approved
by President Clinton in a crucial m
oment during his electoral campaign. Now
that the elections are over, certain
surprises in the relations between those
two countries might be expected."

X' hp x (#

MEXICO: "NonIntervention, Cuba And HelmsBurton"

X' hp x (#In the editorial view of centrist Excelsior (11/12), "President Zedi
llo
rejected in Chile any possibility that Mexico might use 'its political and

economic muscle' to provoke an alleged transition to democracy in Cuba....

Nonintervention has been the key to sovereignty and independence for Latin American nations. As a matter of fact, it represents a very important shield against the stupid attitudes of economic powers such as the United States, which try to impose their will on other countries beyond their borders. President Zedillo expressed his rejection of the implementation of the Helms-Burton law....

Only unity will be able to stop the arrogance of an empire that is obsolete."

URUGUAY: "Castro's Anachronistic Words Refuted"

Business-economic El Observador's editorial (11/12) said, "Castro's views, which, like his dictatorship, belong to an anachronistic past, were clearly refuted by (Uruguayan President) Sanguinetti, who described Latin America as a continent striving forward, a continent with great achievements during the last few years, and one which confronted corruption as well as many other essential issues with decisiveness and realism. His words were like a response to those of Fidel Castro, who had described Latin America's situation as gloomy and exploited by a two-headed monster: the United States and the big international companies."

EUROPE

X' hp x (# SPAIN: "The Castro Summit"

X' hp x (#

Centrist Diario 16 argued (11/14): "Once again, the Ibero-American summit has regrettably become the 'Castro summit.' It condemned the Helms-Burton legislation, basically rebuking Clinton for a law which Ibero-American, as well as European countries, reject. Although the goal of democratizing Cuba is shared by all, Aznar, the Spanish prime minister, has gone too far in his frontal opposition to Castro, which breaks from the official Spanish diplomatic line...and gives the impression of following Washington in its

support of the most extreme of the Cuban opposition groups."

X hp x (#

"Pressuring Castro While Objecting To HelmsBurton"

An editorial in independent El Mundo (11/13) concluded, "By establishing limit

s on economic aid from Spain to Cuba based on an authentic democratization of Cuba, the Spanish prime minister is advancing (the cause of) freedom in Cuba....

However this increased firmness must not be confused with bowing to the United States or Mas Canosa's extremist positions....

X hp x (#

"A policy of diplomatic and political pressure on Castro is perfectly compatible

with rejecting the HelmsBurton legislation, which violates the principle of

sovereignty of nations. It is also compatible with maintaining economic and trade

relations and supplying humanitarian aid to ease the misery of the people.

"

"Aznar Made Summit Focus On Cuba"

Liberal El Pais countered (11/12) in an editorial, "Spanish Prime Minister Azn

ar has managed, with his comment, 'I have nothing against Cuba, but everything

against its regime,' to make the summit once again focus on Cuba.... Wheth

er it was his intention or not, Aznar is favoring not only Mas Canosa, through

the CubanAmerican Foundation, but the United States, which is never very sympa

thetic to meetings to which it has not been invited."

"Vina del Mar Final Declaration"

Under the headline above, conservative ABC (11/12) insisted, "Nobody can ignor

e that there is something extraordinary in the fact that, among all of the aut

hentically democratic leaders of IberoAmerica, Fidel Castro confirmed, just bef

ore signing (the final declaration), his desire to uphold a Communist dictator

ship supported by a single party and the police. Castro's farce of repeatedly

signing commitments he will never fulfill raises the need for IberoAmerican g

overnments to think about the
uselessness in believing what he (Castro) signs.

Castro, by himself, will
never initiate a democratic transition, and it is ti
me that this reality be
accepted as fact and to end the charade of believing th
at only by talking to
the dictator can tyranny on the island be eased."

"Little To Do With Reality"

Readers of independent El Mundo (11/12) saw this editorial: "The final
documen
t of the IberoAmerican summit is a perfect combination of vague and
general to
pics for whose achievement nothing and nobody is accountable. This
final text
has little to do with reality."

BRITAIN: "Singeing Castro's Beard"

Under the headline above, the independent weekly Economist (11/16) suggested
t
hat Castro, by attending the summit, "got more than he bargained for.

"What he wanted was condemnation of the U.S.'s siege of Cuba's economy. Most
L
atin American governments dislike that kind of bullying and they duly
decried i
t.... But they also dislike Mr. Castro's dictatorship. And this
time they sai
d so with unusual clarity."

RUSSIA: "Latin American Democracy Still Illusionary In Many Ways"

X' hp x (#

X' hp x (#Centrist Nezavisimaya Gazeta (11/13) carried an article by Karen Kha
chaturrov

on the recent sixth meeting of heads of state and government of
IberoA

merican states in Chile: "The participants in the summit discussed
AmericanCub

an relations, first of all the negative impact of the
HelmsBurton Act on the ec
onomies of IberoAmerican countries. Spain, for
instance, holds first place amon
g European investors in Cuba and, together
with the Latin American countries, r
ightly demands an abolition of this
unlawful legislation which, to boot, is ext
rateritorial in its application.

That is why the sanctions against Cuba were r
oundly condemned."

X' hp x (#
X' hp x (#Assessing the summit, the author writes: "The discussion of the main theme [of the forum] in Chile showed that in Latin America democracy is still illusionary in many ways."

X' hp x (#THE NEW ORDER: DEMOCRACY, TRADE, PEACEKEEPING AND 'CLINTON II'

X' hp x (#ARGENTINA: "Mexico And MERCOSUR: Difficult FourPlusOne Sum"

Leftofcenter Pagina 12 (11/13) ran this assessment by political analyst Maria

O'Donnell: "President Zedillo's visit to Argentina marks a change in Mexico's

foreign policy. Diplomats agree that, until the 'tequila crisis,' Mexico did

not appear too interested in the rest of Latin America....

Before traveling t

o Buenos Aires, Zedillo tried to achieve a 'rapprochement' with Fernando Cardo

so and proposed starting a 'special relationship' between Mexico and Brazil.

But Cardoso answered evasively.... Only after his failed attempt with Cardoso

did Zedillo aim at Menem,...who also favors

MERCOSUR but is easily tempted by

shortcuts which lead to the United States."

"Argentina And Mexico, MERCOSUR And NAFTA"

An editorial in leading Clarin said (11/13), "President Zedillo's visit, with the purpose of creating a political and economic alliance with Argentina, is

a good opportunity for both nations to strengthen their historical links and ac

hieve better relative conditions visavis the world market. The importance of t

he Mexican economy to Latin America is undoubted, and the clearest example of

this was the shock resulting from the...'tequila effect' in countries of the re

gion. Argentina, precisely, was one of those which suffered most from the drai

n of capital by frightened investors.

"Nevertheless, trade relations between the two countries are far from significa

nt.... Part of President Zedillo's proposal is to change this situation of tr

ade imbalance, caused partially by Mexico's accession to NAFTA...and the expans

ion of trade horizons.... The consolidation and

extension of MERCOSUR and the expansion of regional agreements with countries as important as Mexico must help Argentina, therefore, to generate better possibilities of growth."

"A Good Starting Point"

Dailyofrecord La Nacion (11/15) stressed, "Mexico's positive wish (to join MERCOSUR) may contribute to the improvement of regional organization and also leave the door partially open to move forward later on to new proposals of association between MERCOSUR and NAFTA, already outlined as longterm political goals, in the North and here... The fact that Mexico has looked South with interest...on this region is a good starting point."

X' hp x (# "Latin America, A Forgotten Continent"

X' hp x (#

Araceli Viceconte, on assignment in Washington for leading Clarin (11/5) remarked, ".Latin America has been a kind of forgotten continent during the campaign...and the absence of the territory south of the Rio Grande from the American policy may continue whichever the winner of these elections may be....

"There are hopes that...the trade issue may be picked up again, but it will be slow and depend on the composition of the Congress. Beyond the good will expressed by Bill Clinton as well as by Bob Dole, and the consensus of the moderate sectors of both parties, times do not seem to forecast great initiatives. Chile may join NAFTA, although it is not a very large nor attractive market. Cuba will continue to be a headache, especially regarding the enforcement of the last clause of the HelmsBurton law that strengthens the economic embargo. The main American frustrations, those related to drug trafficking and security, may bring either complications or news. Of the rest, little is to be said.

"(Secretary of Defense) Perry said 'There is mistrust in Latin American countries. Argentina's position five years ago, or even three years ago,

could have
allowed it to join NAFTA together with Chile, or after Chile.
But, even with M
ERCOSUR, South Americans will never be a big trade bloc.
Besides, in a bloc wi
th Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, there is
not a 'big' helper should
problems arise.' (Perry) emphasized that the
political instability in those
countries (either President Menem's
succession, or Brazil's postCardoso era) is
another key factor that prevents
any kind of negotiation."

"New Faces In Central America"

An editorial in leading Clarin said (10/25), "Neither threatening military
hi
erarchies nor former guerrilla commanders are the political protagonists
in Ce
ntral America today. The presidential elections in Nicaragua...add
their chara
cteristics to this new scenecivilian, and, at the same time,
notably incomplete
....

"The first transition to elected governments in the history of Nicaragua was
a
clear example of this difficult learning process as much as of its limited
re
sults.... Neither the Sandinistas' nor Violeta Chamorro's governments were
abl
e to introduce structural changes to overcome extreme underdevelopment
and th
is explains the victory...of Arnaldo Aleman, a lawyer and coffee
planter busin
essman who ran with the advantages of his relative novelty,
Managua's regulato
ry administration and the promise of economic investment.

"Everyone is aware, anyway, of how much is still to be done outside the
peramet
ers of these imperfect political systems: Sectors that are excluded
from plural
istic exchange and constitutional legislation, the portions of
society that are
deprived of political order and production, the realities
that are not represe
nted in their institutions. It is here, rather than in
their administrative ce
nters, where the biggest challenges to Central
American countries lie."

"A Hard Task Awaits Aleman"

Managua correspondent Patricio Bernabe filed for dailyofrecord La Nacion (10/25), "Governability will be Arnaldo Aleman's greatest challenge once he takes over power in January next year. Aleman's Liberal Alliance must face unpredictable opposition from the Sandinistas, which suffered on Sunday their second consecutive defeat in the ballots.... Aleman is also regarded as the most capable candidate to tackle upcoming economic challenges, receive support from private enterprise, Nicaraguans in exile, in Miami, and from the Catholic Church.... A hard task awaits the next president: to finally reconcile his country and fight unemployment and poverty, two scourges which are affecting Nicaragua relentlessly."

"An Uncertain Future"

Telma Luzzani, on special assignment in Managua for leading Clarin, opined (10/22), "If the victory of the Sandinista revolution in 1979 marked the decline of lifelong dictatorships in Latin America, the predictable victory of Arnaldo Aleman is the confirmation that the new millennium will find a world ruled by the right wing.... Social differences will deepen in the world. In Nicaragua, such social division is also the result of its history of confrontation. Aleman's eventual presidency opens a new cycle of fear for a large portion of Nicaraguans: The return from exile of the former Somoza elite and the possibility of the redistribution of confiscated property...."

"Even though Daniel Ortega's defeat is a hard blow to him as a national political figure, the FSLN has not lost its appeal nor its political power. Nevertheless, another uncertainty these elections present is the future of the Front."

BARBADOS: "What Will Clinton II Bring For Caribbean?"
X' hp x (#
X' hp x (#Columnist Rickey Singh commented in the moderate Nation (11/8), "A question

of immediate relevance for us in the Caribbean is whether this return i
n U.S.
politics will mean much of the same old 'trade and aid' problems we have
been
facing from a Clinton administration in its choreography with a Republica
n
Congress for political survival. Or will there be a more flexible and
sympat
hetic approach in Washington to our concerns?

"What Clinton and a Republicancontrolled Congress seem to have in common is
har
dly comforting for us in the Caribbean. That includes a hostile policy
towards
Cuba, with all its attendant consequences of political tension and
instability
in a region that bridges the two Americas.... On other trade and
economic issu
es, there remains the insistence by the United States on
dismantling of the EU'
s banana imports regime, which gives limited
preferential treatment to bananas
from the Caribbean. There is also
CARICOM's desire to access long sought after
parity concessions with
NAFTA.... The Community's heads of government have als
o considered for
priority action a firstever CARICOMU.S. summit. Such a summit
could result
in a useful contribution by small Caribbean states to helping Pres
ident
Clinton honor his campaign pledge to 'build bridges' into the 21st centur
y."

CHILE: "Sandinista Defeat In Nicaragua"
X' hp x (#
Massappeal, conservative La Segunda (10/22) said in an editorial, "What
affect
s Nicaragua the most is the indifference regarding its desperate
situation, esp
ecially from the United States, whose historical responsibility
was crucial in
the support of dynastic dictatorships which, for a long time,
were convenient t
o North American politics. Reagan's efforts towards helping
Nicaraguans gain b
ack their freedom have not been followed up adequately in
terms of economic co
operation by the Clinton administration. The rest of the
continent has not sho
wn much solidarity with Nicaragua either.... We can
only hope that Alemn's str
ong victory is adequately appreciated by the
international financial system in

order to assist in the restoration of
Nicaragua, the second poorest country of
the continent after Haiti."

X' hp x (#

ECUADOR: "Time Favors Peru"

In his opinion column, Pedro Saad wrote in Guayaquil's centerleft Expreso
(11/

3), the most antiPeru paper among the major dailies: "Like it or not,
Ecuador h

as recognized the force of the Rio Protocol. There is no turning
back.... Ecu

ador enjoyed a big enough success during the military conflict
in the Cenepa to

irritate Peru, but not big enough to modify the relation of
forces in the long

run.... Time favors Peru. It is the stronger structurally
and might achieve m

ilitary superiority if enough resources are earmarked and
it has time to reeduc

ate its top

officers in the handling of state of the art technology.... Consequently, we
ha

ve little time to achieve a negotiating framework on the level with our
militar

y success in the Cenepa....

"This is reality. And, after freely accepting the force of the protocol and
ab

andoning the idea of papal arbitration, the only thing left in this
scenario is

that the guarantors demand the closing of the border, providing
(maybe) a smal

I territorial concession to Ecuador. But it is going to be
almost impossible t

o have this path lead us to 'compensation,' such as a
sovereign corridor to the

Amazon."

"The Need To End The EcuadorPeru Conflict"

Quito's leading, centrist El Comercio (10/31) noted, "If the signature of the
Santiago agreement between the ministers of Ecuador and Peru was expedited,
it

was not a coincidence. The guarantors have performed detailed work and
have ex

ercised pressure. There are various results: Aside from the
statements of var

ious diplomats and the visits of Luigi Einaudi the U.S.
representative to Quito a

nd Lima; the proposal of the four guarantor
countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile

and the United States) was the foundation for the signature of the document in Chile. These actions, as well as their good will, make evident the need to end the conflict between Ecuador and Peru, because of its interconnection to the whole continent."

"Unite Behind Accord"

The frontpage editorial of influential, centerleft Hoy of Quito (10/31) said,
"The conflict with Peru is a century old and finally we are about to arrive at a solution, which should find the country reasonably unified. Not so much around one idea there is no uniformity in a democracy but with every sector willing to talk and listen, to disagree but also to understand. The border negotiations are a matter of state and not one of government. Friends and enemies of the administration should act in harmony, without political maneuvering and partisanship."

"U.S. Has Been Especially Important"

Quito's leading, centrist El Comercio (10/30) remarked, "The guarantors succeeded in adjusting the clocks of Ecuador and Peru in order to initiate important territorial negotiations. The United States has been especially important, through its representative, Luigi Einaudi, who performed a detailed job coordinating with the diplomats of the six countries."

JAMAICA: "Clinton's Opportunity To Write New Page On Cuba, Haiti"

Barbados-based journalist Rickey Singh wrote in the moderate, influential Sunday Gleaner (11/10), "The Caribbean region...offers the challenge to a victorious second-term President Bill Clinton to make a remarkable impact on U.S. foreign policy in the Western hemisphere as the last American president of the 20th century. That challenge is linked to future U.S. policy initiatives on Cuba and Haiti.... Mr. Clinton now has the opportunity to write himself into U.S. history as the politician who succeeded in restoring normal relations between the Un

ited States and Fidel Castro's Cuba....

"The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), though small in size and resources, is neve

rtheless in a good position to help in fostering improved CubaU.S. relations an

d also play a role with the United States in encouraging the growth of democrat

ic institutions and political stability in Haiti."

X` hp x (# PANAMA: "Canal Negotiations: One Of First Tests For Second Term"

X` hp x (#

Washington correspondent Henry Raymont filed for conservative El Panama Ameri

ca (11/15), pointing out that, even though relations are still good, prospects

are less favorable now than

they were a year ago for arriving at an agreement on a post2000 U.S.

presence i

n Panama: "The general opinion is that the delay has allowed criticism to bu

ild domestically and with prominent foreign opinion

leaders.... Panamanian so

urces say the Clinton administration has not yet

signaled it is ready to start

serious discussions.... Clinton is not

interested in reaching a consensus in

the Pentagon to keep the bases.... It

is expected that the negotiations will b

e one of the first tests of the new

bipartisan foreign policy hoped for in the

second Clinton presidential term.

Ironically, one possible and positive step

in this direction is the

reelection of Senator Helms, the author of the resolu

tion urging the

administration to negotiate a continued U.S. military presence

in Panama."

X` hp x (# "Clinton's ReElection Will Not Bring Major Changes For Us"

X` hp x (#

Conservative El Panama America (11/9) frontpaged this editorial, "For Panama,

Clinton's reelection will not represent major changes in its relationship....

Historically, foreign policy in the United States has been independent of the

party living in the White House. The appointment by

Clinton of Republican Negr

oponte confirms this."

PERU: "A Step Forward"

Economic Gestion (10/31) commented, "The Santiago accord...is a step forward.

(It represents) the end of the border demarcation (as defined by the) Rio
Protocol and the end of the echoes of the last military conflict. However,
the end of the road is still long and difficult. It is easy to foresee that
Ecuador will insist on some of its previous demands. This will probably be
the crucial moment of the negotiations. It is (also) evident that Peru will
uphold its position of not granting territorial concessions, and therefore
respecting the Rio Protocol."

"White House Satisfaction With Santiago Accord"

The editor in chief of centerright Expreso, Manuel D'Ornellas, wrote in his
daily column (10/31), "The White House has shown its satisfaction with the
signing of the Santiago accord in an unusual press communique. Less than one
week before the U.S. elections, U.S. pleasure with the outcome seems to be
part of Bill Clinton's reelection 'final push.' Clinton wanted this
Peru-Ecuador joint decision to begin 'conversations of a substantive nature'
before the end of the year in Brasilia as a new foreign policy 'feather in
his hat.' The electoral objective is obvious.

"For the Ecuadoreans, what is under discussion is the 'delimitation,' while
for Peru it is 'demarcation.' The U.S. government which is obviously the
most important among the guarantor countries at last has supported the
Peruvian thesis in this crucial point. The above will necessarily mean that
either (the United States) will abandon Luigi Einaudi's efforts to get Peru's
granting of territorial concessions to Ecuador or (Ecuador's will) to submit
the drafting of the border line to the ukase of an 'eminent person,' such as
the Pope or Jimmy Carter."

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ARMS Email SystemRECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (TRP NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: USIA_Media_Reaction (
USIA_Media_Reaction/R__MR/WASHDC/USIA/GOV.USIA@notes1.usia.gov@INET@LNGTWY [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:21-NOV-1996 13:41:00.00

SUBJECT: Daily Digest 11/21: U.S. POLICY TOWARD CUBA: TARGET OF INTERNA

TO: Laura D. Schwartz (Laura D. Schwartz@eop [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

International criticism of the U.S.' policy toward Cuba continued unabated

in

the Latin American, European, Asian and African press. In the wake of

Cuban

leader Fidel Castro's presence in Rome this week to attend the UN World

Food

Summit, his meetings to court favor with Italian officials and the pope at

the

Vatican, and the overwhelming vote in the UNGA last week rejecting the

decades-long U.S. embargo against Cuba, condemnation of the U.S. policy

was the

order of the day in a majority of commentaries. Critics held that the UN

vote,

along with other recent actions, including the Ibero-American summit

statement

earlier this month critical of the U.S.' Helms-Burton act, as well as the

EU's

retaliatory efforts designed to combat the U.S. legislation, revealed the

extent of displeasure among U.S. trading partners and marked Washington's

"increasing isolation" on the issue. Not surprisingly, official Havana

Radio

Rebelde railed against the "hegemonic and protectionist" and "meddlesome"

U.S., and its words were echoed by many other media voices characterizing

U.S.

policy. Regional voices in Latin America were joined by others in

asserting

that, in the post-Cold War era, the U.S. policy on Cuba was out of step

with

the times. A Brazilian daily commented: "For a long time now Cuba has

posed

no threat to the stability of institutions.... The beard of the Sierra

Maestra

subversive has grayed, and so have his political ideas." The liberal

Montreal

Gazette maintained that the Helms-Burton law--which allows U.S. citizens

to sue

foreign companies using property in Cuba confiscated from them after Fidel

Castro seized power in 1959--was the U.S.' "arrogant attempt to force

other

countries to toe its line on Cuba" and "remains an affront to...U.S.

trading

partners." Commentators charged that the U.S. is operating unilaterally,

outside the multilateral free trade system. They also claimed that, in

supporting Helms-Burton, President Clinton was only pursuing his own

"domestic

political" interests, bowing to the strong Cuban-American lobby in

Florida.

Analysts said that U.S. efforts have had little of their desired effect on the

Castro regime. Instead, they said, only the Cuban people have been punished.

Many pundits were quick to point out that in criticizing Washington, they were

not condoning the dictator's hold on power. They contended they were for change in Cuba, and looked to strict adherence by Mr. Castro of promises for

improvement. They also believed Cuba's integration into the world economic

system--a la China, Vietnam and Eastern Europe--would foster change more quickly in the island nation. Commentators, for the most part, were hopeful

that Mr. Castro's meeting with Pope John Paul II would be one catalyst for change.

However, a number of media voices urged caution in dealing with the Cuban leader, saying the dictator could not be trusted to bring democratic changes

after so many years of repression. Some were indignant about the support Mr.

Castro has been receiving--from hemispheric leaders, the Europeans and even the

pope--while his people are not enjoying basic human rights and freedom.

A

number of observers wondered what the U.S. would do about its policy toward

Cuba in the face of intense international pressure--especially from its important trading partners. "Now that the [U.S.] elections are over, certain

surprises in the relations between those two countries might be expected," concluded Quito's centrist El Comercio.

This survey was based on 52 reports from 21 countries, November 8-21.

EDITOR: Diana McCaffrey

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

CUBA: "Latin Americans Categorically Reject Helms-Burton Act"

Orlando Contreras said from Santiago, Chile, on Havana Radio Rebelde network

(11/12): "The sixth Ibero-American summit yielded positive results regarding

certain fundamental principles of coexistence between countries and left on

record one of the most categorical rejections to the Helms-Burton Act.

The

Vina del Mar declaration, signed by all heads of state, says, and I quote:

'We

manifest our strongest rejection to the Helms-Burton Act, which violates the

principles and norms of international law and the UN Charter, contravenes

WTO

principles, and is contrary to the principles of cooperation and
friendship

that should characterize relations of all members of the international
community.' The heads of state and government of 21 Latin American
countries al

so vowed to honor the principles of sovereignty, nonintervention, and
juridical

equality of the states, which are the basis of international law.

Regarding

self-determination, the sixth summit recognizes the right of all peoples
to

freely construct in peace, stability, and justice their political system
and

institutions.....

"There are other basic points of agreement, like the condemnation of the
Helms-Burton Act.... The fact that Latin Americans talk and exchange
ideas

without U.S. meddling, is also important. In this debating exercise,
where

ideas and proposals are exchanged at the highest levels, agreements are
enriched and others are reinforced, because, aside from certain details
and

despite interests and beliefs, in the real world no one has the entire and
absolute truth. Socialism has shown it is imperfect, but capitalism is not
only

imperfect but also unfair."

"Hegemonic, Protectionist U.S. Laws"

Havana Radio offered this commentary by Guillermo Alvarado (11/9):

"Within the

framework of the 14th International Havana Fair, Cuba has taken important steps

to consolidate its economic relations and cooperation with EU countries, with

which it already maintains good relations. On this occasion, Cuba has increased its contacts with France and Germany, which rank second and fifth in

Cuba's volume of trade with the EU.... Step by step, Havana continues strengthening its commercial and cooperation ties with European nations, which

have firmly rejected the hegemonic and protectionist U.S. laws that created the

blockade against Cuba and are now trying to internationalize it. There are

still important steps that must be consolidated. There is no doubt, however,

that the foundations are now ready, and that the emergent Cuban market will be

able to compete successfully in the race to attract European investments."

ARGENTINA: "Bonuses For Castro"

The independent, English-language Buenos Aires Herald commented (11/14):

"Since Argentine President Carlos Menem insisted on renewing his onslaught against Cuban dictator Fidel Dastro...it is high time to inform him of the counterproductive nature of this obsession.... All Menem has achieved is to

shed more limelight on a Cuba already receiving attention out of all proportion

to its importance at the Santiago summit. A despot of 37 years' standing like

Fidel Castro was already lucky to be allowed to be signing a joint statement

with his elected colleagues.... As an extra bonus Castro received the summit's

support against the Helms-Burton U.S. embargo against Cuba.... In fact Cuba

hardly matters outside the Caribbean area--the real challenge facing Latin America's democracies is not so much to bring the region's last surviving dictatorship to an end as to address the social neglect which has been the inevitable price of economic liberalism. Failure to lend socio-economic substance to democracy runs the risk of lending not so much to (Chile's) Pinochet-style military dictatorship or Castro's socialism as a perhaps equally

pernicious and insidious danger: populism."

"The Ibero-American Summit"

An editorial in daily-of-record La Nacion opined (11/13): "The Cuba issue has become, once again, the source of controversy. On one hand, Fidel Castro's presence (at the sixth Ibero-American summit in Chile) caused strong demands...in favor of a change of conditions (in Cuba) that would lead to the replacement of the present totalitarian state with a regime that would guarantee respect of human rights and the establishment of democracy. Such demands emphasized again Castro's isolation from the international community.... In spite of this, the heads of state (at the summit)...reiterated their protest against the Helms-Burton law.... It would be a mistake to suppose that the position taken by the summit on this issue expresses...an attitude of solidarity with the Castro regime. What has prevailed is the decision to safeguard the principle of free trade and respect for an unquestioned international legal order."

BARBADOS: "Will New U.S. Administration, Congress Be More Flexible On Cuba?"

The independent Nation opined (11/8): "A question of immediate relevance for us in the Caribbean is whether this return [of a Democratic president and

Republican Congress] in U.S. politics will mean much of the same old trade and aid problems we have been facing from a Clinton administration in its choreography with a Republican Congress for political survival. Or will there be a more flexible and sympathetic approach in Washington to our concerns?

What Clinton and a Republican-controlled Congress seem to have in common is hardly comforting for us in the Caribbean. That includes a hostile policy toward Cuba, with all its attendant consequences of political tension and instability in a region that bridges the two Americas."

BOLIVIA: "Lot Said About Helms-Burton; Little About Cuban Liberty"

Conservative El Diario published a commentary by Samuel Mendoza (11/14):

"The presence of Cuban Communist dictator Fidel Castro at the VI Ibero-American Summit, which took place in Chile and which had as its central theme 'governability for an efficient and participatory democracy, was, from all points of view, incredible and certainly cynical. Because what business did a sinister character like [Castro], who has tortured the Cuban people for more

than 35 years through a regime that understands nothing about democracy,
have
there? Incredibly, it would seem that the Santiago summit was custom-made
for
Fidel Castro, since a lot was said about the American Helms-Burton law,
condemning it for crashing against the Cuban regime, and very little about
the
importance and need to return the Cuban people their liberty by
democratizing
the country.... Apparently, the Ibero-American presidents, who are
democrats
in effect, do not care much about the dramatic situation of the Cuban
people,
whose elemental rights and liberties continue to be trampled by the
dictator
and his clique."

BRAZIL: "Embargo In Jeopardy"

Pro-government Correio Brasiliense opined (11/12): "Such a large number of
expressions in favor of Cubans show that Clinton's apparently irreversible
position is inconsistent with the course of history. The embargo on Cuba
has
trampled on the principles and rules of international law, of the UN
Charter,
and of the WOT. The obstinate U.S. decision to unilaterally place Cuba
under

an economic quarantine collides with a world that is fighting to submit international commercial relations to WTO regulations and discipline....

International rejection of the embargo on Cuba proves that Clinton will have to

reconsider his policy as soon as possible. Otherwise, the United States will no

longer be the indispensable nation of the re-elected president's dreams.

The

isolation that the U.S. government has imposed on Cuba is threatening to

backfire on the U.S. government itself. Diplomatic sources are convinced that

Clinton himself, in light of the broad, general, and unrestricted

rejection of

the Helms-Burton law, has already decided to reconsider his decision. He

did

not do it yet because he feared the powerful Cuban colony during the

election

campaign. Now that he has been reelected, he can afford to exercise a bit

of

common sense.

"For a long time now Cuba has posed no threat to the stability of

institutions. The revolutionary who worried many chiefs of state of the

continent has changed. The beard of the Sierra Maestra subversive has

grayed,

and so have his political ideas."

CHILE: "Europe And Cuba"

Influential, conservative El Mercurio ran this editorial (11/17):

"Following

the line set forth by (Spanish Prime Minister) Jose Maria Aznar in a conversation with Fidel Castro during the recent VI Ibero American Summit held

in Santiago, Spain has proposed the European Union harden its policy toward

Cuba, to achieve tangible progress toward a participatory democracy and more

respect for human rights in (Cuba).... Aznar's initiative is congruent with

the participatory democracy embraced by the rest of the countries in our hemisphere, and of all European Union members. For this reason, it is of merit

that his government proposes the application of such principles to Cuba, where

they don't exist. However, it seems unlikely that Fidel Castro will modify the

character of his government in response to foreign political pressures."

"U.S., All Alone"

Government-owned, but editorially independent La Nacion commented (11/16):

"The United States remains absolutely alone in its policy of blockading

and

isolating Cuba. The vote that took place last week in the UN is eloquent:

137

countries voted against the blockade, 25 abstained, and only the United

States a

nd two other countries were in favor. The vote's message is unequivocal:

The

international community doesn't believe that economic isolation helps the

cause

of human rights or Cuba's transition to democracy.... In any case, the UN

resolution can't be interpreted as some sort of support for Cuban

immobility.

Cuba is a country that has no choice other than political opening and

movement

toward democracy. It is the role of the international community to assist

in

bringing about those changes without violence."

COSTA RICA: "Helms-Burton Act: An Outrage"

Independent La Nacion (11/15) ran this editorial comment by Ricardo

Sossa:

"The Helms-Burton Act is an outrage against the self-determination of

countries; it obstructs free trade, an issue which the United States

always

supported. The Helms-Burton Act not only affects Latin American

countries. It

brings to mind the imperialist ideology of the United States. But this time its applications also affect Washington's allies, which will assure its definitive defeat, causing grave damage to the Bill Clinton's domestic policy."

ECUADOR: "The Pope And Fidel"

Influential, center-left Hoy commented (11/19): "By meeting with the pope, Castro intends to reduce the pressure of the U.S. blockade and ratify the legitimacy of his stay in power. On the other hand, the pope, by receiving [Castro] and planning to travel to Cuba later on, is becoming a possible catalyst in a process leading Cuba to significant changes, away from the severity of the blockade and the fanaticism of the U.S. Cubans."

"Time For U.S. To Reconsider Cuba Policy"

Leading, centrist El Comercio commented (11/11): "In Santiago, once again, this democratic exercise allowed, among other things, the presence of Fidel Castro--the only dictator of the region--and, moreover, allows him to end up as the victor thanks to the condemnation of the U.S. Helms-Burton law. It is,

apparently a sui generis situation. The disagreement among the Ibero-American majority is only explicable by their fear that the Cuban blockade might be extended and affect other countries. Aside from this, it is time for the United States to analyze the increasing opposition to this law, reluctantly approved by President Clinton in a crucial moment during his electoral campaign.

"Now that the elections are over, certain surprises in the relations between those two countries might be expected."

EUROPE

ITALY: "First EU Victory On Helms-Burton Law"

Leading financial II Sole-24 Ore observed (11/21): "European nations yesterday obtained from the WTO the creation of a panel to settle the dispute over the Helms-Burton law....The United States, for its part, has made it clear that it does not intend to renounce Helms-Burton and that the EU decision to proceed with its appeal risks jeopardizing the prestige and the power of the WTO...."

The dispute may indeed become very delicate for the WTO, as the Americans have already made it clear that this is not a trade matter, but a foreign and security matter."

"Required Of Castro: Cuba's Return To Freedom"

Igor Man wrote in centrist La Stampa (11/20): "The pope will go to Cuba because the 'Lider Maximo' has not objected to the 'precise conditions' posed by the Holy See, i.e., that the pope be free 'to go anywhere he wants and to speak about anything he wants.' Which suggests that, during their long meeting, Fidel and the Pope have dealt with the main problem: the respect of human rights in Cuba, systematically trampled upon by the Castro regime after its triumph over Batista.... Capitalism Castro-style will not save the 'revolution' if Fidel does not finally decide to restore civil rights to the Catholics, to restore freedom of expression to the priests, and to restore Christmas to Cuban children. To allow the Cuban Catholic Church some breathing space would be, de facto, the first step toward the recognition of human rights. Once again, a 'gesture' by John Paul II, in this case the

extraordinary audience granted to Fidel Castro, takes on a very high political meaning. The end of the embargo on Cuba is via an act of humility: Cuba's return to freedom. This is what is required of Castro."

"EU Has No Strategy For Cuba"

A report in centrist La Stampa read (11/19): "Italy commits itself to re-launching 'a constructive dialogue' between the European Union and Cuba, but

it expects to see progress in 'the fields of democratic principles and citizens' rights' on the island. This is what Lamberto Dini stated after the...meeting.... He added that he found Castro 'open to starting a dialogue'

on the delicate issue of democratization.... The foreign affairs minister

noted that relations between Italy and Cuba are 'very good' and 'I took the

opportunity to congratulate the president for his opening in the field of economic reforms.'... Instead, relations between Cuba and the European Union

are more difficult.... The 15 member states agree on their condemnation of the

American embargo and the Helms-Burton Act...but there is no agreement yet on

what strategy to follow with Havana."

"No Delusions For Castro"

Centrist Il Messaggero opined (11/19): "The Cuban president knows that in the

Vatican he will find his noblest ally in the fight against the strangling U.S.

embargo...but he does not delude himself about being able to avoid harsh criticism of his regime on human rights. After all, it would be a vain hope

to ask for the lifting of the embargo without opening to democracy."

"Madrid Teaches Rome How To Play A Role In the New European Order"

An article in provocative, classical liberal Il Foglio observed (11/19):

"Even

with Cuba, the policies followed by Italy and Spain are deeply different.

Contradicting the traditional Spanish stand on the Havana dictatorship,

Aznar

wants to force Fidel Castro to carry out deep changes in human and political

rights in exchange for EU aid.

"In Italy Castro was received with all honors."

"Realpolitik Has Its Rules"

Paolo Cacace wrote in centrist Il Messaggero (11/18): "Both Italian Prime Minister Prodi and Foreign Minister Dini indicated clearly that it is possible to intensify relations with Cuba but on one condition: Italy expects an improvement in the status of human rights in the island, which are still brutally trampled upon. This is a realistic position which it is difficult to attack.... America insists on maintaining an embargo against Cuba and intends to punish (for reasons which are not exactly political) those European companies which engage in business activities with the Castro regime. Europe has opposed this policy and has claimed an autonomous role for itself. Castro's Roman meetings take place in this context. Certainly nobody has a right to forget that, behind the Cuban dictator, there is a people who still suffers for lack of freedom. But 'realpolitik' has its rules. And to assume a too rigid attitude or a renouncing attitude would be an unforgivable mistake."

"Peace And Democracy The Antidotes To Poverty"

Aldo Rizzo commented in centrist La Stampa (11/18): "The reservations expressed

by the United States and the Vatican are no novelty, and have their reason
for

being, yet they prompt considerations which are not exactly encouraging.

In

the case of the United States, it is an exercise in pragmatism: It is
useless

to tie one's hands with major general commitments, better to decide on the
aid

policy 'case by case,' and so on. But there is one point where we can
talk of

international obligation, and that is the liberalization of trade
according to

the rules of the World Trade Organization, of which the United States is
also

a member. This is very important--as a 'structural' rather than an
occasional

contribution to the fight on hunger and on poverty which generates
it--since,

by opening rich markets to the products of the poor, perhaps sacrificing a
few

more or less marginal interests, we can grant to the poor the minimal
amount

of accumulation that opens the way to development."

"Economic Embargo Has Enhanced The Myth Of Lider Maximo"

Ugo Tramballi wrote in leading financial Il Sole-24 Ore (11/15):

"Paradoxical

as it may be, the United States, which has opposed the Cuban regime more than

anyone else, is in fact the country which has contributed the most to maintaining alive justifications for the Castro revolution. U.S.

administrations have opened trade superhighways toward China, they have even

done business with North Korea. But Cuba had to be taken by hunger.

Since

the Vietnam War, there has perhaps not been a worst choice in Washington's

foreign policy..... But what have years of economic embargo and the refusal of

a dialogue produced? Dissidents continue to come and go from Castro's prisons,

and there is no alternative to the regime on the horizon. Perhaps dialogue is

the only way: If the pope, a man who was not a Communist even when he was 18,

has decided to open a dialogue, then there must be a moral and political reason for it. The real issue, therefore, is not whether Prime Minister Prodi

talks to Castro or not, but what he will tell him, since the 'revolucion' ended

a long time ago."

"The Dirty Business Of Comrade Fidel In Central America"

A commentary in leading rightist Il Giornale read (11/15): "With Castro's arrival in Rome amid a lot of fanfare, many seem to have forgotten Cuba's destabilizing role under the orders of the former USSR. Beginning with Italian Prime Minister Prodi, who has proposed Castro as one of the vice presidents of the food summit."

"Strong Spanish Pressures On Cuba"

A report from Madrid in leading financial Il Sole-24 Ore declared (11/14):

"Spain intends to push the Castro regime's back to the wall and is asking the

European Union to join its strategy in order to force democratization in Cuba:

cutting off credits, limitation of cooperation in humanitarian aid (to be distr

ibuted only through non-governmental organizations), expansion of the dialogue

with the anti-Castro dissidents. The project will be presented today to the

Latin America Group of the European Union.... This has mainly political relevance, since humanitarian aid to Cuba has already been greatly reduced."

"The Left That Loves Fidel"

Commenting on the fascination exerted by Fidel Castro on the Italian left,

Sandro Viola noted in left-leaning, influential La Repubblica (11/14):

"Let's

not forget, among the elements which have contributed to the 'Cuba cult' is

the most stupid aspect of American imperialism: the Bay of Pigs, 34 years of

economic embargo, CIA attempts to kill Castro: In sum, all the useless efforts

carried out by the American Goliath since 1959 to get rid of the Cuban David.

In the end, the most significant result has been the strengthening of sympathy

for Castro and the undermining of his opponents' arguments, providing instead

ammunition to those who sing his praises.... Apart from the understandable

emotion of the 'Communist' left at seeing Che's comrade up close, however, the

political aspect is different. A political assessment of the Cuban

regime,

and, therefore, of the Castro experience as a whole, in fact, can be reassumed

in one word: 'disastrous.' Let's leave aside Cuba's economic conditions....

Let's examine the political conditions and climate. We have to conclude that

all that remains of the Soviet system in the world can be found there, on the

island of Cuba. Even in China and Vietnam the Leninist power machine is slowly changing. But not in Cuba....

"The enormousness of Castro's failure cannot be blamed solely on the U.S. embargo. If Cuba's embrace with the USSR had not been so tight, its relations

with the United States could have been different, and Europe and the main Latin American countries would have had better chances to mediate. And that

embrace--and the international isolation which resulted from it--was such because Communism Soviet-style represented the most suitable instrument for a

totalitarian government.... In sum, one can understand why Castro still exerts

such charm...as the man who embodies the memory of the Socialist, libertarian

utopia which fascinated a whole generation of young people in the West.

But

we need to make clear that Castroism as a political experience is only another one of the ideological failures of this century."

"Embargo Against Cuba, America Remains Alone"

Centrist, top-circulation Corriere della Sera commented (11/14): "Castro is arriving for the food summit and it is a triumph even before his landing in Rome.... Washington seems to be isolated in Rome as well. As was also shown by the resolution approved last Tuesday by the UN General Assembly against the American embargo and the Helms-Burton law.... Even the pope, opening the summit yesterday, recalled 'people victim of embargoes imposed without sufficient consideration.' A warning which many interpreted as aimed at Washington as well.... The historic meeting between Fidel Castro and the pope...will perhaps be the final blow to the U.S. policy of total closure. Perhaps it will give the Clinton administration a chance to take the difficult road of political mediation with the Havana regime."

"Fidel, The Pope And Cuba's Future"

A front-page story by Saverio Tutino in PDS (former Communist Party) organ

L'Unita held (11/13): "The Roman Catholic Church is again playing a decisive role in Fidel Castro's destiny.... In Cuba this year organized dissent was coming together, organized with a view to lowering tensions.

"But, as if by tacit agreement, the possibility of accusing the United States

of favoring dissent with propaganda air flights allowed Castro to arrest its

leaders and Clinton to pass a piece of legislation making the embargo even stronger. But both are aware that it is not possible to continue like this

forever. Amidst this search for a different future comes the opening by the

Roman Church. Castro arrives in Rome clearly relieved. The Europeans...have

confirmed their opposition to the Helms-Burton Act which goes against their

right to trade with Cuba as they like. And the Americans have not been too

insistent on punishing those who violate the act. The Right found itself in

difficulty in its race for the White House and it was clear that Clinton supported the tightening...for political reasons.... However, a warning remains

hanging over Fidel's head on which all agree: It is O.K. to do business,
but
with a country which must allow democratization. It is for this reason
that
Castro needs the Pope.... Now, the Pope offers Castro the opportunity to
change his route.... Perhaps in Rome the foundation of a future Cuba is
being
built."

"Castro Receives 'Blessing' Of UN"

Centrist Il Messaggero observed (11/13): "As if the good results of the
Ibero-American Summit were not enough, with the United States being
condemned
by all Latin American countries...yesterday Castro also received the
'blessing'
of the United Nations."

GERMANY: "America All Alone"

Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger noted in an editorial in right-of-center
Frankfurter
Allgemeine (11/14): "By no means did the United States achieve a
political
masterpiece with the Helms-Burton Act. It is, rather, an example of how
justified outrage and good intentions can turn into the opposite and
develop

into a diplomatic stupidity capable of sowing the seeds of discord among the

allies. If one fact was necessary to prove this, then it was the vote at the

UN General Assembly on the U.S. trade embargo on Cuba. For the first time, all

Europeans voted for an end of the economic isolation of the communist-ruled

island. The reasons were not support, indifference, or profit-making, but irritation at the U.S. arrogance to decide on its own about the trade and investment relations of its partners. (The vote in the UN) should give Washington pause to realize that even Britain and Germany openly voted against

the Clinton administration. It is really outrageous that a 'common European

foreign policy' is apparently taking the shape of an opposition policy vis-a-vis Washington. But this is something for which the leading Western power must blame itself."

BRITAIN: "Landmark Vote In UN Against U.S. Helms-Burton Law"

The centrist Independent reported (11/13): "In an extraordinary diplomatic breach with its closest ally, Britain yesterday joined all of its European Union partners in siding against the United States in voting for a resolution

at the UN calling for an end to the economic embargo against Cuba. The vote was

a landmark in the development of a common European foreign policy."

"Vote Also A Propaganda Boost For Cuba"

The liberal Guardian said (11/13): "The vote [at the UN] showed

Washington's

increasing isolation on the Helms-Burton Act, which was introduced earlier

this

year to penalize countries trading with Cuba.... Yesterday's vote was a

propaganda boost for Cuba."

"Britain Votes In This Year's Ritual At UNGA"

The conservative Daily Telegraph remarked (11/13): "Britain usually

abstains

in this annual General Assembly ritual [calling for an end to the embargo

against Cuba], which is staged by mainly Third World nations.

"Yesterday it joined other European nations in voting for the blockade to

be

lifted. The move follows growing British opposition to the Helms-Burton

Act."

FRANCE: "Washington Threatens The WTO"

Blanca Riemer in centrist La Tribune (11/21): "The EU proved yesterday

that it

is truly united in engaging a joint procedure against the United States.... It

is Europe against the United States on the Helms-Burton Act.... Even Great

Britain, traditionally on the side of the United States, is playing the role

of locomotive alongside France and Spain in asking Brussels for forceful action.... Washington maintains that it is a political, not a commercial issue, and plans to invoke Article 21 of the GATT."

"A Ridiculous Embargo"

Pierre-Marie Christin said on RTL radio (11/20): "This embargo is particularly

ridiculous. Cuba is no longer a threat to the United States. Washington is just being vindictive, while using (the embargo) for electoral gains. It is

well known that Cuban exiles in Florida count a lot."

"Europe Should Not Be Too Naive When It Comes To Castro"

Left-of-center Le Monde said in its editorial (11/20): "Castro has two problems

which are intimately linked: the economic future of the island of Cuba, and

Castro's own political future.... He hopes to solve both with his many trips

to Europe and his repeated courtship of European investment in Cuba. As for his trip to the Vatican, a state which has condemned the economic embargo imposed by the United States, it is essentially symbolic.... Castro's discourse does not change: Cuba has no other choice but to change. But at its own rhythm.... The United States denounces this rhetoric, while Latin America and now Europe seem to accept it more readily. Condemnation of the U.S. embargo proves it. But Europe should not be too naive when it comes to a man who has proved his guile and whose regime is anachronistic."

"Castro At The Vatican"

Georges Suffert observed in right-of-center Le Figaro (11/20): "The dictator needs to find intermediaries to loosen the U.S. economic embargo. Who better than the pope, who is known to be against all types of boycotts."

RUSSIA: "Europe's 'No' To U.S. Stand Is No 'Yes' To Castro"

Discussing the UN General Assembly vote on Helms-Burton sanctions law, Yevgeny Bai, writing in reformist Izvestia, pointed out (11/14): "The unanimous condemnation of this embargo by Western Europe was not at all caused by

growing

pro-Castro sympathies.... As in the previous years, Europeans were primarily

opposed to Washington's attempts to bar Western capital from Cuba and discriminate against those investing in the Cuban economy."

"UN Resolution May Come In Handy"

Vladimir Kozlovsky reported from Washington for reformist Segodnya (11/14):

"The UN resolution is not binding, but it may come in handy if President Clinton decides to go down in history as a 'normalizer' of relations with Cuba. Clinton signed the Helms-Burton bill under pressure. He normalized relations with Hanoi and nobody ever mentioned this during the election campaign. He concluded an agreement with North Korea which drew fire from critics but did not harm the president politically. It seems premature to talk of detente with Iraq or Libya. So, that leaves Iran and Cuba."

"Ibero-America Rightly Demands Abolition Of Helms-Burton"

Centrist Nezavisimaya Gazeta (11/13) carried an article by Karen Khachaturov on

the recent 6th meeting of heads of state and government of Ibero-American states in Chile: "The participants in the summit discussed American-Cuban

relations, first of all the negative impact of the Helms-Burton act on the economy of Ibero-American countries. Spain, for instance, holds first place among European investors in Cuba and together with the Latin American countries rightly demands an abolition of this unlawful legislation which, to boot, is extra-territorial in its application. That is why the sanctions against Cuba were roundly condemned."

CANADA: "Helms-Burton Law Should Go"

The liberal Montreal Gazette (11/15) said: "The Helms-Burton law, Washington's arrogant attempt to force other countries to toe its line on Cuba, remains an affront to Canada and the other U.S. trading partners. And it does not seem likely to help the Cuban people, its declared goal.... Mr. Clinton compromised by suspending for six months the application of a particularly controversial part of the bill.... The six months end in January. Here's hoping that Mr. Clinton renews the suspension.... Despite the odds, a renewed fight for the

repeal of Helms-Burton is worth the effort. Ottawa and its allies should do what they can to turn up the heat."

"A Repugnant Policy"

The business-oriented Financial Post (11/14) stated: "The smashing success of the recent convertible debenture issue from Sherritt International Inc. is significant for one rather large reason. It was completed under the ominous shadow of the United States' Helms-Burton legislation.... Helms-Burton is repugnant public policy, and President Bill Clinton should begin working to repeal it as soon as possible.... It is a hopeful sign that companies can still function--and function quite well--in the chill cast by Helms-Burton. We hope that Sherritt's actions will help hammer home the futility of the legislation."

"U.S. Law Runs Counter To Global Investment Agreement"

In an article on foreign direct investment in the business-oriented Financial Post (11/12), international trade counsel Lawrence Herman argued that the Helms-Burton Act, "by giving Americans the right to sue foreigners and attack

their assets in the United States for doing business with Cuba, the U.S.

law

runs directly counter to the very core of a global investment

agreement--the

obligation to ensure foreign direct investment is given full protection

and

security by the host government. It remains to be seen how this will work itself out."

SPAIN: "Aznar, Alone (In EU) Against Castro"

Independent El Mundo said (11/21), "Spain is alone in Europe. Aznar, the Spanish prime minister, proposed actions against Castro for the EU's consideration and approval.... Spain, therefore, has renounced its 'de facto'

role of mediator...and now finds that a majority of the 15 EU countries does

not accept its proposals, because they do not want to appear to be siding with

the United States (on its Cuban policy.)"

"The Pope Makes A Move About Cuba"

Liberal El Pais held (11/20): "The Vatican has not changed its position toward

Cuba. During the pope's meeting with Castro, it condemned the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba and announced a typical Vatican policy: dialogue

with an
established power. The pope will probably wait to see about the changes
made
in Cuba over the next few months before he sets a date for his visit to
the
island.

"The Vatican's policy for a democratic transition favors dialogue and a
'freedom infusion' (which produced excellent results in Eastern Europe)
over a
'stick policy.'"

"Castro's Imagery"

Independent El Mundo asserted (11/20): "Castro's visit to the Vatican
strengthens his image of moderation and flexibility which he attempts to
portray in Europe and which contrasts with the lack of freedom in his
anachronistic regime."

"Castro Only A Danger For Cubans"

Javier Tussell wrote in liberal El Pais (11/18): "At present Castro is
only a
danger for the Cubans. Protesting against him was very worthwhile when his
regime was conducting an imperial policy under Brezhnev ranging from
Angola to

Nicaragua. Since 1991, after the fall of Communism, there is no sense in asking if his regime is going to last, when will it fall and what kind of transition will there be.... To tell Castro that his regime is not liked is a political and ethical pleasure, but it also prevents further negotiations."

"The Castro Summit"

Centrist Diario 16 argued (11/14): "Once again, the Ibero-American summit has regrettably become the 'Castro summit.' It condemned the Helms-Burton legislation, basically rebuking Clinton for a law which Ibero-American, as well as European countries, reject. Although the goal of democratizing Cuba is shared by all, Aznar, the Spanish prime minister has gone too far in his frontal opposition to Castro, which breaks from the official Spanish diplomatic line...and gives the impression of following Washington in its support of the most extreme of the Cuban opposition groups."

LATVIA: "Wedge Between U.S. And EU"

Centrist Neatkaritga Rita Avize carried a commentary by Oskars Kastens (11/19):

"The problem of economic sanctions lies in the fact that foreign policy of Western countries rests on two whales--commercial interests and human rights.

This is an obvious contradiction.... Lately economic sanctions have become one of the main points of conflict between the United States and EU.... The infamous Helms-Burton Act...received a wave of protest world-wide, including America's closest neighbors.... Economic sanctions are getting a bad reputation. Even after the Gulf War, when there was unprecedented unity and energy to enact sanctions against Iraq, the goal still has not been achieved.... The blame might be on the U.S. tendency to pursue foreign policy that is domestic-policy-based (especially during an election year), as well as the tendency to act alone. There are too many unstable decisions and too many differences of opinion on whether or not sanctions are justifiable."

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC

BURMA: "West Attempting To Impose Economic Sanctions"

Government-owned, English-language New Light of Myanmar (11/20) mentioned attempts by Western nations to impose economic sanctions on Myanmar in an article by Tekkatho Tin Kha (Managing Director of News & Periodicals Enterprise, part of the Ministry of Information). The article dwelt with

the

"success" of oil and gas exploration in Burma, but had the following paragraphs buried in the story: "However, some of the West bloc nations who cannot bear to see Myanmar prosper economically and raise the standard living for people dwelling in Myanmar Naing-Ngan, are attempting to impose economic sanctions on Myanmar. They also coerce and apply pressure on foreign entrepreneurs not to make investments in Myanmar Naing-Ngan.

"A report appeared in 23 July 1996 issue of Financial Times published in London reported Total, French oil company, announced that it would continue doing business in Myanmar despite being severely criticized for making investments in Myanmar Naing-Ngan.... It can explicitly be seen how firmly

Myanmar economic system is established in view of Western companies' making solid and firm investments in Myanmar in spite of coercion and pressure from some of the West bloc nations."

INDONESIA: "A Maneuver"

Leading, independent Kompas (11/21), in an editorial, maintained, "Castro's

invitation to the pope [to visit Cuba] is considered as a maneuver to open itself to the outside world. For 34 years, Cuba has been isolated by the U.S. economic embargo.... In responding to the Castro-pope encounter, the United States hopes that the pope's plan to visit Cuba will encourage change toward democracy and human rights protection [in Cuba]. But, to date, the United States has yet to hint when it will lift the embargo. Despite his strongly defiant position against Cuban communism, the pope has many times criticized the embargo. The act of imposing the embargo has caused inhuman, prolonged suffering for the Cuban people."

SOUTH KOREA: "Objections To Sanctions Law Take Shape"

Conservative Segye Ilbo commented (11/14): "The international community has become more specific about its objections to the Helms-Burton law. With the United Nations voting 138 to 3 against the (Helms-Burton), the international community sent a message that the sanctions law is in violation of the principles of the WTO and a breach of the spirit of cooperation among

nations.

Ever since 1962, when the world organization began asking the United States to

end its sanctions against Cuba, an increasing number of countries have responded positively. It is quite significant that all EU countries voted against the latest sanctions law passed in the United States. While not binding, the UN resolution nevertheless carries political weight because it

reflects the common voice of an international protest which will likely force

the United States to take action in one way or another. It is feared that the

unilateral nature of the law will have a negative impact on the structure of international trade."

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: "Cuba Isolates U.S."

An editorial in the centrist Statesman (11/21) held under the headline above,

"The...Helms- Burton Act, may have helped Bill Clinton in taking Florida...out

of Republican influence, but it has brought the United States into violent opposition with its allies.... The act is seen as a violation of national sovereignty and it is the turn of the United States to find itself

isolated on

the issue.... For the vast majority in the international community, the

war

against Communism is over and Castro is just an eccentricity, a little

more

lovable for being virtually toothless. This is not, in any way, to

condone the

real repression the Cuban regime has exercised against its opponents both

at

home and abroad...but to recognize the fact that economic collaboration

with

Havana no longer poses a threat to global, or even American security....

Embargo and punitive trade measures, as the example of Iraq if not of

Libya

daily demonstrates, are much harsher on the people than the regimes who

hold

them hostage to their policies. By contrast, an embargo which would hurt

the

corrupt military junta in Nigeria is not considered. Squeezing Cuba

economically is not going to work, and even if it did would not succeed in

securing the principal American objective-dislodging Castro."

"Cuba Si, Says UN"

Hyderabad's right-of-center Newstime opined (11/16): "The UNGA has once again

delivered a stinging rebuke to the United States on its policy of economic sanctions against Cuba.... Of course, the very fact that such a resolution has

been passed five years in a row without any effect on the American government

is an indication of the impotence of the General Assembly.... In a sense, the

passage of the resolution also marks the impotence of the United States.

Despite its bluff and bluster, which includes the recent passage of the Helms-Burton law...the international community seems to be lining up to do business with a comparatively tiny island just off the American coast which

stubbornly remains a Communist bastion.... The Helms-Burton Act...has only hardened the stand of most countries against the American line on Cuba.... But

in an election year Bill Clinton needed the votes of Cuban Americans, who are

particularly influential in Florida, and hence the act was passed in haste with

no thought to the impact on America's own interests. European governments threatened to blacklist American firms if any action was taken against their

own companies for dealing with Cuba. Such an economic war among otherwise

strong political allies would have disastrous consequences for international trade. The Helms-Burton Act has thus remained a dead letter so far."

AFRICA

GHANA: "The Case Against U.S. Embargo Against Cuba"

The government-owned Ghanaian Times held (11/14): "By the biggest majority yet,

the UNGA adopted a resolution on Tuesday for the fifth year in a row calling

for an end to the 30-year-old U.S. economic blockade against Cuba. It is probably ambitious to expect that the U.S. government can reverse the long-standing embargo against Cuba, especially as the recently passed Helms-Burton law extending the implications of the embargo presents the U.S.

government with intractable legal hurdles in any attempt to change the law.

The economic blockade has imposed hardship on the people of Cuba; it violates

all the tenets of the human rights of the Cuban people and the sovereignty of

their nation. From the point of view of America's own interests, the latest

law is also uncautious. The EU has made this clear by successfully persuading

its members to make retaliatory regulations to neutralize the effectiveness of the U.S. law.

"Following Cuba's passing of her new investment legislation liberalizing and opening up foreign investment in the country, U.S. investors now see their opportunities of investing in Cuba--the neighbour across the street--blocked to them, and they don't like it. Cuba possesses important fields for substantial foreign investment, potentially lucrative given Cuba's political stability, vast store of local expertise, and high standard of labour discipline. Europe, Asia, and Latin America are therefore moving into Cuba to take all the investment openings which otherwise should to American businessmen on the basis of most favored nation-relationship. Despite the embargo laws, it does not appear that the U.S. government is going to be able to stem the tide of the unfolding Cuban investment rush, nor is the United States, indeed, gong to put real heart into preventing the rush. It means, then, that the blockade is sliding down to further absurdity for Cuba, the United States, and the world."

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 2, 1996

PRESS BRIEFING BY

MIKE MCCURRY

The Briefing Room

1:40 P.M. EST

MR. MCCURRY: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

Welcome back to the White House after, I hope, a blissful

Thanksgiving weekend. Any subjects you're interested in?

Q Can you tell us if the President is getting close
to naming his national security team? (Laughter.)

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Blitzer, the President was just having
a very good laugh at your most recent report moments ago. The
conversation he was having with Mr. Panetta and Mr. Bowles made it
manifestly clear that what you reported on the air was not true.

Q Uh-oh.

Q Which part?

Q What did he say?

Q -- being carried live on CNN. (Laughter.)

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Blitzer was ranking the various rumored candidates for Secretary of State and got the latest speculation wrong.

Q What did the President say?

MR. MCCURRY: The President said much of what he told you earlier, that he spent four days with his family. He clearly had gone through the recommendations, the binder that Mr. Bowles had presented to him. This was the first substantive conversation the President has had with his transition leaders since last Wednesday, before Thanksgiving. And I won't change what I said earlier, that his thinking on the national security cluster is fairly well-advanced, but it was fairly clear that there is no final decisions to announce. And as the President indicated, when there are final decisions he will make the announcement accordingly. In the meantime, you're all free to speculate.

Q Do you have more on the President's schedule this week? You said there are going to be more public appearances than were listed in that little skeleton schedule.

MR. MCCURRY: I've got -- the only additions I have to the week in review that we've already put out are two for tomorrow. I expect the President will have a briefing on AIDS research by Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala and by the NIH Director Ramos tomorrow at some point. There also is an interagency conference call concerning the civil disturbances in St. Petersburg, a conference call that Secretary Cisneros will lead, but we expect the President to participate at some point during that call.

Q These are public events?

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MR. MCCURRY: Those are public events, yes.

Q Any travel? There has been some speculation of something like next weekend or something? Do you --

MR. MCCURRY: Travel? Haven't we had enough of that this year? I'm not aware of any, no. Do we -- no, I'm not aware of any. No travel plans that I'm aware of.

Q Mike, is President Menem coming in to see the

President?

MR. MCCURRY: The President of Argentina, Carlos Menem, will be here at the White House on Thursday for a brief visit with the President. He is here in the United States on a private visit. The President looks forward to an exchange of views with President Menem that will cover hemispheric issues, issues related to the growth of both democracy and market economics in this hemisphere.

Q Mike, how about the letter referenced in today's Wall Street Journal's story from Mr. Riady in 1993?

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Riady's letter -- Mr. Mochtar Riady's letter.

Q Yes. Do you have plans to -- I mean, do you intend to release that letter?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes, as the President indicated we will release that letter publicly once we've made it available to Congress. We have been assembling a variety of materials for members of Congress that are interested in such matters. And I understand from the Legal Counsel's Office that they continue to work to assemble things.

One of the things they're doing is looking through presidential records, the group that manages presidential records,

looking for any relevant correspondence or data or memoranda so they can make a thorough submission to Congress at the appropriate time.

Q But not today, though?

MR. MCCURRY: No, it will not be today.

Q Will the other materials be released as well to the public -- or to the press when they're submitted to Congress?

MR. MCCURRY: Our intent is to make available publicly what we make available to the Congress. Now, we have simultaneously been entertaining questions from various news organizations looking into these matters as the Journal did. They were interested in correspondence. I told them about a March 1993 letter that Mr. Mochtar Riady sent to the President that congratulated the President on his economic program, on his plans for engagement with Asia, and made some recommendations concerning policy towards Asia, contained in the letter. And as the President indicated today, nothing that was that much different from what we were hearing from others in the business community.

Q Mike, let me follow this question. In 1992 the President criticized George Bush specifically for accepting soft you contributions of \$100,000 or more, and then doing the bidding -- not the bidding, but then following the policy that these people asked him to do. And he said, at the very least it creates the impression

that the White House is for rent, for sale. The President obviously heard a lot of sides on the Vietnam thing. But is the President unaware that this looks exactly like what he criticized Bush for -- big contributions and then the people ask for something and then they get it?

MR. MCCURRY: For a policy matter that was as contentious, as hotly debated and as thoroughly public as U.S. relations towards Vietnam, to suggest that any particular individual's views, whether it be a financial contributor or not, would have a disproportionate thinking on the work of the administration is a little bit less than credible.

Q Well, wait a minute. What about the money, Mike?
Can't that be seen as making -- he's asking how it looks.

MR. MCCURRY: The question is about what is the impact of contributions, and the point I would make is that there is not any public record that suggests that any financial contributor had a disproportionate influence on policy.

Q Well, what about the Bush case? Where is the public record on that?

MR. MCCURRY: As how it looks, that's up to you to characterize. I think there is a problem --

Q How is it different in terms of how it looks from what he criticized in '92?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not going to characterize how things look. You're in the business of doing that.

Q Well, the President showed no reluctance to do that himself.

Q Let me follow. Mike, in '92, Bill Daniels bundled soft money -- he was the cable television guy, he was a friend of Bush. It was sort of an equivalent relationship. They went back --he wrote this letter saying thanks for your help on the cable bill. Riady had contributed \$100,000 to the Inauguration. I think John Huang had done the same thing. Less than two months later, they get this letter. Shortly thereafter, America starts on a brand new policy towards Vietnam. Now, a lot of people think that was right, but John McCain, of course, called for this. There were a lot of voices on that side. But the impression that was created in the President's mind when he was governor by Bill Daniels' big contribution was that, at the very least, an ordinary American would think, gee, if you get \$100,000, you get what you want.

MR. MCCURRY: I believe that U.S. policy towards Vietnam throughout the last four years has been one of the most heavily covered and thoroughly accessible subjects on our entire foreign policy agenda. What interpretations you make of an individual letter

from a prominent businessperson is up to you to render your own judgments about it. You can characterize that as you see fit. I would just like to stick with the facts as I've just established them.

Q How do we know for sure the \$100,000 grand had nothing to do with it? How do you know for sure?

MR. MCCURRY: Because there is a very complete public record about the administration's consideration of normalization of relations with Vietnam, as was very heavily covered --

Q There's always a large public record --

MR. MCCURRY: Very heavily covered, very heavily briefed, numerous discussions that occurred and that were briefed publicly about it. And, frankly, it is up --
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Q But at the end of the day the President had to make a decision in his own mind, didn't he?

MR. MCCURRY: The President had to make a judgment based on U.S. national interests, the interests of the American people as we engage in that region.

Q Let me try this a different way. Is the President concerned that there seems to be no way to separate the appearance of possible impropriety here from the fact?

MR. MCCURRY: I think the President is largely concerned about the appearances that arise from soft money donations. You'll recall that during the campaign period he spoke directly to that subject, made a series of proposals, strongly backed legislation which we hope will now be introduced in the 105 Congress that would ban exactly those types of contributions.

Q He hasn't changed his mind about how these things look?

MR. MCCURRY: He's spoken publicly and has not changed his point of view about the perception that exists based on these contributions and the need to eradicate that type of contribution from our system of campaign finance.

Q So he would agree that somebody could draw the same kind of conclusion from his interaction with Riady that Bush --

MR. MCCURRY: He would agree with the expectation that many of you will draw your own conclusions, and so will the American people.

Q Just on the documents, Mike, is your thinking about

releasing them that you want to get as many as you can, have a complete set, rather than piecemeal day after day of documents --

MR. MCCURRY: That's exactly right. We've -- not only the President, but we are interested in what other correspondence that exists. We've looked through those records, we've got a substantial amount of that available, and I've been entertaining requests from those news organizations that have pursued some of those questions and telling them what we know about that correspondence.

Q Was this particular letter, though, available and in your hands -- before the election, and shouldn't it have been made public, given that --

MR. MCCURRY: The existence of the letter I believe was largely known because, if I'm not mistaken, I've heard from other reporters that Mr. Riady's representative made reference himself to the letter having been sent. I think we never formally disputed the notion that there was such a piece of correspondence from Mr. Mochtar Riady, but we have not -- we did not elect to make piecemeal disclosures of any correspondence or brief reporters in a piecemeal fashion on correspondence until we had more of the record available. We've been able to do that within the last couple of days, as various news organizations have turned their attention to that specific question.

Q Do you maintain it had no more influence on the President than the opinions of somebody who didn't give \$100,000, and who also might have written the President about Asia policy or Vietnam policy?

MR. MCCURRY: People from the private sector who are in prominent positions in the business community can speak with some authority as to the value of U.S. engagement towards Asia. And as the President indicated this morning, he said tens of thousands, but certainly hundreds and hundreds of such leaders have written to the President, some contributors, some not contributors, some, frankly, contributors to the other party. But the authority comes from having some knowledge of the operation of U.S. economic interests in that region and the value of promoting a policy of engagement with Asia, which is one that this President actively pursued almost from the first days of the administration.

Q Are you trying to say that the amount of the contribution, certainly sizeable, had absolutely no influence on the way the request was considered?

MR. MCCURRY: I think that --

Q How can you say that?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not saying that. I'm saying contributions are welcome. For those who have to run political

campaigns, you're thankful to your supporters for rendering that kind of support. But the President has made it clear that he has the responsibility to conduct foreign policy consistent with what the interests of the American people are -- all the American people. And that's the way he has conducted his policy towards Asia, on any of the matters that this individual has written about, or, indeed, any of the matters that affect the interests of America around the world.

Q Mike, on another subject --

Q No, can I ask one more?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes.

Q You said you don't want to make piecemeal disclosures, but the impression coming out from you and the White House was that it was a social relationship with Riady.

MR. MCCURRY: I don't believe that's true. I believe that there were some in the White House who characterized meetings that the President had with Mr. Mochtar Riady's son as being social. And the record, I think, stands up pretty well that that's an accurate characterization.

Q An accurate --

MR. MCCURRY: Yes, an accurate characterization. They

were largely social visits. The President has spoken publicly on the occasions in which there may have been a policy element to those conversations. But you can't escape the fact that by and large they appear to have been social visits by two individuals who had known each other for some time.

Q You said the full set of letters won't be ready today for release. Do you have a sense of when it is going to be ready? Will it be this week?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, there are questions well beyond correspondence. I mean, we've been briefing news organizations as to the number of visits that Mr. James Riady and some of his associates had here at the White House, the nature of the contact that existed between the President and Mr. Riady -- this would be Mr. James Riady -- other aspects of this. And we're in a position to help news organizations inquiring in this, because the President has directed all of us to be forthcoming and candid in responding. But as to documentation we think it's more appropriate to provide the documentation first to Congress and then to release it publicly.

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Q Do you think that's going to be this week, or do you have some sense of the timing?

MR. MCCURRY: I can check for you. First of all,

remember that, because Congress is just forming itself for the work it will do in its 105th session, there has been no formal schedule of hearings or formal calling of particular witnesses at this point. We imagine they will be setting about that work very shortly.

Q The Chief of Staff earlier took action with respect to Mark Middleton and questions about the appearance of whether he was trading in on his White House relationship after leaving. The L.A. Times over the weekend had the story about this Chinese American in Los Angeles. Is the White House considering any sort of broader review of its policies about -- to prevent this kind of problem?

MR. MCCURRY: These matters have occasioned that type of review, and have led to very strict admonition by the Chief of Staff to all the department heads of the White House to be very conscious of the admission of outside individuals to the White House who may appear to use their access to the White House for their own private commercial gain. He's cautioned all of us to just know who we are admitting to the White House complex, and for what purpose, and who will accompany them on those occasions.

Q If these people were higher up they'd be covered by the revolving door law, isn't that correct?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, no, we're talking in this case about visitors from the outside. If there are White House officials who are -- or former White House officials who are no longer working

here, they are covered by the administration's voluntary ethics guidelines that apply to those with the rank of deputy assistant to the President, or assistant to the President, or who earned in excess of \$100,000 a year. Now, that would not cover the individual you mentioned, Mr. Mark Middleton, but there is some sense here that we should look at that issue and make sure that even those who are at more junior levels in the White House staffing structure are not in a position to appear to use their access for any of their own personal private purposes.

Now, as you know, Mr. Middleton has denied that he has done that in a statement that he can make available to you, or he has made available to many of your news organizations.

Q Does the President think it's a good idea for James Carville to be mounting his attacks on Ken Starr?

MR. MCCURRY: The President has not rendered any opinion on that. Mr. Carville is certainly someone who speaks for himself and has made it clear he will speak for himself, regardless of what the White House says.

Q Earlier today you said --

Q Does the President believe that if he asks Mr. Carville to desist that Mr. Carville would continue?

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Carville has indicated that, first, he has not discussed the matter with the President, and second, he will pursue the course of action that he thinks he needs to pursue, regardless of what anyone at the White House, including the President, has to say.

Q This morning you were going to ask the President -- you said you asked him and he said he has no opinion, or he has yet to -- you were going to try to find out what he thought about this matter.

MR. MCCURRY: I told you he has not rendered an opinion on the subject.

Q Are you saying here that what Mr. Carville is saying does not represent the President's thinking?

MR. MCCURRY: That does not represent the President's thinking. The President on this matter will speak for himself or instruct those of us who speak on his behalf to indicate whatever he wants said, and he's indicated that the work of the Independent Counsel ought to be treated respectfully and with the proper "no comment."

Q Well, wouldn't it be appropriate if he thinks that to ask one of his dear friends and a man who has been his chief political advisor to knock it off if that's what he thinks?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, as I just said, Mr. Carville is an outspoken individual and has made it clear that he intends to speak out.

Q Regardless of what the President says?

MR. MCCURRY: Regardless of what anyone at the White House says.

Q Do you seriously believe that? Do you expect the public to believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: The public can believe whatever the public wants to believe.

Q Do you believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: Do I believe that?

Q Yes, do you believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: I believe that Mr. Carville would continue to make whatever points he felt compelled to make regardless of what anyone at the White House thought about it.

Q Even if the President asked him to stop? Are you

serious?

MR. MCCURRY: I am serious, yes.

Q Did you ask the President about this today? You said you were going to.

MR. MCCURRY: I had a very brief conversation with him.

Q And what was his response?

Q What did he say?

MR. MCCURRY: I think I've just reflected his sentiments.

Q He said, I don't have a response to that?

Q I'm not going to render any --

Q Has the President discussed it with Carville at all?

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MR. MCCURRY: Not to -- he has not had a discussion with Mr. Carville about it.

Q About it -- or about Carville's plans? I mean, he knew nothing about it?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's been -- Mr. Carville has been very public about his intentions to speak out.

Q If he doesn't like what he's doing, why doesn't he ask him to stop?

MR. MCCURRY: Just he's not in a position to dissuade Mr. Carville from pursuing the course that Mr. Carville has --

Q He's the President of the United States of America.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, Mr. Carville, the most prominent political consultant in America, has made it clear that's what he's going to do.

Q -- this is not helpful to you, or do you think it is helpful to you? What do you think of Carville's --

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not rendering an opinion on it.

Q Has Carville talked to someone other than the President here at the White House about this endeavor?

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't asked every individual here at the White House. I don't -- he may have. I just don't know.

Q What about those you have asked?

MR. MCCURRY: Of those that I have, no one, to my knowledge, had any extensive discussion with Mr. Carville about the merits of --

Q Well, wait a minute. What does that mean?

MR. MCCURRY: -- pursuing this course of action.

Q Did they have any discussions, and if so who, and what was said?

MR. MCCURRY: Brit, I don't -- I'm not going to answer a question that I don't have 100 percent information on. I haven't gone around and canvassed every single person who knows --

Q Well, what about those you have canvassed?

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't found anyone --

Q We'll accept your version of those you have talked to about it.

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't found anyone who said that they tried to dissuade James from doing what he's doing.

Q I'll bet. But the question is, has anybody encouraged him, to your knowledge?

MR. MCCURRY: Not to my knowledge.

Q Has anybody in any sense discouraged him?

MR. MCCURRY: Not to my knowledge.

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Q It's a remarkable, look-ma-no-hands operation here that Carville is carrying on, isn't it?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, you can characterize it as you see fit, and I'm sure you will.

Q Mike, you said that Carville had no extensive discussions with anyone at the White House. Did he have any not extensive discussions with someone at the White House about it?

MR. MCCURRY: Again, Susan, there are a lot of people who work here. There are 1,500 people who work at the White House.

Q That you know of.

MR. MCCURRY: There are a lot of people who know James. I haven't gone and talked to each individual who knows James and said, what was the nature of your conversation with Mr. Carville on a given date. So I want to be very careful --

Q What about those you have talked to?

MR. MCCURRY: I just -- you just asked and answered those questions.

Q Asked and not answered.

Q Do you think anybody has made it clear to him how wretchedly miserable it's made your lot here today? (Laughter).

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Carville is aware of how wretchedly miserable my pitiful life is, I'm sure. (Laughter.)

Q The President has to make some decisions on cutting back Social Security for disabled children. Do you know when he's going to make that decision? Certain categories of disabled kids.

MR. MCCURRY: You mean related to welfare reform fixes? There's no change in what we told you last week. That's an issue that's got budgetary impact for FY98. It is being looked at very

carefully by the President and his economic and budget advisers. The President is interested in addressing those shortcomings that he found in the welfare reform bill -- significant discussions underway about how best to do that and what the likely budget impact will be.

Q Are you going to change your mind on that after what Moynihan had to say about potential -- a likelihood of changes in welfare reform?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, Senator Moynihan is a distinguished member of the Senate, particularly on this subject, but it doesn't necessarily reflect the sentiments of all 100 senators.

Q But you have essentially the Democratic leadership on that issue, in Moynihan and Nickles, up there saying, it's done, nothing is going to be considered.

MR. MCCURRY: Of who and who?

Q Nickles and Moynihan, both of them.

MR. MCCURRY: I think there are a lot of sentiments within the Democratic Caucus in the Senate that shortcomings in the welfare reform bill ought to be addressed. Senator Moynihan's view is that that was not likely to occur, but that is not necessarily the only view that exists within the Senator Caucus or here at the White House.

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Q And those shortcomings will be addressed within the context of a budget proposal on the legal --

MR. MCCURRY: There's budgetary impact on those issues and we continue to assess how best to address those issues.

Q Is the White House still discussing 25 percent replenishment of the funds that were already designated --

MR. MCCURRY: We are taking steps. I'll have to look into that. We are looking at some specific steps on addressing those more emergency type situations and that can be done within current budget authority. I think there has been some reporting on that already.

Q He's talking about the Times story.

MR. MCCURRY: Oh, you mean the differential that exists between the President's balanced budget proposals and the impact of the welfare reform bill? They made a -- there is sort of a rough calculation for initial policy discussion purposes that was made and the figure I think is in the neighborhood of \$13 billion. That does not necessarily equate to the price tag of those things that would be recommended by the President. Again, those discussions are still

underway.

Q What is your view that legal immigrants could receive benefits simply by becoming U.S. citizens?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, those legal immigrants who go through the process of naturalization are entitled as U.S. citizens to a different range of benefits. I mean, that's the law.

Q No, but I mean as an answer rather than trying to make changes --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that seems to be occurring. I mean, there are -- it seems in practice that that process is speeding up because there are some cases where people have had legal residence status are attempting to convert to legal citizenship status, in part, it is believed by some experts, because of the impact of this law.

Q Mike, over the weekend Secretary Perry signed a series of agreements in Japan designed to reduce the impact of the U.S. military presence on Okinawa, including what is most important in the eyes of the Japanese of moving a Marine helicopter base off-shore. How does the White House feel about the accords, and will these issues related to the military presence on Okinawa continue to get White House attention?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, we are obviously pleased that we have been able to work with the government of Japan to reduce the burden on Okinawa in ways that do not fundamentally alter the U.S.-Japan security relationship or affect the readiness of our forward-deployed troops in that region.

The satisfactory arrangement that was concluded by the Secretary of Defense really works through a lot of those recommendations from the Special Advisory Committee on Okinawa which looked at the question, particularly the Futenma facility. They've arrived at what the Secretary believes is an adequate conclusion, an agreement that satisfies our own security interests and also our strong force posture in the region, a commitment that the United States has made and will continue to make to the security of that region.

Q Mike, will the President endorse the recommendation of the panel looking at the CPI and will he implement them?

MR. MCCURRY: The Boskin Group has made a recommendation or is about to make a recommendation on CPI calculations. There are a number of people in the area of labor, economics and economists looking at the question of how best to measure inflationary impacts across the economy. The Boskin Group has certainly been impaneled to do that by a congressional committee. BLS has been looking at much the same issue with respect to how best to take into account inflationary pressures when you calculate things like benefits to

individual Americans under entitlement programs. All of these expert opinions will be very carefully considered by the administration because the President believes this is a decision that ultimately is one best based on scientific economic expert calculation as opposed to some political measurement with respect to the budget.

Q Isn't this a scientific panel? Isn't this what this is? And doesn't he have --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that group is -- was asked by I believe the Senate Finance Committee, right, to look at CPI calculations. BLS has been doing much the same thing. There are others. It's been a very vibrant debate in the academic community about how best to calculate and measure the impact of inflation, and we are going to consider all those views as we look at their work.

Q Is it accurate to say the administration is willing to consider the Boskin Group's recommendations as far as they might call for changes in the technical procedures made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, but that something along the line of what Moynihan wants to do legislatively is something you would oppose?

MR. MCCURRY: That's a technical question beyond my ability to answer. There is a variety of ways which you go about calculating that. I think we're going to look at the whole question of how best to measure inflationary impacts, what that suggests with respect to the CPI, how you apply the CPI to the calculation of

benefit increases and then make some judgments accordingly.

Q But in their interim report, this group suggested that the CPI is inflated by about one percent and --

MR. MCCURRY: There have been different measurements of what the over-estimation of the inflationary effect have been. And Senator Moynihan's got a different view. The BLS economists are looking at much the same question. I'm not going to speculate on where the number will come out.

Q Mike, bipartisan commission on Medicare reform -- how's the President going to make that happen?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's -- a couple of different stages in the process. There's health care -- the provision of health care commission, which he's pledged to appoint and which we have not yet named -- correct? -- that is under consideration. The President has also suggested in the short-term we need to proceed with Medicare savings by slowing the rate of increase in spending for those programs consistent with what he's put forward in his balanced budget proposal. Now, that would extend the solvency of the trust fund into the next century by a number of years.

And then the longer-terms questions related to Medicare solvency are ones which during the campaign period the President suggested might be amenable to consideration by a bipartisan panel.

Now we are much farther down the road in looking at the quality of health care, looking at what the short-term budgetary impacts are going to be on the solvency of the Medicare fund and then the longer range issues that kick in. The President will address at a later date on how you begin to structure a bipartisan commission if, in fact, we continue to see sentiment for doing that as we work with Congress.

Q Well, are you seeing any sentiment? It didn't sound like there was a whole lot.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's been mixed. There are some leaders in Congress who said they don't think that's an idea that's worth exploring at this point. There are others that have said that's the only practical way we're ever going to get at the issue of entitlements. And I'm sure the President will consider these views and it will be a subject that will certainly be a part of our economic decision-making in the coming term.

Q Mike, there's growing concern among many arms control analysts about the fate of START II in the Russian Parliament. And in that connection, there's a proposal floating around to have the President and Yeltsin take an initiative to get it off dead center and spell out what a START III treaty might look like in terms of lower limits so that the Russians don't have big expense on the START II of reconfiguring their land-based -- is there anything along these lines under consideration, or is the President

merely waiting for the Russians to do their thing in the Duma?

MR. MCCURRY: No, we have had a very active dialogue with the Russian Federation on the question of START II ratification by the Duma. I would not suggest that we've been waiting for some plan to try to get it off dead center. The President has actively encouraged President Yeltsin to do so. We have engaged a number of diplomats at a high level from the Russian Federation on that subject and stressed the importance of ratification by the Duma of START II.

But there have also been discussions among arms control experts on both sides about how to structure further arms reductions and limitations consistent with a START III approach. The momentum that would be created by a START II ratification would lend itself to further arms control efforts. But I'm not aware of any specific plan to structure that one-two step as you said, other than to say that there have been a very consistent effort on the part of our side to stress the importance of Duma ratification.

Q Mike, many women's groups are eager that a woman fill one of the upcoming vacancies on the President's national security team. As he looks at the candidates, is that a factor at all, or is it not a factor compared to experience and whatever other qualities he's looking for?

MR. MCCURRY: There are a number of factors that go into the consideration, and the President, as he has said publicly, is

stressing how the team works together. Obviously, there is rampant speculation at least one of the candidates under serious consideration is of the female gender, so we'll have to wait and see.

Q Is that a positive attribute for that candidate in addition to the other things, as far as being --

MR. MCCURRY: It is an attribute, and how people work together is driven I think more by personality than by gender. And we just happen to have someone who is a very highly qualified, successful candidate for one of those positions, or at least we have rumors to that effect, and I wouldn't dissuade you from thinking that.

Q As the President adds up the pluses and minuses, is gender considered a plus, or is it not a factor?

MR. MCCURRY: I think diversity has always been considered a plus as the President considers appointments. But I don't want to apply that to any specific consideration.

Q Speaking of diversity, is the President going to meet with the rest of the Cabinet that has not resigned, and specifically when is he meeting with Janet Reno?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes. He will continue his one-by-one discussions with members of the Cabinet, those that he has not yet

seen -- I think he's seen about half the Cabinet so far, and we'll let you know when he sees individual members. I'm not aware of any schedule for the remainder of those consultations at this point.

Q Getting back to this Social Security thing, this is a question that I've been asked to ask. Apparently --

Q Whoa!!!

Q My editors made me do it. (Laughter.)

Q Give the disclaimer. (Laughter.)

Q What are the families of those disabled kids --

MR. MCCURRY: Leo put you up to this question, didn't he?

Q When are the families of the disabled kids who are no longer going to receive certain Social Security benefits for their disabilities going to be notified that they're no longer going to get a Social Security supplemental check?

MR. MCCURRY: I have no idea. We'll have to look into that. Do you know? It's all part of the review of how you address the welfare reform legislation.

Q They're certainly reviewing -- whether to tell them.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, you have to know what to tell them before you --

MR. TOIV: The Social Security Administration is reviewing individual cases.

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Toiv tells me that the Social Security Administration is looking at individual cases on a case by case basis.

Q That will keep them busy for a long time, won't it?

MR. MCCURRY: Why don't we come back to that, Wolf, when I can get more information.

Q Just to follow John's question about diversity. I mean, is having a Cabinet that looks like America as important this time as it was last time, or has it somehow shifted and --

MR. MCCURRY: It's important to the President to have a Cabinet that looks like America and to have diversity reflected in his appointments.

Q So last time he spent an inordinate amount of

effort making sure that that happens.

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MR. MCCURRY: Well, last time it was a new administration after a period in which Democrats had not occupied the White House and there had to be more effort to reach out to people who are not instantly on the radar screen for appointment. We've now had four years, four successful years in office in which a number of candidates present themselves having served in the administration in various capacities. It's a different equation this time because it's an incumbent administration. I think you have to take into account it's a different situation.

Now, that said, the transition team that the President empaneled has -- one of the results of their work, reaching out around the country and generating new names, was to really present the President with some options for Cabinet appointment that he's now in the process of considering that do reflect considerable gender, racial, ethnic diversity.

Q Is that less a consideration than it was four years ago?

MR. MCCURRY: It's a consideration, but we're four years later, it's an incumbent administration. There are people that now have had experience serving in the first term that, you know, because

of that experience, rise to the top of those who might be considered, clearly. So it's a different -- somewhat different kind of equation, but not any more or less important than it was four years ago.

Q You're suggesting that that could push gender or racial considerations out of the picture.

MR. MCCURRY: No, I'm not at all. I said that diversity continues to be a very important guidepost for the President as he considers these appointments.

Q Mike, can we go back to Starr for a minute? He's kind of gone on a counteroffensive. He sat down with Newsweek for three hours. I believe his deputy in Little Rock, Hickman Ewing, said an attack like Carville's is a sign of guilt. Do you think it's helpful to have Carville out attacking?

MR. MCCURRY: I've repeatedly refused to render a judgment on that and I won't do it again. Mr. Starr has to speak for himself. Mr. Carville has to speak for himself. And all of their debate will be judged in the court of public opinion, no doubt.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

2:15 P.M. EST

Message Sent

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wh-outbox-distr @ clinton.ai.mit.edu@INET@LNGTWY

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CREATION DATE/TIME: 5-DEC-1996 20:13:00.00

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/OU Organizational Unit

/S Surname

/G Given Name

/I Initials

/Q Generation Qualifiers

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id SAA18108; Thu, 5 Dec 1996 18:07:33 -0500

From: <"Darby_E._Stott"@oa.eop.gov>

Received: from pmdf.eop.gov by gatekeeper.eop.gov;
(5.65v3.2/1.1.8.2/17Oct95-0424PM)

id AA31646; Thu, 5 Dec 1996 18:06:59 -0500

Received: from mr.eop.gov by PMDF.EOP.GOV (PMDf V5.0-4 #6879)

id <01ICNRUVOQ8W00WOWS@PMDf.EOP.GOV>; Thu, 05 Dec 1996 18:06:51 -0400

(EDT)

Received: with PMDF-MR; Thu, 05 Dec 1996 18:06:36 -0400 (EDT)

Mr-Received: by mta EOPMRX; Relayed; Thu, 05 Dec 1996 18:06:36 -0400

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Date: Thu, 05 Dec 1996 17:59:00 -0400 (EDT)

Subject: Statement re: Meeting with the President of Argentina

To: 1=US

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"*To: 62955104"@eln.attmail.com, "*To: 73030.21"@compuserve.com,

"*To: _ABERNATHY_P"@a1.eop.gov, "*To: _ABRAMS_L"@a1.eop.gov,

"*To: _BAER_D"@a1.eop.gov, "*To: _BARBUSCHAK_K"@a1.eop.gov,

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"*To:_DORVAL_C"@al.eop.gov, "*To:_EDWARDS_A"@al.eop.gov,
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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 5, 1996

STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

Meeting with Argentine President Menem

The President met today with Argentine President Carlos Menem and several members of the Argentine Cabinet to review the relationship with one of our closest international partners. To enhance and strengthen that relationship, the two leaders agreed to establish a special Consultative Process with regular, senior- level meetings between our two governments. This Consultative Process will address important issues in our bilateral relationship.

The President applauded Argentina's continuing role as a driving force for democracy in the Americas. The two leaders also reviewed progress in implementing commitments from the first Summit of the Americas, which the President hosted two years ago this week in Miami. They reaffirmed their commitment to the Summit goal of a Free Trade Area of the Americas and agreed to cooperate closely with Chile as we prepare for the Santiago Summit of the Americas in March 1998.

The President expressed appreciation for Argentina's continued strong support for our joint foreign policy initiatives around the world, including in Bosnia, where 40 Argentine police monitors serve in the UN's International Police Task Force, and in Zaire, where Argentina is helping to address the humanitarian crisis. They also reviewed our growing commercial ties, taking note of the fact that two-way trade between the United States and Argentina now exceeds six billion dollars per annum.

President Menem extended to President Clinton an invitation to visit Argentina. The President affirmed that he hopes to visit the region sometime early in his second term.

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===== ATTACHMENT I =====
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