

**REPORT OF THE COMMISSION FOR ASSISTANCE
TO A FREE CUBA**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

—————
JULY 27, 2006
—————

Serial No. 109-234

—————

Printed for the use of the Committee on International Relations



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.internationalrelations.house.gov/>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

28-969PDF

WASHINGTON : 2006

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512-1800; DC area (202) 512-1800
Fax: (202) 512-2250 Mail: Stop SSOP, Washington, DC 20402-0001

COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

HENRY J. HYDE, Illinois, *Chairman*

JAMES A. LEACH, Iowa
CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, New Jersey,
Vice Chairman
DAN BURTON, Indiana
ELTON GALLEGLEY, California
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, Florida
DANA ROHRBACHER, California
EDWARD R. ROYCE, California
PETER T. KING, New York
STEVE CHABOT, Ohio
THOMAS G. TANCREDO, Colorado
RON PAUL, Texas
DARRELL ISSA, California
JEFF FLAKE, Arizona
JO ANN DAVIS, Virginia
MARK GREEN, Wisconsin
JERRY WELLER, Illinois
MIKE PENCE, Indiana
THADDEUS G. McCOTTER, Michigan
KATHERINE HARRIS, Florida
JOE WILSON, South Carolina
JOHN BOOZMAN, Arkansas
J. GRESHAM BARRETT, South Carolina
CONNIE MACK, Florida
JEFF FORTENBERRY, Nebraska
MICHAEL MCCAUL, Texas
TED POE, Texas

TOM LANTOS, California
HOWARD L. BERMAN, California
GARY L. ACKERMAN, New York
ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA, American
Samoa
DONALD M. PAYNE, New Jersey
SHERROD BROWN, Ohio
BRAD SHERMAN, California
ROBERT WEXLER, Florida
ELIOT L. ENGEL, New York
WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT, Massachusetts
GREGORY W. MEEKS, New York
BARBARA LEE, California
JOSEPH CROWLEY, New York
EARL BLUMENAUER, Oregon
SHELLEY BERKLEY, Nevada
GRACE F. NAPOLITANO, California
ADAM B. SCHIFF, California
DIANE E. WATSON, California
ADAM SMITH, Washington
BETTY MCCOLLUM, Minnesota
BEN CHANDLER, Kentucky
DENNIS A. CARDOZA, California
RUSS CARNAHAN, Missouri

THOMAS E. MOONEY, SR., *Staff Director/General Counsel*
ROBERT R. KING, *Democratic Staff Director*

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

DAN BURTON, Indiana, *Chairman*

RON PAUL, Texas
JERRY WELLER, Illinois, *Vice Chairman*
KATHERINE HARRIS, Florida
JAMES A. LEACH, Iowa
CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, New Jersey
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, Florida
CONNIE MACK, Florida
MICHAEL MCCAUL, Texas

ELIOT L. ENGEL, New York
GRACE NAPOLITANO, California
ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA, American
Samoa
DONALD M. PAYNE, New Jersey
WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT, Massachusetts
GREGORY W. MEEKS, New York
BARBARA LEE, California

MARK WALKER, *Subcommittee Staff Director*
JASON STEINBAUM, *Democratic Professional Staff Member*
DAN S. GETZ, *Professional Staff Member*
BRIAN WANKO, *Staff Associate*

CONTENTS

	Page
WITNESS	
Mr. Caleb C. McCarry, Cuba Transition Coordinator, Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba, U.S. Department of State	13
LETTERS, STATEMENTS, ETC., SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING	
The Honorable Dan Burton, a Representative in Congress from the State of Indiana, and Chairman, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere: Prepared statement	4
Mr. Caleb C. McCarry: Prepared statement	15
The Honorable Gregory W. Meeks, a Representative in Congress from the State of New York: Prepared statement	19

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION FOR ASSISTANCE TO A FREE CUBA

THURSDAY, JULY 27, 2006

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:10 p.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Jerry Weller presiding.

Mr. WELLER [presiding]. Good afternoon. A quorum being present, the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere will come to order.

I ask unanimous consent that all Members' and witnesses' opening statements be included in the record. Without objection, so ordered.

I ask unanimous consent that all articles, exhibits and extraneous or tabular material referred to by Members or witnesses be included in the record. Without objection, so ordered.

I ask unanimous consent that any Member who may attend today's hearing be considered a Member of the Subcommittee for the purpose of receiving testimony and questioning witnesses after Subcommittee Members have been given the opportunity to do so. Without objection, so ordered.

Today, the Subcommittee will hear from Cuba Transition Coordinator Caleb McCarry and discuss details of the report of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba.

I know a great deal of consultation and energy went into the work of this Commission. I applaud the hard work of Secretary Condoleezza Rice, Secretary Carlos Gutierrez, Caleb McCarry and others who contributed to this report. It is our intention today to examine the recommendations of the Commission's inter-agency strategic plan to assist a Cuban-led transition.

There is moral clarity in the report which reaffirms the United States' strong commitment to the democratic forces of Cuba.

Many people have suffered for the cause of justice and freedom in Cuba. It has been a long, hard struggle. The forces for change are both within and outside Cuba, and they are driving discourse about what a possible transition scenario will look like. There is optimism among some observers and participants in this struggle. Others are passive and counsel restraint in any discussion of Cuba after Castro.

The dawn on a long-awaited transformation in Cuba may be near. Many Cubans long for the day when a culture of suspicion, surveillance, persecution, brutality and injustice makes way for a

new paradigm of political and economic freedom. They long for the day when the light of democracy replaces the hopeless cycle of darkness and deprivation.

The Commission report states that this is the time for bold, decisive action and clarity of message; and I support this approach. Good neighbors engage their neighbors; and when a struggle is just and noble, neighbors do not remain silent.

With the \$80 million President George W. Bush pledged to this initiative, we can assist Cuba media outlets and civil society organizations and provide those pro-democratic movements with the means to effectively spread their message of hope and freedom to the Cuban people.

Cuba's transition will be a Cuban-led transition. The Commission's report is not a "provocation," as some have charged. If anything, it is a compass for preparation, for policy and for practice so that we are positioned to help the people of Cuba help themselves and begin the process of normalizing bilateral regulations.

On the first report of the Commission released 2 years ago, there were critics who said the report represented a narrow and shallow understanding of Cuban history and current conditions there. Let me speak to these critics: Where I come from in Illinois, neighbors help their neighbors if they are in need; and our Cuban neighbors have been suffering.

We are not the final arbiters of justice and morality, nor do we hold a monopoly on the commodities of democracy and freedom, but we do have a responsibility to stand with brave defenders of democracy, many of whom are rotting in despicable conditions in Cuba. We are preparing to assist when the transition and a potential transformation of Cuba occurs.

Fidel Castro launched his 26th of July Movement in 1959, and since that time the weight of one man's will has stunted the healthy growth of Cuban society. Today, there are many Cuban constituencies and many stakeholders in the future of Cuba. The United States will continue to stand with the freedom-loving people of Cuba and solidarity to break free of the chains of this Communist regime.

I now recognize my colleagues on the Subcommittee for opening statements they would wish to make. Does the gentlelady from California, Ms. Lee, have an opening statement?

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

It's no secret that I disagree with your position and views with regard to Cuba. For the most part, I want to reiterate the fact that I think that our policy, quite frankly, is a failed policy and our country for, what, 40 years now has embarked on this policy of a blockade which hasn't done anything in terms of helping to normalize relations with the people of Cuba. We have normal relations with China, Pakistan is our ally, many countries that many people believe we should not be dealing with. We deal with them for our own reasons.

No one is taking the position that they support or oppose any leadership in any country. But the point is that the way you promote democracy and the way you engage in normal relations is by allowing for free and fair trade, educational changes, and just basic normal relations. And I think that what we have seen over the last

40 years is that this policy of embargo and blockade just doesn't work. It hasn't toppled the Castro regime, and it won't.

Let me say a couple of things with regard to some very current issues that—and, Mr. McCarry, I hope you don't take any of this personally, but some of us are very frustrated with what's been going on, so I've got to tell you what has happened, if you don't know by now.

Soon after Secretary Rice announced that she was reconvening the Commission, myself, along with 25 other Members of Congress, requested a meeting, a Member-level meeting. We sent a letter, and we wanted to provide input for the Commission's report. In response to our letters, the State Department coordinated a staff-level briefing, not the requested Member-Secretary briefing.

I think that it is, quite frankly, unconscionable that certain Cuban American groups and others had direct access and input about what would go into the report that affects the entire Nation, while Members of Congress with alternative perspectives were excluded. I mean, this is America, and this is, I think, a democracy, and we should be allowed to provide our input into this, but we were totally excluded from this process, totally excluded.

Our separate request for a meeting on protecting religious travel resulted in Members of Congress meeting with State Department and OFAC, we met with the staff. The staff couldn't negotiate a solution or make a decision about what the final policy on United States-Cuban religious exchanges would be.

In the past month, myself and other Members have made personal inquiries, and we still have not received a response; and the Commission's report was the exact opposite of our request for a diplomatic and balanced solution. I would hope that any Commission coming out of the United States Government would want to be balanced and objective. Instead the report further restricted religious and humanitarian exchanges, which basically is a fundamental violation of religious freedom; and we wanted to make sure that those views were reflected in this report.

The only thing that I can say has been fairly positive was a promise that was made by Secretary Powell to protect the 90-plus American students enrolled at the Latin America Medical School. That promise so far is being upheld, and I want to thank you very much for that. These are young people who, for whatever reason, America didn't allow for the type of medical education because of resources. They just couldn't afford to go to school here. So we asked that the students not be kicked out because of U.S. policies. And we're thankful that their studies will be allowed to continue.

I'd like to reiterate, though—and this is on record—that we wanted a general license for these students because that would save OFAC and Members of Congress a lot of time and a lot of money. And, again, it's unfortunate that as a result of this failed policy, the parents of these students can't visit them or send packages to them. I mean, what is this about?

So today we're looking at American taxpayers shelling out an additional—what is this—\$80 million to further restrict our civil liberties. I'm not talking about Cuba. I'm talking about those of American citizens. We should not be prevented from traveling if we want

to travel anywhere in the world. This is just an extension of more of these failed policies, and I think this \$80 million could be much better spent in other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean maybe to help some of these students go to medical school in America.

So I look forward to your testimony in response to these questions, but I've just got to tell you—and I'm speaking for several Members here—with regard to the disappointment with both the report and the expanded sanctions on religious exchanges and on humanitarian assistance and, also, just the fact that we've been blocked from you all. We haven't been provided the opportunity to provide input and feedback or have dialogue with you.

I thought that was what the basic criticism—one of the basic criticisms of Cuba is, that it's a closed society. Well, it's been very closed dealing with you all with regard to this report, so I just wanted to let you know that and ask you some questions later.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WELLER. I thank the gentlelady from California.

Before I recognize the gentlelady from Florida, I ask unanimous consent to insert into the record Chairman Burton's opening statement for the hearing. Without objection, so ordered.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Burton follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DAN BURTON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Today the Subcommittee will hear from Cuba Transition Coordinator Caleb McCarry and discuss details of the Report of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba.

I know a great deal of consultation and energy went into the work of the Commission and I applaud the hard work of Secretary Condoleezza Rice, Secretary Carlos Gutierrez, Caleb McCarry, and others who contributed to this report. It is our intention today to examine the recommendations of the Commission's inter-agency strategic plan to assist a Cuban-led transition.

There is moral clarity in the report which reaffirms the United States' strong commitment to the democratic forces of Cuba.

Many people have sacrificed for the cause of justice and freedom in Cuba. It has been a long, hard struggle. The forces for change are both within and outside Cuba, and they are driving discourse about what a possible transition scenario will look like. There is optimism among some observers and participants in this struggle. Others are passive and counsel restraint in any discussion of Cuba after Castro.

The dawn of a long-awaited transformation in Cuba may be near. Many Cubans long for the day when a culture of suspicion, surveillance, persecution, brutality and injustice makes way for a new paradigm of political and economic freedom. They long for a day when the light of democracy replaces the hopeless cycle of darkness and deprivation.

The Commission report states "this is a time for bold, decisive action and clarity of message" and I support this approach. Good neighbors engage their neighbors, and when a struggle is just and noble, neighbors do not remain silent.

With the \$80 million President George W. Bush pledged to the initiative, we can truly assist Cuban media outlets and civil society organizations, and provide these pro-democratic movements with the means to effectively spread their message of hope and freedom to the Cuban people.

Cuba's transition will be a Cuban-led transition. The Commission report is not a "provocation." If anything, it is a compass for preparation, for policy, and for practice so that we are positioned to help the people of Cuba help themselves, and begin the process of normalizing bilateral relations.

When the first report of the Commission was released two years ago there were critics who said the report represented a narrow and shallow understanding of Cuban history and current conditions there. Let me speak to these critics: Where I come from in Indiana, neighbors help their neighbors if they are in need. And our Cuban neighbors have been suffering.

We are not the final arbiters of justice and morality. Nor do we hold a monopoly on the commodities of democracy and freedom. But we do have a responsibility to stand with brave defenders of democracy, many of whom are rotting in despicable conditions in Cuba. We are preparing to assist when the transition and the potential transformation in Cuba occurs.

Fidel Castro launched his "26th of July Movement" in 1959 and since that time, the weight of one man's will has stunted the healthy growth of Cuban Society. Today there are many Cuban constituencies and many stakeholders in the future of Cuba. The United States will continue to stand with the freedom-loving people of Cuba in solidarity to break free from the chains of this Communist regime.

I now recognize Ranking Member Engel for any statement he may wish to make.

Mr. WELLER. The gentlelady from Florida, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, and I thank my good friend from California for her opening statements. I just bristle at the thought of the moral equivalency of equating anything that we do here in the United States with something that Castro does in Cuba; and I'm sure that Mr. McCarry would be glad to give you any hearing or report that you would like, Ms. Lee, but there is certainly no moral equivalency.

But I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for scheduling this important meeting, this hearing on the report of the Commission for Assistance for a Free Cuba. This report comes at a critical juncture in our efforts to support the Cuban people in their struggle for democratic transition; and it's a great pleasure to see my good friend, Caleb McCarry, back with us. We've worked so closely over many years on our shared goal of ending Castro's tyrannical regime and establishing a free and democratic Cuba. Thank you for your valuable support on this issue when you worked on the House International Relations Committee and for continuing your mission to spread freedom and democracy in your current position as the State Department's Transition Coordinator for Cuba. I'm gratified by the Administration's commitment to this democratic transition in Cuba.

The second report issued by the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba underscores the role of the United States in supporting the Cuban people free themselves from the ruthless dictator and his equally oppressive proxies. We are in a supportive role as the Cuban people reclaim their rights and their sovereignty from a dictator who sells out the Cuban nation to other pariah states and who traffics Cuban women and children for tourism dollars.

Almost half a century of tyrannical rule could not break the spirit of the Cuban people. These are folks who literally die coming into our shores. They may be participating in a demonstration in favor of Fidel Castro in the morning, and by the afternoon they're busy building a raft to try to come to this country that they heard is the great Satan and the enemy of all that they treasure, but they know better. And they love the United States, and they know that we are not the enemy, and they know that there is no future for them under Fidel Castro.

Since the publication of this first Commission report, the voice of the people has grown stronger, their commitment has remained firm, their courage is strengthened. You look around and you see las Damas de Blanco—they are courageous ladies in white—and the independent journalists and the independent librarians. It's unbelievable that they are rising up in record numbers despite increasing intimidation practices of the ruthless dictator.

Opposition forces on the island are ready for a democratic government to replace the cruel dictatorship, freedom to replace torture, persecution and oppression, a free market economy to replace a collapsing planned economic system; and the United States will provide its unwavering support to Cuba's freedom fighters in their fight for democracy, for liberty and an open market system.

Therefore, undermining Castro's succession strategy represents a key component of U.S. policy and, in turn, the Commission's report. As he approaches the age of 80, Fidel Castro's time is wearing thin. Anticipating his demise, he is plotting a succession strategy whereby his brother, Raul, the so-called head of the Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, would continue the regime's iron grip. Further, in order to maintain absolute power over all aspects of Cuba's social, economic and political life, Castro is also establishing ever-closer ties with the equally oppressive leaders of Iran, Syria and Venezuela. They differ in their ways of oppression, but I don't think the well-being of their people is high on their list.

The report advocates a diplomatic campaign to build international consensus for free and fair elections in Cuba. Who is against free and fair elections in Cuba? That should be the bread and butter of what this nation stands for. It includes bilateral agreements with European nations and democracies in the Western Hemisphere, OAS members, the Community of Democracies, the Inner-American Commission on Human Rights, the International Labor Organization.

In addition to creating a coalition of democratic nations to support the aspirations of democratic forces in Cuba, the Commission also recognizes the role that former Communist countries can play in promoting Cuba's democratic transition.

By contrast, the Castro regime, with the help of other rogue states, seeks to gain the financial resources to insulate Cuba from internal and international pressure for democratic transition.

It's always interesting for me to hear Members talking bad about the embargo, the same Members who were very happy to promote an embargo against South Africa, against their horrible apartheid policy, and against Papa Doc and Baby Doc and the military juntas that controlled Haiti for far too long, and embargoes which I also supported. But it's interesting to see that moral distinction that they make and justify in their own minds.

But this regime once served as a proxy of the Soviet Union in Cuba. It now increasingly threatens our national security interest in the region. This regime will end, and the aging tyrant must not be allowed to continue his cruel legacy.

As recommended by the Commission, vigorous enforcement of Title I of the Helms-Burton Act constitutes another fundamental piece in our policy toward the Cuban dictatorship. By tightening the embargo, we deny the authoritarian dictator the resources to keep his stranglehold on power; and we've got to ensure that we've got this transition, political protocol returned to the Cuban people so they can control their own destiny.

So let these not be mere words. We must ensure that these recommendations outlined in the report are translated into actions, concrete mandate.

Again, thank you, Caleb, for today's hearing. I'm interested in hearing more about the critical components of the Commission reports. And I thank the Chairman for extending me a little bit of time. Thank you.

Mr. WELLER. I thank the gentlelady from Florida.

The gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Delahunt, do you have an opening statement?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I do.

Mr. McCARRY, welcome. I don't want to cause you any angst or anxiety, and maybe I shouldn't say this in front of this particular audience, but we've known each other for a long time, and I consider you a friend. I hope that doesn't hurt you in certain circles.

The gentlelady from Florida referenced the ladies in white. You're familiar presumably with Miriam Leiva, who's married to Oscar Espinoza Chepe?

Mr. MCCARRY. Yes, I am.

Mr. DELAHUNT. He spent 3 years in prison in the aftermath of the roundup of April, 2002, and was recently released. She recently penned an op-ed piece that appeared in the *Miami Herald*. It's courageous in its language. It's entitled, "We Cubans Must Decide." I'm just going to read one excerpt, and then I'm going to ask unanimous consent that it be entered into the record of the hearing, Mr. Chairman. You would consider her clearly an exceptional human being, is that true, Mr. McCARRY?

"What better way to help our current endeavor than to enable contact between the peoples. Millions of U.S. tourists could bring their ideas and both our peoples would better know each other. American students, professionals and scientists would help develop advances that are unknown here and describe the fair wages received for one's labor elsewhere. Cuban Americans would have an opportunity to exchange experiences and financially help relatives and friends who lack the most basic necessities."

That is just simply a paragraph, but I'm sure you're familiar with the particular piece, knowing what your focus is.

I think that it's important to understand that there is diversity of opinion in terms of how to help all peoples everywhere to achieve their goals and that no one necessarily has an exclusive on the truth. Therefore, let me associate myself with the remarks of the congresswoman from California.

I would have hoped that there would have been more input from those of us who believe that removing the travel ban, for example, would effect change. That is not cozying up to anybody.

The term "moral equivalency" was used. I don't think there is anybody that is unaware of the fact that the image of the United States all over the world, but specifically in Latin America, is in disrepair. I'm sure that you're familiar with a recent poll that was conducted by John Zogby that indicated that the negative opinion of this Administration was in excess of 82 percent.

Let me suggest that what many perceive is that there are double standards in terms of the foreign policy that this Administration continues to embrace. On the one hand, continuing the same policy vis-a-vis Cuba; on the other hand, embracing thugs like Islam

Karimov of Uzbekistan, like Turkmenbashi of Turkmenistan, calling individuals like the President of Equatorial Guinea a good guy, never criticizing in any particular way that liberal democracy over in Saudi Arabia.

So I would suggest that there is example after example where moral equivalence does play and the perception of double standards and hypocrisy clearly plays into the problems that we have in terms of perception worldwide. We throw around the word terrorist, yet here in the United States we have a terrorist who—I don't know where he is at this point in time, presumably in some detention center—who blew up a plane with 73 Cuban civilians on board. Where is the outrage?

We have Toto Constant, a thug who ran FRAPH from Haiti that was responsible for the deaths of thousands in political violence in Haiti.

So I think it's important to remember that while Cuba is clearly a concern of all of us, so shouldn't be Egypt, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan? If we're talking about moral equivalence, I would suggest they rank right in there.

And with that, I'll yield back.

Mr. WELLER. I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for his opening statement.

We've been joined by the Ranking Member, Mr. Engel. Mr. Engel, do you have an opening statement? You will be so recognized.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for having this most important hearing on post-Castro Cuba, which focuses on the release of the Second Report of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba.

For 47 years, the Cuban Government, led by Fidel Castro, has consistently spurned domestic and international calls for greater political tolerance and respect for human rights. It has ignored or violated virtually all of its citizens' fundamental rights, including the right to change their government. Thus, on the eve of Fidel's 80th birthday, we certainly hope that the end of political repression in Cuba is near and agree that it's time to begin envisioning the post-Fidel world.

One of the reasons I have not been a fan of Castro is the repression and the total lack of political pluralism. Indeed, I condemn dictatorships, whether they be left wing or right wing.

I think the points made by Mr. Delahunt are certainly well taken. I think it's hypocritical of us to condemn only one side of the equation. We need to be consistent when we find governments that are wanting for lack of civil rights and human rights and being oppressive regimes. There is plenty to go around, and I don't think we have to signal out one country. But yet we have to call it as we see it if we see it in that country, and we have to call it as we see it in other countries. I call it the way I see it, and I have not been happy with what I see in Castro in Cuba, as well as the other countries that Mr. Delahunt spoke about.

So, indeed, regardless of one's views on current United States policy toward Cuba, we surely all hope that the United States will be able to forge new, close ties with an ultimate transitional Cuban Government. I thus look forward to hearing from our Administra-

tion witness about the Second Report of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba.

The Commission report outlines how the United States is supporting democratic activists already and how it will bolster its support for the Cuban people after the end of the Castro era. The Commission's recommendations include concrete support for change in Cuba, including a 2-year, \$80 million program to break the regime's information blockade and to reinforce efforts to prepare for the day when the country will hold free and fair elections.

As we recall, the first Cuba transition report released in 2004 was criticized. Among critics' most serious concerns, the first report welcomed "an expeditious end to Castro's rule" through all means, which insinuated possibly including violence. Thus, when compared to 2004, the updated 2006 Cuba report is certainly, I believe, a significant improvement.

However, serious flaws remain. For example, the present report's basic assumption that a Cuban transitional Government is likely to welcome comprehensive United States democracy assistance, let alone one we wish to partner with, seems a bit naive. We heard that before in Iraq and other countries, and I think we need to call it into question.

It is also naive to presume openness to a market-based economic system.

While I welcome the strong message to the Cuban people that we stand with them in their quest for democracy, I also hope our message does not backfire by strengthening the regime, providing the regime with a propaganda tool, or jeopardizing the welfare of the democratic activists we seek to protect.

Since Cuba's post-Castro's transition is, first and foremost, a matter for the Cuban people to decide, not for the United States, let's hear what some current Cuban dissidents are saying about the July, 2006, Commission report.

According to the Congressional Research Service, while some dissidents, like former political prisoner Vladimiro Roca, maintain that they would welcome any United States assistance that would help support the Cuba dissident movement, others expressed concerns about the report.

Dissident economist and former political prisoner, Oscar Espinoza Chepe, says, "We are thankful for the solidarity we have received from North America, Europe and elsewhere, but we request they do not meddle in our country."

Miriam Leiva, a founding member of The Ladies in White, a human rights organization consisting of the wives, mothers and sisters of political prisoners, expressed concern that the report could serve as opposed to evidence of the government to imprison dissidents.

Leiva also faults the Commission's report for presuming what a Cuban transition must be before United States recognition or assistance will be provided. According to Leiva, and I quote her:

"Only we Cubans of our own volition can decide issues of such singular importance. Cubans on the island have sufficient intellectual ability to tackle a difficult peaceful transition and reconcile with other Cubans here and abroad."

I believe it's important for us to acknowledge and respect these internal views.

While I support the need to think seriously about U.S. policy options during the transition and I believe the report has much to offer, I also fear that it reads too much like a road map and thereby may be inherently arrogant in its approach. As was the case with the United States democracy transition efforts in Iraq, the report's highly optimistic and formulated tone seems rather naive, for I do not think we can predict Cuba's transition or make assumptions about United States engagement or the welcome of the United States.

Mr. Chairman, I believe United States policy must respect Cuba's sovereignty. Accordingly, United States policy should be crafted as a response to legitimate efforts by the transitional Cuban Government and its citizens to transform their nation toward an open society with a market-based economy under the rule of law where human rights and personal freedom are respected; something that they have not had under the Castro regime.

Among my questions, I wonder about lessons learned elsewhere, the impact of President Chavez, the strength of the Cuban opposition, the role of multilateralism, the nature of United States society support, United States military plans, the success of TV Marti, the appropriate role for exile groups, the fate of political prisoners, and other aspects of U.S. policy.

I know the report begins to answer some of these questions. Where it does not, I look forward to a lively discussion.

I also welcome the forward-thinking nature of the Commission and appreciate the hard work that went into the report. Let us not debate the success or failure of decades of United States policy toward Castro's Cuba. Rather, let's aspire for a new relationship with the Cuban people and, ultimately, a new government.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WELLER. Thank you, Mr. Engel.

We've been joined by the Ranking Member of the House Ways and Means Committee and my good friend from New York.

Mr. Rangel, do you have a brief statement before we begin the hearing?

Mr. RANGEL. How kind of you, Mr. Chairman. How kind and courteous you are to allow me this opportunity.

I enjoy working with you on the Ways and Means Committee. I work very closely with Chairman Burton and my dear friend and a new Ranking Member here, Elliott Engel, and, of course, Barbara Lee, and my dear friend from Florida.

This is a special occasion to have an opportunity to talk about an issue that I do have a lot of concerns about. I'm one of those type of Americans—the Purple Heart, Bronze Star career. I'm always close to my country, right or wrong. But don't embarrass me, and I think we're reaching that point. I can go to sleep every night thinking of how great it would be to have a democracy in Cuba, to be sharing economic and social exchange in the area, to be able to depend on her in this fight against terrorism. But we don't know who the Cuban people are because we're not allowed to. We can't visit. We can't talk. We can't send money. There is, indeed, an economic wall between Americans, which I resent. As an American, I

want to go where I want, when I want, and not have people believe that any type of government can seduce me away from the great democracy that I'm so proud to be a part of. So to think that Castro, Communists, Socialists or anyone else can contaminate Americans to me is embarrassing, but this is even more.

We've attempted, through some almost comical ways, to have the man assassinated. We've had the Bay of Pigs. We've passed out radios and moneys. We've done a lot of silly things to get rid of this dictator.

But the whole idea now is that we've given up; after 50 years, we've given up. And we say there is \$80 million or \$100 million waiting for anybody that's prepared to take over. When, they ask? After he dies. What is this based on? The commission report and his age.

Well, there are a lot of people in my congressional district that would like to see me out. But I'm 76. I would hate to believe they're passing money around in my district waiting to see who succeeds Rangel after 36 years in this Congress.

I don't blame you for laughing. This is absolutely ridiculous, and it takes away from the leadership that my great country should be providing.

Now, I am for sanctions. God, I know I was for sanctions in South Africa. But you know something? If sanctions didn't work in 1 year, I would say give it a chance. If it didn't work in 2 years, I would say, well, it hasn't got started. Twenty years? Well, I don't know. Thirty years? Well, you know, maybe. Forty years? Give me a break.

Now if I thought for 1 minute that these were just well-intended, stupid people having this policy, then I would say, can we talk? But since I know it's from my dear friends in Miami, all I want to know is how many electoral college votes do you need, and then maybe we can work out something. But, for God's sake, don't hold millions of people hostage to the dumbest foreign policy which hurts our farmers who want to find consumers. Don't do this.

I'm so glad my friend, Chairman Burton, is here. Because I can't think of someone I respect more and perhaps disagree with more than I should. But I know one thing, honest he is. So, Chairman Burton, let's walk together in Miami, see if we can resolve this issue in Miami, and release the good people in Cuba to be able to enjoy our trade, our culture, our kids, our raps, hip hop, and let's get on with making them a democracy the easy way, not trying to drop \$80 million into Havana.

Thank you for the opportunity.

Mr. WELLER. The Chair thanks the gentleman from New York. Mr. Rangel, it is always a pleasure to have you in the same room. It's a pleasure to work with you on many things.

I recognize the gentleman from Indiana, the Chairman of the Subcommittee, Mr. Burton, for his opening statement. I want to mention, Mr. Chairman, we've already inserted your eloquent statement into the record.

Mr. BURTON. I know, but I can't help but respond to Mr. Rangel.

Charlie, you can go to Cuba whenever you want to. Come on. So when you talk about we can't go to Cuba, maybe others can't, but you do.

Mr. RANGEL. I'm a representative of the great American people. I can do a lot of things, but I want America to participate.

Mr. BURTON. I know, Charlie. But let me go into reasons why I think it is important that the pressure be kept on Fidel Castro.

First of all, regarding the sanctions you referred to in South Africa, you were for those—and I wasn't, at that time. It's very interesting. I had a different approach. But you were for the sanctions, and the sanctions were not unilateral. And, as a result, the pressure on South Africa grew and grew, and there were changes that were made which I think were ultimately beneficial, so I'll grant that to you.

The pressure we've been putting on Cuba has not been multinational. It's been pretty much the United States trying to put it on them because we are 90 miles from them. They're the closest neighbor, and we'd like to see a change in leadership because Fidel Castro has been hell-bent since he came into power back in the '50s to export revolution throughout Central and South America. He helped the Sandanistas, the Communist Sandanistas. He helped the FMLN in El Salvador, the Sandanistas in Nicaragua. Che Guevara went into South America and was killed down there while trying to export revolution throughout all of Latin America.

We went into Grenada, and, in boxes marked food and humanitarian aid, found thousands of AK-47s and millions of rounds of ammunition and uniforms that came from Cuba that were going to be used for exporting revolution through Grenada into South America so that all of those new democracies would be Communist satellites of Cuba. So he's been a thorn in the side of democracy and human rights and freedom for a long, long time; and the people of Cuba have suffered under his "leadership."

Now's he's got an ally in Hugo Chavez, and Mr. Chavez has been working with him. Mr. Chavez now has \$100 million a day coming in oil revenue, \$65 million from us. So we're helping subsidize these leftists, unfortunately, but we need the oil. And his mentor is Fidel Castro.

So what Fidel Castro couldn't achieve back in the '50s and '60s and '70s and '80s, he's now thinking he's going to be able to achieve with the help of the money from the oil revenues that Mr. Chavez has. And they've been successful with Mr. Morales in Bolivia, but they've haven't been successful in Peru, and we hope not in other countries.

But the bottom line is, keeping the pressure on Castro is important. Letting the people of Cuba know that we're waiting for the day when they can be liberated and we want to be able to provide resources for them to get off to a very quick start to make democracy work when it does come is something that I think the American people would applaud.

I know you're a good friend of his, Charlie, and I love you, buddy, but we disagree on this. And we'll still go out to dinner and be good buddies, but this is one thing we're never going to work together on. Thanks.

Mr. WELLER. The Chair thanks the gentleman from Indiana.

The gentleman from Arizona, Mr. Flake, we're expecting votes about 3:10, and our witness has been very generous with his time, so I would ask if you could be to your point.

Mr. FLAKE. I will. I thank the Chairman for allowing me to sit in on this, and I look forward to the testimony.

Let me just say that we all have a common goal here; and that's for a free, democratic Cuba. We see things different, perhaps, on how to get there.

All of us can stipulate that Castro is a pretty bad actor and that there are people in Cuba, the dissidents, that are in tremendous difficulty and working as hard as they can to change the situation. But the question here is, how can we best plan for the transition, who will be in charge of that transition and how can we best exert influence to help in that transition?

So, with an open mind, I look forward to your statement.

Thanks.

Mr. WELLER. I thank the gentleman from Arizona for joining us for this important hearing here.

Our witness today is Mr. Caleb Charles McCarry.

Caleb, welcome back. You've got a lot of friends here.

Mr. MCCARRY. Thank you, sir, I appreciate that.

Mr. WELLER. It's good to have you here.

Mr. McCarry was named the Cuba Transition Coordinator in July 2005. Caleb is the senior United States official responsible for U.S. Government planning to support a transition to democracy in Cuba through the President's Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba. He previously served on the majority professional staff of the International Relations Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. Prior to that, he worked for a bipartisan organization known as the Center for Democracy. This Subcommittee welcomes you today and welcomes you back to this hearing room.

I would ask if the witness would please stand and raise your right hand to take the oath.

[Witness sworn.]

Mr. WELLER. Mr. McCarry, of course, as you know from precedent, I would encourage you to summarize and submit your written statement for the record. We look forward to your testimony.

TESTIMONY OF MR. CALEB C. McCARRY, CUBA TRANSITION COORDINATOR, COMMISSION FOR ASSISTANCE TO A FREE CUBA, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. MCCARRY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, Members of the Committee, Members of the House of Representatives who have been kind enough to come and spend time on this important subject today. I want to thank you for this opportunity. It's an honor for me to appear before this Committee that I served for 9 years as a staff member.

I will summarize my statement and ask that the full statement be submitted for the record.

Mr. WELLER. Without objection.

Mr. MCCARRY. On July 10th, the President approved the second report of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba and a Compact with the People of Cuba. As you know, the Commission is co-chaired by the Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, and by our Secretary of Commerce, Carlos Gutierrez.

The Compact with the People of Cuba is a message of hope and reassurance to Cubans that they can count on our concrete aid in

areas such as humanitarian needs, economic recovery, and free and fair elections. The people of Cuba have a choice, economic political freedom and opportunity, or more political repression and economic suffering under the current regime.

The second report of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba built upon the recommendations of the Commission's first report, and it represents the work of over a hundred participants from 17 different departments and agencies over the course of several months.

The Commission's recommendations include concrete support for democratic change in Cuba. The report recommends a substantial increase in our efforts in concert with other nations to empower Cubans to define a democratic future for their nation.

The report sets out a new 2-year, \$80 million program aimed at stepping up our efforts along multiple fronts, including breaking the regime's information blockade and offering support for the efforts of Cubans to prepare for the day when they will recover their sovereignty and can select a government of their choosing through free and fair multi-party elections. The report directs actions we can take now to develop appropriate plans to support a democratic transition tomorrow.

We are laying the groundwork to offer specific substantial assistance for a democratic transition in Cuba, including humanitarian aid and support for the recovery of those fundamental democratic rights and economic freedoms that lead to prosperity.

When this report was announced on July 10th, President Bush said, we are actively working for change in Cuba, not simply waiting for change, and called on all our democratic friends and allies around the world to join us in supporting freedom for the Cuban people.

On that same day, Secretary Rice said the Commission's second report keeps the promise that the United States has made to the people of Cuba: You have no greater friend than America. You can always count on our support, and we will be ready to stand with you through the process of transformation to your democratic future.

Cubans in Cuba at great personal risk are already talking about a democratic transition for their country. It is what Cubans say about the future of Cuba that truly matters.

The opposition movement in Cuba is creating momentum for democratic change in their country. With our offer of advice and assistance to all who seek democratic change in Cuba, we hope to add to that momentum.

The report's recommendations also put the regime's henchmen that are orchestrating violent attacks on the opposition and other independent groups through so-called *actos de repudio* on notice that they will be denied United States visas. This is an ongoing process, one to assist Cubans in their transition to freedom.

We will need to update and adapt our preparations to keep pace with Cubans themselves. This will ensure that, when asked, we will be able to offer appropriate support that meets needs identified by Cubans. We hope that this report will find resonance with the people of Cuba, the world's democracies and the people of the United States. Together, we can reassure the Cuban people that

they can count on democratic allies as they move to see their sovereign will ultimately expressed through free and fair multi-party elections. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McCarry follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. CALEB C. MCCARRY, CUBA TRANSITION COORDINATOR,
COMMISSION FOR ASSISTANCE TO A FREE CUBA, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for inviting me to appear before the Subcommittee today to discuss the work of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba.

On July 10th, the President approved the second report of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba and a Compact with the People of Cuba. The Commission is co-chaired by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez.

The Compact with the People of Cuba and the Second Report's recommendations reflect America's resolve to stand with Cuba's brave opposition leaders, men and women, who speak for those Cubans who are forced into fearful silence but who remain free in their hearts and in their minds.

Compact with the People of Cuba

The Compact with the People of Cuba is a message of hope and reassurance to Cubans that they can count on our concrete aid in areas such as humanitarian needs, economic recovery and free and fair elections. The people of Cuba have a choice: Economic and political freedom and opportunity or more political repression and economic suffering under the current regime.

The United States stands ready to work with the people of Cuba to attain political and economic liberty. We pledge to help the Cuban people and a new Cuban transition government as it moves away from a totalitarian communist dictatorship and toward a free and representative democracy.

To support a Cuban transition government, we pledge to provide emergency food, water, fuel and medical equipment. We pledge to help rebuild Cuba's shattered economy. We pledge to respect the right of the Cuban people to be secure in their homes. We pledge to encourage assistance from other countries, associations and private companies. And we pledge to discourage third parties from intervening to obstruct the will of the Cuban people.

We will do all this and more, provided we are asked by a Cuban transition government that is committed to dismantling all instruments of state repression and implementing internationally respected human rights and fundamental freedoms, including organizing free and fair elections for a democratically-elected new Cuban government within a period of no more than 18 months.

The Compact and the recommendations of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba are not prescriptions or dictates. Our support for a transition government only becomes possible when the President determines that there is a transition government in place, as determined by U.S. law, including the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act.

The Second Report of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba

The Second Report of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba builds upon the recommendations of the Commission's first report and it represents the work of over 100 participants from 17 federal departments and agencies over the course of several months.

The report and its recommendations are intended to support the Compact with the People of Cuba. It sets forth specific assistance and programs the United States can offer to help Cubans rapidly recover their sovereignty through free and fair multi-party elections. It contains seven chapters and a series of recommendations designed to help Cubans secure real and lasting change in their country.

The Commission's recommendations include concrete support for democratic change in Cuba. The report recommends a substantial increase in our efforts, in concert with other nations, to empower Cubans to define a democratic future for their country. The report sets out a new two-year \$80 million program, aimed at stepping up our efforts along multiple fronts, including breaking the regime's information blockade and offering support for the efforts of Cubans to prepare for the day when they will recover their sovereignty and can select a government of their choosing through free and fair multi-party elections.

The report directs actions we can take now to develop appropriate plans to support a democratic transition tomorrow. The report broadly summarizes resources and expertise the U.S. Government could make available to a Cuban transition gov-

ernment that releases all political prisoners, is committed to free and fair elections and asks for our help. The report recognizes that the international community and Cubans abroad will have an important role to play in Cuba's transition.

We are laying the groundwork to offer specific substantial assistance for a democratic transition in Cuba, including humanitarian aid and support for the recovery of those fundamental democratic rights and economic freedoms that lead to prosperity.

Role of the Community of Free Nations

When this report was announced on July 10th, President Bush said: ". . . we are actively working for change in Cuba, not simply waiting for change. I call on all our democratic friends and allies around the world to join us in supporting freedom for the Cuban people."

The United States is keeping our promise to marshal our resources and our expertise and to encourage all nations to join with us in supporting the right of all Cubans to define a future of freedom and democracy for themselves and for their country.

As a community of free nations, now is the time to intensify our efforts to stand with the Cuban people as they work to secure liberty, prosperity, and reconciliation when Cuba becomes free.

The Right of Cubans to Define a Democratic Future for their Nation

On July 10th, Secretary Rice said: "The Commission's Second Report keeps the promise that the United States has made to the people of Cuba. You have no greater friend than America. You can always count on our support and we will be ready to stand with you through the process of transformation to your democratic future."

Cubans in Cuba, at great personal risk, are already talking about a democratic transition for their country. It is what Cubans say about the future of Cuba that truly matters.

The opposition movement is creating momentum for democratic change in Cuba. With our offer of advice and assistance to all who seek democratic change in Cuba, we hope to add to this momentum. The report's recommendations also put the regime's henchmen that are orchestrating violent attacks on the opposition and other independent groups through so-called *actos de repudio* on notice that they will be denied U.S. visas.

Keeping Pace with Cubans

On July 10th Secretary Gutierrez said: "The Administration of President Bush is committed to accompany Cubans through a transition to political and economic freedom. The people of Cuba have suffered too much and for too long and deserve so much more than what they have today."

This is an ongoing process to assist Cubans in their transition to freedom. We will need to update and adapt our preparations to keep pace with the Cubans themselves. This will ensure that when asked, we will be able to offer appropriate support that meets needs identified by Cubans. We hope that this report will find resonance with the people of Cuba, the world's democracies and the people of the United States. Together, we can reassure the Cuban people that they can count on democratic allies as they move to see their sovereign will ultimately expressed through free and fair multi-party elections.

Mr. WELLER. Thank you, Mr. McCarry.

You know, much was made by some in the opening statements over the \$80 million that's been allocated to support pro-democracy organizations involved in a pro-democratic transition in post-Castro Cuba. At the same time, we've seen a massive infusion of funding from the Venezuelan Government of Hugo Chavez to prop up the Castro regime. In the Cold War, it was the Soviet Union that provided that financial support. Of course, the Berlin Wall collapsed, and that dried up, but in the last few years, the Castro regime seems to have found a new patron.

How much has the Venezuelan Government and Hugo Chavez given to the Castro regime in financial support?

Mr. MCCARRY. There are different estimations that are out there. However, we believe that it is up to \$2 billion annually is provided.

Mr. WELLER. \$2 billion annually?

Mr. MCCARRY. Yes, Congressman.

Mr. WELLER. Compared to \$80 million to help pro-democracy organizations; \$2 billion. That's B, as in boy, Billy.

Mr. MCCARRY. Yes.

Mr. WELLER. That's a lot of money.

Is Cuba becoming a colony of Venezuela?

Mr. MCCARRY. Cuba, of course, is a dictatorship, and what we see is the regime in Havana working with likeminded governments, particularly, of course, Venezuela, to develop. Their strategy is to insulate the regime from the need to change and to insulate the regime from pressure to change. And what we see with regard to Venezuela's support for Cuba is that it is deliberate, and it is intended to support the regime in Havana, its continuation, and the succession within the dictatorship.

Mr. WELLER. You know, in the 1970s and 1980s some of the financial support that Cuba received from the Soviet Union was used to finance and provide support for communist guerrilla movements in Central America and elsewhere. In the report you shared with us, you state that there are clear signs the regime is using money provided by the Chavez Government in Venezuela to reactivate its networks in the hemisphere to subvert democratic governments. Can you describe in detail what you mean by that?

Mr. MCCARRY. I can affirm what the report says in that regard. In this venue, I cannot go into details. However, I could certainly direct you to look at concerns that have been expressed by countries in the region about these activities, specifically in Peru, for example.

Mr. WELLER. All right. I guess that concludes my testimony or questions at this time.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York, Mr. Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to ask one quick question, and then I'm going to turn it over to Congresswoman Lee, who I know has many questions.

The Commission reports that it plans to spend \$80 million over 2 years on Cuba transition efforts. I believe our Government already provides \$35 million or so to support TV and Radio Marti, which I have supported, as well as sizeable money for democracy and human rights programs.

How do we envision paying for this? Are we going to use pre-existing resources or request separate appropriations from Congress? Will this be part of an emergency appropriations request? Could you just tell me how the Administration envisions paying for it?

Mr. MCCARRY. Thank you, Mr. Ranking Member.

As you know, the President transmitted the fiscal year 2007 budget to Congress on February 6th of this year, and the recommendations of the second Commission report were issued after that date. With regard to this funding, it is to be provided over 2 years, including fiscal year 2008. And we are finalizing the fiscal year 2008 budget now.

The Administration will be working with Congress to identify the necessary resources to implement the recommendations of the report. And the Administration is in the process now of resolving the details of meeting this commitment.

Mr. ENGEL. Who would administer these programs? Would it be our your office, USAID, State Department, Democracy and Human Rights Bureau? Who would administrator these programs?

Mr. MCCARRY. Obviously, these are prospective funds. We would be developing specific plans for the administration of these funds. Currently, these funds are administered both through USAID and the Human Rights Bureau of the State Department.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. I'd like to turn it over to Ms. Lee.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much. I want to thank you, again, our Ranking Member and Chairman for this hearing and reference a couple of things that have been said earlier. And I'm certainly not looking at the world through rose-colored glasses.

I'm not happy with anything—I'm not happy with a lot of conditions in many, many countries, including our own, and including Cuba. I'm not happy, as an African-American, with the current conditions of African-Americans in America, for example. If you look at the huge discriminatory criminal justice system and the laws and look at the jails and see the numbers of African-American men in jail. And I'm not happy here in America as an African-American as it relates to the infant mortality rates, and all of the disparities—unemployment rates and housing discrimination. The rest of the world is appalled, quite frankly; I'm telling you they're appalled when they look at the greatest democracy and the wealthiest country in the world and they see all of the violations here of human rights. I'm not happy with many things in our own country.

So having said that, let me just say that Cuba has one of the highest literacy rates in Latin America, the lowest infant mortality rate in Latin America. So I can point to positives both in Cuba and America and in other countries; I don't think that's the point. The point is, we have to do everything we can do to make sure that the people of all countries have an opportunity to promote the type of exchanges, normal relations, that create an environment for democratic movements and also an environment for understanding and for peace. What we're doing, this failed 40-year policy, doesn't do that.

You mentioned that the report denies visas for the so-called *actos de repudio*. You're putting them on notice that they will be denied United States visas. Well, you guys also have denied visas to members of the clergy from Cuba. You put the Cuban Council of Churches on the ban list. I mean, come on, does that make any sense at all? It doesn't to me. But these religious restrictions now are unjustified. They're unconstitutional restrictions on our religious freedoms and exchanges. And I want to know, how do you justify restricting American members of the clergy, the faith community here, from participating in religious activities wherever they so choose in the world?

And also, I'd like to ask you, why in the world haven't we got a response from Secretary Rice and Secretary Shannon about the meeting that we want to have with them about these religious restrictions that are being put on American citizens?

Mr. MCCARRY. Representative Lee, thank you, I appreciate that.

Mr. BURTON [presiding]. If I might interrupt real quickly, I'd just like to inform my colleagues, we've got about 15 minutes to get to the Floor for a vote, we're going to have about five votes, and

there's going to be a 10-minute debate in between the vote, so it's going to be well over an hour before we come back. So I'd like to, if possible, have Mr. McCarry answer your questions. Mr. Meeks, if he has any questions, and try to wrap this up so we don't have to sit around waiting for an hour or so.

Mr. MCCARRY. Just to be clear about a few things, one is, the Administration's policy is that religious groups in Cuba represent one of the fastest growing elements of civil society, and our goal is to encourage a wide array of churches of all faiths and denominations to provide assistance and engage in fellowship with churches on the island; this is why we do licensed travel.

If I can refer to the specific recommendation in the report, the recommendation was regarding the Cuban Council of Churches. The issue for us is that the Cuban Council of Churches has been known as a body that is tightly controlled by government authorities. And the purpose of the recommendation is not to stop people from making licensed donations but rather that these go directly to churches that are members, and they may even be members of the Cuban Council of Churches, but not to allow the Cuban Council of Churches, which is part of the regime, to control who that assistance goes to, simply to require that people who are making these donations provide it directly to churches. We understand that some churches feel coerced that they have to belong to the Cuban Council of Churches, and that, in our view, shouldn't stand in the way of their receiving these donations directly. The purpose of the policy of course is to strengthen independence and civil society in Cuba and to encourage that.

Mr. WELLER [presiding]. Mr. Meeks, do you have a question or two? And Ms. Lee, if you have one more question, that's okay. Charlie, do you have any more questions?

Mr. RANGEL. No.

Ms. LEE. I just want to know why you're restricting U.S. members of the clergy, U.S. citizens from fully participating in religious activity that they have historically participated in.

Mr. MCCARRY. We determined in the first report that there had been abuses of religious licenses.

Ms. LEE. So you go after the bad actors.

Mr. MCCARRY. Where there were people who were using these licenses for purposes for which they weren't intended.

Ms. LEE. And there are penalties for those.

Mr. MCCARRY. There are penalties. But the purpose of the licensing requirement is to make sure that the licensed traveler is getting the assistance and the contact directly with independent groups in Cuba to provide them with support.

Mr. BURTON [presiding]. Mr. Meeks.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, I would just like to submit my full statement for the record.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Meeks follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE GREGORY W. MEEKS, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

First, it was difficult to discern whether I was reading a report on Cuba or Venezuela. Second, was this report a Venezuela regime change document wrapped in Cuba transition blanket because I am troubled by the insinuations.

The commission is recommending creating an \$80 million fund to boost opposition to Fidel Castro and tightening economic sanctions on the island. At what point are we going to acknowledge that this is a fail policy and something else should be done.

Instead of wasting the diplomatic purse on counterbalancing the actions of Cuba and Venezuela, we should change our focus and mobilize the more than 100 officials from 17 government departments and agencies with the goal of developing a working relationship with these two countries.

The Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez, a Cuban American should be using their talents on efforts that will empower the poor people in these countries instead of destabilizing the governments in Cuba and Venezuela.

Mr. Chairman, it should be the standing policy of this government that the Cuban people are responsible for the course of their government's transition either before or after the demise of their current leader.

I have a suggestion for the Administration, how about this as a policy on Cuba, remove the travel restrictions and allow for democratic change to occur by having Americans travel to Cuba and by nature of our presence, we will begin to share our democratic ideals.

Our efforts to undermine the Cuban government have worked to simply make the Cuban people more resentment of the United States. Sanctions have caused great hardship on the people of Cuba. The Cuban government has used our policy as a mechanism to consolidate the power of Fidel Castro.

Mr. Chairman, I would hope that our efforts do not prove to be more damaging than helpful. The people of Cuba should be the ones who decides on when their will be a change in leadership in their country.

Thank you.

Mr. BURTON. Without objection.

Mr. MEEKS. My good friend, Mr. McCarry, how are you?

Mr. MCCARRY. I'm fine, Congressman.

Mr. MEEKS. Good, good. Quick questions. First, have you had the opportunity to visit Cuba recently?

Mr. MCCARRY. Not recently. I did visit once.

Mr. MEEKS. How long ago was that?

Mr. MCCARRY. It was nearly 10 years ago.

Mr. MEEKS. Now, so you haven't had the opportunity as I have, because I have been there recently, to see the effect of the embargo that it has on everyday Cubans. You haven't seen that in the last 10 years. Correct?

Mr. MCCARRY. I have not been to Cuba.

Mr. MEEKS. And you have not also had the opportunity in Cuba to see how just about every other nation in the world is in Cuba either visiting or doing business except for the United States. You haven't had that opportunity to see that's happening also because you haven't been there in 10 years. If I was to tell you that, if you were to go to Cuba, you would see individuals from all over the world except for one country—actually, you might see them from our country also; I don't know how they get there—but enjoying the restaurants and doing business there and seems like a society that would welcome the United States there. That wouldn't surprise you, would it?

Mr. MCCARRY. Actually, I felt very welcome in Cuba as an American.

Mr. MEEKS. Now it seems as though it should come to a point, and I know the buck stops with 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue and here in this House, but it would seem to me that it seems as though we are trading now with a country that is much bigger than Cuba ever was and is every much as Communist as Cuba ever was in a little place in Asia called China, but because of being able to talk with them and work with them, we are doing much better

than we did say 20, 30 years ago. Wouldn't it then be logical to say that we should change the policy that we've had over close to 50 years with Cuba currently and not exclude or prevent people from getting visas to come visit this country? Wouldn't that be more like promoting democracy than saying we're not going to talk to you, act like you don't exist, as we did with China for a long time?

Mr. MCCARRY. Congressman, thank you for your commentary. It's nice to see you again, although a little strange from this perspective, I have to say. The purpose of our policy is to deny resources to the regime that it would otherwise use to repress the Cuban people. That is the purpose of the sanctions policy. We believe that the time when American investment in Cuba could actually make a difference in the lives of ordinary Cubans is when ordinary Cubans would have the opportunity to be our business partners, when they would have the economic freedom to do so and truly benefit from it.

I was in Cuba nearly 10 years ago, and what I saw was a country of people filled with fear, people who are afraid of their own government.

Mr. MEEKS. Was that not true for China?

Mr. MCCARRY. It is certainly true for Cuba. I can tell you that because, I have never been to China, but I can speak to what I saw and experienced there, and the purpose of this report and the purpose of our policy is to very respectfully support the sovereign right of Cubans to define a democratic future for their country. There have been some references here to statements by members of the opposition in Cuba. This is very important. There are different views among the opposition in Cuba, and that represents the fact that pluralism exists, although it is severely repressed in that country.

So if I may, the purpose of our policy is to be supportive of the right of Cubans to define a democratic future for their country, and at that moment—

Mr. MEEKS. We have to vote. But wouldn't it make sense then if we're talking about exporting democracy, it would be better if we went to visit ourselves so we can show we are not being prevented. Americans are not being stopped by the Cuban Government from going to visit Cuba; Americans are being stopped by the American Government from going to visit Cuba.

Mr. BURTON. Mr. Meeks, I'm sorry to interrupt you, but we are going to have to get to the Floor and I know that Mr. Delahunt might have a comment he'd like to make real quickly, and it takes about 2.5 minutes to get there if you move fast. So would it be all right if we had Mr. Delahunt—did you have another comment real quickly?

Mr. MEEKS. I'll just say, my good friend Mr. McCarry—and then I'll turn it over to Mr. Delahunt—I haven't seen him in a while.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I'm sorry. The time is short. I would hope, Mr. Chairman, that we would have additional hearings.

Mr. BURTON. Yes, we will.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I have raised a question with Mr. McCarry regarding two—well, at least at this point one individual who is an alleged terrorist who purportedly blew up a Cuban airline with 73 civilians on board, and since we use the word terrorism frequently

in this body, I think a thorough examination of the history of Luis Posada Carriles is in order. And I think it is our responsibility to do it. He's been arrested. He's somewhere in this country enjoying our hospitality, and I think that we have to exercise our right, and if you tell me, Mr. Chairman, we'll have a hearing on Mr. Posada Carriles, I will yield back my time.

Mr. BURTON. Well, we will have additional hearings on the Cuba issue, and if you want to raise that issue when we have those hearings, I have no objection to that.

Let me just say, Mr. McCarry, thank you very much for your patience. I have a raft of questions I wanted to ask of you, but we simply don't have the time, and I don't want to keep you here for another hour and a half. But I do understand there is a classified annex to the report of the Commission for Assistance to Free Cuba. Would it be possible for the Committee to obtain a copy of that? We, of course, will keep it close to the vest according to protocol.

Mr. MCCARRY. I received your request, and we have briefed staff.

Mr. BURTON. We'd like to have a copy of that if it's at all possible, and we can have it numbered so that nobody see it except relevant Members of the Committee.

Mr. MCCARRY. We'll take your request back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you very much. I will have some questions I'd like to submit to you for the record.

Mr. MCCARRY. Of course. Be happy to answer them.

Mr. BURTON. Although you had a number on the other side of the issue, I want you to know the majority is with you.

Mr. MCCARRY. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

[Whereupon, at 3:15 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

