



¡BARAGUA!

a project of the DC "Hands Off Cuba!" Coalition

September/October 1991

Cuba and Capitol Hill

by Henry Reeve

House Resolution 434, introduced by Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) in the first session of the present 102nd Congress, remains stuck in the House Foreign Relations Committee, whose chair is Rep. Dante Fascell (D-FL). The Weiss Bill would remove from the U.S. embargo medicines and medical equipment to Cuba. If it were to pass, U.S. firms could benefit to the tune of approximately \$60 million in trade with the island. Cuba currently buys about \$180 million in medicine and medical equipment from various Western countries and would save in transportation costs if it were able to buy from U.S. companies. However, because of various factors — mostly related to recent events in the Soviet Union and, more importantly to strong pressure from the extreme right wing of the Cuban-American community, notably the Cuban-American National Foundation (CANF) it appears Weiss' humanitarian proposal will not get to the floor for a vote.

No significant levels of communication in support of HR 434 have been received by Fascell or other members of the committee. And it will take a lot to get it through in that Fascell is very much the creature of an extreme anti-Cuba constituency in south Florida. Fascell has intimate ties with the CANF. According to Federal Election Commission records, has received in the last five congressional elections a total of \$39,887 in campaign contributions from the Free Cuba Political Action Committee (FCPAC), the political arm of CANF at the congressional level.

Mack to be signed by Bush?

In late February of this year the Senate passed the so-called Mack Amendment to the Export Administration Act. Named for its sponsor Sen. Connie Mack (R-FL) the provision seeks to

"close the loopholes" of trade with Cuba by U.S.-owned foreign subsidiary companies. Mack will deny Cuba some \$114 million in food and medicine imports annually.

The Mack Amendment, while obviously bad for Cuba is also not particularly healthy for U.S. business. Since 1980, subsidiary trade with Cuba has totaled \$2.6 billion. The possibility of losing such lucrative trade has caused some concern in certain business circles.

However, armed with the muscle of the CANF in Congress and its PAC, Mack seems to be pressing on to Bush's desk. Action on Mack, according to one congressional aide, will most likely occur within the next three months.

But will Bush sign it? While that remains unclear, at least one Cuba Congress-watcher thinks he will — thus reversing his previous stand. That being the case what can Bush do in terms of enforcement of Mack? That will be another matter since it is one thing to placate and coddle the Cuban-American ultra-right and another to actively interfere in the economies and legal systems of several major Western trading partners including Canada, Great Britain, France, Spain, Argentina and Switzerland where the subsidiaries are located. Still, Mack is an attack on Cuba's self-determination and does not bode well for the improvement of U.S.-Cuba relations in general. It must

be actively opposed in the next period through the targeting of the White House and Congress with letters by as many people as can be mobilized around the country.

Torricelli's Hearings

Rep. Robert Torricelli (D-NJ) has held two more hearings on Cuba in the Subcommittee on Hemisphere Affairs, which he

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chairs. On July 11, Undersecretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Bernard Aronson strongly attacked Cuba. Speaking for the administration, Aronson noted that a number of measures could be taken by the U.S. in regards to Cuba, including: pressuring the USSR to end all "aid" to Cuba if it expects to receive any aid from the U.S. for its "reforms"; going ahead with the Mack Amendment; and continuing to limit Cuba's acquisition of hard currency.

The other hearing of the subcommittee was held on July 31 and was supposed to represent the views of the Cuban-American community. However, only the views of CANF and more "centrist" elements were heard by the subcommittee. No one testified in support of Cuba's right to self-determination.

Rep. Torricelli has evolved over the course of these hearings a position that he terms a "proactive policy" on the part of the U.S. toward Cuba in light of the changes of the last 2 years in the international situation. A recent column in the Miami Herald sums up his public views. While agreeing with the Bush Administration on "Cuba's list of offenses,"

Torricelli notes that "citing them does not constitute a policy" and goes on to advocate a "proactive U.S. policy that will increase the likelihood of Cuba's joining the community of democracies that is today's Western Hemisphere." According to Torricelli, Bush has failed to "accelerate the pace of change in Cuba" which has led to a situation "where threats to the U.S. are becoming graver."

Torricelli calls for a new policy toward Cuba that "mixes carrots and sticks into a coherent whole designed to penalize Cuba's current policy while nurturing and rewarding change."

This "proactive" policy includes heightened pressures on the Soviet Union to suspend support for Cuba, application of "Mack-like" policies, changes in existing immigration policies "to prevent Castro from using the U.S. as a safety valve for his political and economic problems," and ideological warfare in the form of continued aggressive radio and television broadcasts.

These views represent a shift in Torricelli's position on Cuba. In the last Congress, Torricelli was a supporter of the Weiss Bill. He ceased his support in the current Congress. Could this possibly have anything to do with the fact that Rep. Torricelli received a \$1500 campaign contribution from the FCPAC in the 1990 election? Could it be coincidental that as a result of the recent federal census, Torricelli's congressional district may well be redrawn to include Union City, NJ, which, after the Miami area has the greatest number of Cuban exiles?

Congress links U.S. aid to Soviet cutoff of Cuba

The U.S. Senate approved two amendments to its Foreign Aid Bill on July 24 blocking any future U.S. assistance to the Soviet Union until Moscow cuts off economic and military assistance to Cuba. The first amendment, sponsored by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC), requires the president to certify that Soviet aid to Cuba has been halted before any aid to Moscow can be released. The companion amendment, sponsored by Sen. Mack, blocks U.S. support for Soviet membership in the International Monetary Fund until the Soviet-Cuban alliance has been ended. The House passed similar provisions on June 19 by a vote of 374-41. Spearheading the effort, in addition to Helms and Mack, are Sen. Bob Graham (D-FL), and Reps. Barney Frank (D-MA), Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Rep. Bill McCollum (R-FL), Rep. Jon Kyl (R-AZ), and Rep. John Miller (R-WA).



What can be done?

What can be done to begin to move Congress in a direction that respects Cuba's right to political and economic self-determination and improves U.S.-Cuba relations?

First, we need to send letters and organize visits and delegations to congressional offices in support of the Weiss Bill. We need to call on Rep. Fascell to get the Weiss Bill out of his committee and on to the floor. We also need to let Congress and Bush know that the Mack amendment is unacceptable.

Delegations should be broad-based and include representatives of various sectors including the church, the trade unions and business people who favor changes in the embargo. Solidarity with and concern for Cuba are not exclusively a "left" thing. Unity should be around the improvement of U.S.-Cuban relations and Cuba's right to self-determination and not on the nature or status of the process occurring on the island.

Please keep a record of your congressperson's responses and concerns. When visiting or contacting Congress, get to know aides and other staff. Having these contacts will be of use in future legislative work. Please share with us here in Washington DC your information — it will help to know what has been done and what needs to be done here in terms of any follow up.

Second, call on Rep. Torricelli to broaden the testimony in his hearings on Cuba. Torricelli and a significant number of other members of the subcommittee have received campaign contributions from the FCPAC. The tone of the hearings has been slanted to the political views of this PAC and the CANF, leaving the impression that these are somehow the only views of substance on Cuba that exist in U.S. society. They should hear from us about this. To date no progressive Cuban-American organizations have testified. To date no informed U.S. progressive (academic or otherwise) has testified. Why not suggest some genuine alternatives to the Congressman such as members of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, Sandra Levinson of the Center for Cuban Studies or Saul Landau of the Institute for Policy Studies? These are but a few examples — there are certainly others. Rep. Torricelli has an obligation to hear more diverse views. Please keep a record of your suggestions and his responses in order to share it with us.

Write letters to your congresspersons and to Reps. Torricelli and Fascell.

- Where to write letters:

U.S. Senate; Washington, DC 20510
U.S. House of Representatives;
Washington, DC 20515
White House; Washington, DC 20500

Cuba's golden summer

by Brian Adams

DC "Hands Off Cuba!" Coalition

Despite being in the midst of the "special period", Cuba has had plenty to cheer about during the summer of 1991. President Castro attended the first Ibero-American Summit held in Guadalajara, Mexico, from July 17-19. Two nations, Columbia and Chile, used the occasion to announce the resumption of diplomatic and trade ties with Cuba. Paraguay made a similar announcement shortly after the end of the meeting.

ANC President Nelson Mandela visited Cuba and joined Fidel on the platform for the ceremonies marking the 38th anniversary of the beginning of the Cuban Revolution. Mandela also delighted crowds at the dedication of the Pan-American Village in Havana on July 25. Mandela's words in support of Cuba bolstered Cubans at a difficult moment in their history.

The 11th Pan-American Games were held in Havana from August 2-18. In the words of the *New York Times*, "Anybody who has visited Cuba for the last 17 days will surely leave humming the Himno Nacional. It was played 140 times at gold medal ceremonies for the Pan-American Games, giving this proud island bragging rights over the United States, which won 130 gold medals." The Games focused the international spotlight on Cuba. "The total of 20,000 people we've received have been able to see how we work, how we live, what difficulties we face, what successes we have, and what our chances are," said Cuban Vice-President Jose Ramon Fernandez, head of the Games Organizing Committee.

U.S. athletes were often surprised by what they found in Cuba. "I got a little nervous coming here," said U.S. baseball player Charles Johnson. "I was expecting guys with machine guns standing in the middle of the road. But once I got here I saw things were a little different. It's not exactly what I expected." "The Cubans have done an amazing job," said U.S. equestrian team member Lisa Strassburger. "Nice rooms, unbelievable mangoes, fresh-squeezed orange and grapefruit juice." The *Washington Post* wrote, "Most of those who came to Cuba found complete hospitality, a more efficient transportation system than at any other Pan-American Games and accommodations that one U.S. official called 'better than anything we've seen at any Games, about the same as in South Korea at the '88 Olympics.'"

Before winning gold medals in the competition, many Cuban athletes helped build the Pan-American facilities. Track star Ana Fidelia Quirot pushed wheelbarrows and carried stones to help build the stadium where she later won the 400

and 800 meter races. Heavyweight boxing gold medalist Felix Savon said, "Once I was laying bricks and another time I was carrying sand. I'm very proud that I helped build this arena. Now my name will go down in history not only as a boxer but as a builder too." Cuban construction workers began moving into the Pan-Am village apartments they built on Sept. 2.

President Castro was everywhere during the games. He passed out medals to the winners and did "the wave" in the stands with the fans to cheer on Cuba's athletes. "I felt so sure of myself in the finals for the 400," said Ana Quirot, "because when I was getting into the blocks, I looked into the stands and saw our President, Fidel Castro." Fidel later presented her with a gold medal for the race. On August 13, Fidel's birthday, the Brazilian water polo team sang "Happy Birthday" to him in Portuguese to which the crowd added a verse in Spanish. One U.S. newspaper referred to Castro as the island's "honorary head coach."

The U.S. press often rose to the occasion in its coverage of the Pan-American Games. New possibilities for better understanding were undoubtedly created. In the aftermath of events in the Soviet Union, however, many are again insisting that Cuba's days are numbered. In an interview given just before the Guadalajara Summit by Carlos Aldana, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba to the Mexican newspaper *Excelsior*, Aldana was asked how he

views the ascent of Boris Yeltsin, who is generally portrayed as an enemy of Cuba. Aldana responded:

"This seems to be part of a myth which the Western press agencies have created, above all manipulating declarations that Yeltsin has made... Boris Yeltsin is a friend of Cuba, a friend of the Cuban leadership and he has longstanding relations with us. He isn't a leader that has just now debuted... he is a man who has spent many years occupying leadership positions and has visited our country. I witnessed Yeltsin's discussion with Fidel during his last visit to the Soviet Union. Boris Yeltsin isn't Cuba's adversary. And I would say that on the contrary he professes a respect toward Cuba that we express toward Russia and the leaders who like him have been elected as an expression of the will of the majority of the Russian people. ...[W]e don't only perceive these relationships in terms of aid, but in terms of trade, of just and equitable trade relations. And I don't believe anyone can sustain that Boris Yeltsin opposes this sort of relations."



There can be no surrender!

Nelson Mandela speaks in Cuba on July 26

It is a great pleasure and honor to be present here today, especially on so important a day in the revolutionary history of the Cuban people. Today Cuba commemorates the 38th anniversary of the storming of the Moncada. Without Moncada, the Granma expedition, the struggle in the Sierra Maestra, and the extraordinary victory of January 1, 1959, would never have occurred.

Today this is revolutionary Cuba, internationalist Cuba, the country that has done so much for the peoples of Africa.

We have long wanted to visit your country and express the many feelings that we have about the Cuban Revolution, and the role of Cuba in Africa, southern Africa, and the world. The Cuban people hold a special place in the hearts of the people of Africa. The Cuban internationalists have made a contribution to African independence, freedom, and justice, unparalleled for its principled and selfless character.

From its earliest days the Cuban Revolution has itself been a source of inspiration to all freedom-loving people. We admire the sacrifices of the Cuban people in maintaining their independence and sovereignty in the face of a vicious imperialist-orchestrated campaign to destroy the impressive gains made in the Cuban Revolution....



We admire the achievements of the Cuban Revolution in the sphere of social welfare. We note the transformation from a country of imposed backwardness to universal literacy. We acknowledge your advances in the fields of health, education, and science....

From its earliest days the Cuban Revolution has itself been a source of inspiration to all freedom-loving people

Your consistent commitment to the systematic eradication of racism is unparalleled. But the most important lesson that you have for us is that no matter what the odds, no matter under what difficulties, you have had to struggle. There can be no surrender! It is a case of freedom or death! I know that your country is experiencing many difficulties now, but we have confidence that the resilient people of Cuba will overcome these as they have helped other countries overcome theirs.

We know that the revolutionary spirit of today was started long ago and that its spirit was kindled by many early fighters for Cuban freedom and indeed for freedom of all suffering under imperialist domination. We too are inspired by the life and example of Jose Marti, who is not only a Cuban and Latin American hero but is justly honored by all who struggle to be free.

We also honor the great Che Guevara, whose revolutionary exploits, including on our own continent, were too powerful for any prison censors to hide from us. The life of Che is an inspiration to all human beings who cherish freedom. We will always honor his memory.

We come here with great humility. We come here with great emotion. We come here with a sense of a great debt that is owed to the people of Cuba. What other country can point to a record of greater selflessness than Cuba has displayed in its relations with Africa! How many countries of the world benefit from Cuban health workers or educationists? How many of these are in Africa? Where is the country who has sought Cuban help that has had it refused? How many countries un-

der threat from imperialism or struggling for national liberation have been able to count on Cuban support?

It was in prison when I first heard of the massive assistance that the Cuban internationalist forces provided to the people of Angola, on such a scale that one hesitated to believe, when the Angolans came under combined attack of South African, CIA-financed FNLA, mercenary, UNITA, and Zairean troops in 1975.

We in Africa are used to being victims of countries wanting to carve up our territory or subvert our sovereignty. It is unparalleled in African history to have another people rise to the defense of one of us.

We know also that this was a popular action in Cuba. We are aware that those who fought and died in Angola were only a small proportion of those who volunteered. For the Cuban people internationalism is not merely a word but something that we have seen practiced to the benefit of large sections of humankind.

We know that the Cuban forces were willing to withdraw shortly after repelling the 1975 invasion, but the continued aggression from Pretoria made this impossible.

Your presence and the reinforcement of your forces in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale was of truly historic significance. The crushing defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanavale was a victory for the whole of Africa! The overwhelming defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanavale provided the possibility for Angola to enjoy peace and consolidate its own sovereignty! The defeat of the racist army allowed the struggling people of Namibia to finally win their independence! The decisive defeat of the apartheid aggressors broke the myth of the invincibility of the white oppressors! The defeat of the apartheid army was an inspiration to the struggling people inside South Africa!

Without the defeat of Cuito Cuanavale our organizations would not have been unbanned! The defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanavale has made it possible for me to be here today! Cuito Cuanavale was a milestone in the history of the struggle for southern African liberation! Cuito Cuanavale has been a turning point in the struggle to free the continent and our country from the scourge of apartheid!...

The formation of the ANC was the first step toward creation of a new South African nation. That conception was developed over time, finding clear expression 36 years ago in the Freedom Charter's statement that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white. This was an unambiguous

rejection of the racist state that had existed and an affirmation of the only alternative that we find acceptable, one where racism and its structures are finally liquidated.

It is well known that the state's response to our legitimate democratic demands was, among other things, to charge our leadership with treason and in the beginning of the sixties to use indiscriminate massacres. That and the banning of our organizations left us with no choice but to do what every self-respecting people including the Cubans have done — that is, to take up arms to win our country back from the racists.

I must say that when we wanted to take up arms we approached numerous western governments for assistance and we were never able to see any but the most junior ministers. When we visited Cuba we were received by the highest officials and were immediately offered whatever we wanted and needed. That was our earliest experience with Cuban internationalism!...

The decisive defeat of Cuito Cuanavale altered the balance of forces within the region and substantially reduced the capacity of the Pretoria regime to destabilize its neighbors. This, in combination with our people's struggles within the country, was crucial in bringing Pretoria to realize that it would have to talk....

[W]e value our friendship with Cuba very, very much. When you, comrade Fidel, yesterday said that our cause is your cause, I know that that sentiment came from the bottom of your heart and that that is the feeling of all the people of revolutionary Cuba.

You are with us because both of our organizations, the Communist Party of Cuba and the ANC, are fighting for the oppressed masses, to ensure that those who make the wealth enjoy its fruits. Your great apostle Jose Marti said: "With the poor people of this earth, I want to share my fate."

We in the ANC will always stand with the poor and rightless. Not only do we stand with them, we

will ensure sooner rather than later that they rule the land of their birth, that in the words of the Freedom Charter, the people shall govern! And when that moment arrives, it will have been made possible not only by our efforts but through the solidarity, support, and encouragement of the great Cuban people....

Long live the Cuban Revolution!
Long live Comrade Fidel Castro!



The Cuban people hold a special place in the hearts of the people of Africa. The Cuban internationalists have made a contribution to African independence, freedom, and justice, unparalleled for its principled and selfless character

How far we slaves have come!

Fidel Castro's speech to the 38th anniversary of the Moncada attack

It is really a great honor for us to have Nelson Mandela here in our country and attending this event....If one wanted an example of an absolutely upright man, that man, that example, is Mandela. If one wanted to have an example of an unshakably firm, courageous, heroic, serene, intelligent and capable man, that example and that man is Mandela....

If there is anything odious and repugnant in this world...that thing is apartheid....Apartheid is capitalism and imperialism in its fascist form and involves the idea of superior and inferior races....

The real truth is that the West supported apartheid, supplied it with technology, countless billions in investments, countless arms and also political support. No, the United States did not break ties with apartheid, the United States did not blockade apartheid, the United States maintained and still maintains excellent relations with apartheid....They had to blockade Cuba as a punishment for its Revolution, as a punishment for social justice, but they never did this to apartheid....

[T]he ANC is facing a truly complex and difficult task... But I think that if there is something which rises above these difficulties, it is the talent of Nelson Mandela and the ANC leaders. We feel encouraged on this July 26, and we feel tremendously honored by the presence and the words of such an illustrious

political leader and revolutionary. We will never forget them!...

[A] revolution like ours doesn't change its ideas nor its name....[W]e have our dignity and our independence, our bravery and our heroism, even in the difficult times in which we live, and we will have them even if times get even harder.

Who wants to return to the times of the slave barracks? And with what will they force us to do so? With the threat of hunger, of a stiffer blockade....A worse blockade and more suffering than our ancestors suffered we can never experience, because today we are owners of the land, now it is owned only by the people. Today we are owners of the factories, now they belong only to the people. The people own the means of production and of everything else. And we will solve our problems, we will solve them however necessary; but we will never return to the slave barracks!...

[I]f we fought 14,000 kilometers...from here...at Cuito Cuanavale..., here on our coasts, in our countryside, mountains, cities, canefields, ricefields and swamps, we will fight as we fought at Cuito Cuanavale, we will fight even more than we fought at Cuito Cuanavale and we will resist for more years than we resisted in Angola, until we are victorious....

What are they going to frighten us with, their so-called smart weapons? We are smarter than those weapons and smarter than those who own them and our weapons can't be underestimated, above all because behind every one of them is a patriot and a revolutionary...

[O]ne of the distinctive features of this moment is the enormous wave of neoliberalism throughout Latin America and throughout the world. We could say that it is practically worldwide, but it is especially strong in Latin America. That is, capitalism is congratulating itself over the political disasters in the Eastern European socialist countries...

Historically, the Cuban Revolution is responsible for its deeds and actions. And we take clear responsibility because they were our deeds and actions, not those of others. We have our ideas, our concepts, and we have done things our own way....

There are some who believe in neoliberalism, and then there are others who have no choice but to believe in it, because if they don't believe they won't get a single cent; this leads to a wave of privatization. What's in fashion is privatization, private enterprise and the market economy....



photo courtesy Bill Cathey

To want to resolve...problems through capitalism, in a world which is divided between immensely rich capitalist countries and the majority of countries extremely poor, precisely as a consequence of capitalism, colonialism, neocolonialism and imperialism; in this world, to think that neoliberal formulas are going to promote the miracle of economic development in our countries is an incredible delusion....

According to a conference which was held just a few months ago in Quito, Ecuador...there are 270 million poor in Latin America. Of these, 84 million are destitute....There are no less than 20 million homeless children in Latin America...The number of children across Latin America who finish elementary school is 44 for every 100 who enroll....The infant mortality rate in Latin America is about 60 per 1000 live births...Thirty to 40 percent of the work force is unemployed or underemployed...And who is responsible for this? Is capitalism detached from this problem? Are colonialism and neocolonialism detached from it? Is U.S. imperialism detached from this problem? How can they come along now with the formula of more capitalism to develop these countries?...

[B]ecause we have declared ourselves enemies of the big monopolies, because we have declared ourselves enemies of the empire, they won't forgive us for that. How could they forgive the fact that a little country which throughout history they thought they had in their hands, like a ripe apple which falls from the tree, has made a social revolution? They will do everything possible to sweep away this revolutionary process, this example, from history. They will never resign themselves to it. But that makes two of us who are not going to resign ourselves. They are not going to resign themselves to the Revolution and we are never going to resign ourselves to returning to the past. We will never resign ourselves to going back to being a colony or a U.S. possession, never! We will see which of these two is the most tenacious and which of the two is stronger....

Latin America has no alternative but to integrate, to unite. That is what the founders of these republics always dreamed about, that was Bolivar's essential dream, and almost 100 years later, that of Marti.

With this new international situation, the United States' main concern is now its competition with Europe, Japan, and its other trading partners; they want to ensure that Latin America remains its backyard and this is why they launched the so-called Initiative for the Americas. This initiative clashes with vital and in-

dispensable Latin American integration because it is based on a series of bilateral accords with the purpose of developing neo-colonial trade relations characterized, fundamentally, by unequal terms of trade. They are looking for cheap labor and raw materials for their capital....

This initiative threatens Latin America's integration and threatens to integrate Latin America into the economy of the United States, which is the worst off of the three great blocs....It

has become a country incapable of competing; it can't compete with Europe nor Japan....

The United States is more powerful than ever in military terms and politically it has enormous influence, but economically it is weaker than ever and has very serious problems.

The world will now see how this phenomenon of competition between the great economic blocs evolves...and how Latin America emerges from its tragedy....



photo courtesy Tony Ryan

We are internationalists, we aren't rigid or chauvinistic nationalists and we have spilled a lot of our blood in other parts of the world,...in Latin America and Africa...Is there a more noble people, a people more willing to express their solidarity, a more revolutionary people? The blood of the Angolans was our blood, the blood of the Namibians is our blood and the blood of the South Africans is our blood! Humanity's blood is our blood!

Our ideas go beyond chauvinism or a rigid nationalism. Our ideas extend beyond all borders. We live in the world that was given to us and we are fighting for a better world; our minds, our intelligence and our hearts are prepared for a much better world...

We who come from way back, who were conquered, exploited and enslaved throughout history, what marvelous ideas we can defend today, what just ideas can be our ideas! And we can think in Latin American and world terms: How far we slaves have come!

But now our internationalist efforts should be focused on defending and preserving the Cuban Revolution. This is our greatest internationalist duty; because when there is a flag like this one that represents ideas as just as ours, to defend this

trench, this bastion of socialism is the greatest service we can offer to humanity. Times are difficult but we will know how to grow and multiply....

Everyone has to rise to this historic moment...The cause that we defend deserves it so much! Our nation deserves it so much! The ideas which we defend deserve it so much!

We are internationalists...Is there a more noble people, a people more willing to express their solidarity, a more revolutionary people?...Humanity's blood is our blood!

We Cubans must face the situation with realism, serenity and firmness

Granma responds to events in the Soviet Union*

The time seems remote now, when in Feb. of 1986 Fidel Castro spoke before the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, saluting the strategy of accelerated growth and modernization of the economy as a drive toward perfection, and the moral campaign, among whose objectives was to put an end to unearned privileges, and praised the atmosphere of renewal, of the Leninist spirit, of optimism, of enthusiasm and of the hopes that infused the documents and deliberations of the Congress. Much has changed in the last five years.

After the acts of political violence that occurred in the USSR last August 19, events have speeded up at a dizzy pace. In a few days, according to Soviet citizens quoted, the country began to resemble something different. The international news media, for their part, have recorded moments that were very painful for our noble and revolutionary people. The Communist Party, founded by Lenin, and author of the great October Revolution, whose militants gave their lives in the great war for their homeland, has been isolated, made illegal...

At the 27th Congress, Comrade Fidel Castro also said: "It is not ours, as the invited, to issue evaluative judgements about what this heroic and admirable country has done, nor to suggest ideas about what can or should be done, without again expressing our unlimited confidence, our profound admiration, and our solid conviction that, whatever the difficulties will be, whatever the detours in the road to the construction of communism, never before travelled over by humankind, this people and this party will know victory."

That invariably principled line, that has characterized for more than 30 years the relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union, reiterated in that moment, is the same one that guided our direction for these last five years and in it is the groundwork for the declaration composed on the 20th of August in the sharpest moment of the crisis. The only official information available at that moment was what the Cuban authorities had received through established channels between both governments and according to which the president of the USSR had been found to be in a delicate state of health and was relieved by the army of his duties. According to Western news agencies and U.S. television a bloody confrontation between the Supreme Soviet and the Russian Federation seemed imminent.

In that declaration, it was categorically stated that the So-

viet Union is a multinational state, endowed with powerful nuclear arms — any internal conflict could have incalculable consequences, for the peoples of this brother nation as well as for the rest of the world. This is the reason for profound worries on the part of our people, for we have always believed that any outside attempt to urge on ethnic problems, divisions, and conflicts in the USSR constitutes an irresponsible and criminal act against humanity....

As revolutionaries, we Cubans must face the situation with realism, serenity and firmness.... Our socialist economy, as it has already demonstrated in spite of the spectacular ignorance of its detractors, is capable of showing such capacity for change and flexibility....

We know our own weaknesses and we know that working against our efforts, besides the inhuman economic blockade imposed by the United States and its sick hatred toward the Cuban Revolution, are the soft parts of our society: the corrupt, the parasites, the indolent, the negligent, the egoists and the mean. We will be intransigent in the fight against these blemishes and to ensure that the wealth of the people will always be administered by honest and efficient hands.

We will strictly maintain, within the possible material and political limits, our dearest desire to rectify, to raise the efficiency of management and production for developing our economy and the well-being of our people, and to continue perfecting our socialist democracy and our political and social system in general....

The justice and humanity of our revolutionary society and of the Cuban concept of socialism will allow us to face the adversities, resist and emerge victorious in a climate of equality, brotherhood and solidarity in which not a single man or woman, not a single child, not a single old person will ever be abandoned to his or her fate....

As a poor and underdeveloped country, situated geographically in the immediate vicinity of the U.S., we are fully conscious of the grave danger that North American hegemony represents for everyone, and we understand the historic necessity that the Soviet Union preserve its unity and integrity, whatever legal structure it adopts, as a powerful force on the planet upon whose existence greatly depends the prevention of the formation of a Third Reich in the Third Millennium.

For that, only those who aspire to be bosses of the world, or confuse their reactionary dreams with reality, and think that they are facing the twilight of the social struggles can be pleased by the dangers that are challenging the very existence of the Soviet Union....

* unofficial translation by Nancy Schwalb

Fidel speaks at Guadalajara Summit

Speech given by President Fidel Castro Ruz at the opening session of the 1st Ibero-American Summit, Guadalajara, Mexico, July 18, 1991. Reprinted from Granma International, July 28, 1991.

For the first time we Latin Americans meet without being summoned by others. Just because of this, the meeting takes on a historic nature. We trust that it will have great relevance and that our dialogue will be a constructive and fruitful one. We are deeply grateful to our beloved Mexico and its president for the brilliant initiative, necessary and timely as never before.

For the tenth consecutive year, the economic crisis continues to affect all our economies. The per capita GNP does not exceed today the level reached 13 years ago. The import-export price ratio is 21 percent worse than at the beginning of the '80s. The foreign debt remains above 400 billion dollars, despite the fact that the region has transferred resources abroad to the tune of 224 billion dollars in just eight years. Inflation reached unprecedented levels during this period.

The policies issued by the big economic powers and the international financial institutions under their control have not led to development but have made 250 million people poorer; they have failed to bring in foreign capital but have facilitated the flow of capital toward the developed countries. Latin America now carries much less weight than 20 years ago in the world economy.

The huge social and human cost of these realities is expressed in terms of hunger, disease, illiteracy, slums, tens of millions of homeless children, nearly half of the population unemployed, underemployed or malnourished.

Let us not delude ourselves, these are the sad realities that wear out and destabilize governments at the speed of light. In spite of our common culture, language and interests, for nearly 200 years, ever since most of Latin America became independent, we have been divided, attacked, cut to pieces, occupied, kept underdeveloped, plundered. If the total value of the net foreign exchange leaving Latin America each year were converted to gold, it would be greater than all the gold and silver that Spain and Portugal took away during 300 years. And in spite of this, it is claimed we can still develop ourselves. In addition, alienating and wasteful consumer dreams and models have been imposed on us which not only poison and ruin the planet, but are also incompatible with the rational needs of four billion people living in an increasingly poor Third World.

We have never been able to reach our goals relying on our own forces, in spite of the immense natural resources and the intelligence of our peoples. We could have been everything and we are nothing.

There is always a new siren song for the eternal navigators which we have become. I'm not talking about blockades, dirty wars, mercenary invasions or the use of the armed forces of the mightiest military power of this world, shamefully repeated in this hemisphere over the past three decades. I am talking about illusions like the Alliance for Progress, the Baker Plan, the Brady Plan and the latest of these fantasies, the Initiative for the Americas.

Meanwhile, where is the essential, vital and unavoidable unity among our states, which is nowhere to be seen, especially during the great debt crisis? When will it come? How will it be?

Given the big groups which now control the world economy, can there be a place in the future for our peoples without an integrated and united Latin America? Can't we see that only united can we deal with the United States, Japan and Europe? Will we only tackle this colossal task one by one? The big economic powers do not have friends, they only have interests.

The world is now headed in an even worse direction: political hegemony of the world by a superpower which has often outdone itself in the use of force. It has attempted, in order to gain that hegemonism, to use even the mechanisms of the United Nations. It was never so important to resolutely proclaim and defend the principle that the independence and the sovereignty of each state are sacred. The irritating privilege of the Security Council veto must disappear because it is outdated, dangerous and unjustified. To speak of democracy we must begin to democratize the United Nations. Only for the sake of a better and fairer world can the nations yield a portion of their prerogatives. Cuba is one of them, but it will never yield to any pressure from any country, no matter how powerful.

I believe that although many things can be discussed here, the essential aspect of this meeting, what gives it its true historical content, is the decision to combine our efforts and our will for the sake of Latin American integration and unity, not just economic but also political.

Cuba is ready to belong to that integrated and united Latin America, to discuss any subject with it, and even to shed its blood defending what is today the front line of the independence and sovereignty of our peoples. This is one duty which Marti expressed in his last letter, on the eve of his death at Dos Rios: "To prevent the United States from spreading through the Antilles as Cuba gains its independence and from overpowering with that additional strength our lands of America."

The time has come to fulfill, with facts and not words, the will of those who dreamed one day of a great common homeland for our peoples which merits universal respect and recognition.



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Cuba asks United Nations to debate U.S. embargo

The following is a letter from Cuban Ambassador to the U.N. Ricardo Alarcon to the U.N. Secretary General requesting that the General Assembly debate the U.S. economic embargo against Cuba.

For more than 30 years the Government of the United States has been pursuing an aggressive policy against Cuba with the declared aim of imposing on it the political, social and economic order which the United States authorities consider most fitting. This policy has included direct military intervention, the threat of nuclear annihilation, the instigation and carrying out of countless acts of sabotage and plans to assassinate Cuban leaders, all of which has been officially recognized by successive United States Administrations and documented in detail in the United States Congressional Record.

An essential element of this policy is the economic, commercial and financial embargo which the United States has imposed and applied against Cuba throughout the above-mentioned period and which is now being intensified and expanded.

The United States embargo has caused Cuba substantial material losses and has obliged it to make extraordinary efforts to change its economic relations, which in the past were entirely dependent on the United States market. This has entailed intensive readaptation of the structure of production, consumption and services to different types of technology, equipment, raw materials and consumer goods from other countries, in many cases obtained at short notice, all of which has caused enormous economic and social damage and hardship.

The discriminatory measures against Cuba in the world of finance — the ban on the use of the United States dollar, the denial of access to the United States banking system and the boycott imposed on it in international financial and credit institutions — have been a major additional obstacle for Cuba's international economic — and especially commercial — relations, and have limited even more the possibilities of external financing of the Cuban economy.

The United States Government has also tried to compel third countries to apply such a policy against Cuba, even seeking to impose its own discriminatory legislation beyond the confines of its national jurisdiction, thereby violating the sovereignty of other States. In its most recent legislative session, the United States Congress to that end adopted new measures which clearly are unlawful and violate international principles and norms.

It should be emphasized that the embargo continues to include a total prohibition on Cuba's acquisition of foodstuffs, medicine

and medical supplies and equipment of United States origin. This criminal practice, applied totally and systematically for three decades, has caused and still causes appreciable additional harm to the Cuban people. Because of the inhuman character of this practice, a proposed amendment was even put forward at the beginning of this year in the United States Congress itself. This amendment, which would permit a humanitarian exception for the export of medicine and certain medical equipment, has already encountered strong opposition from governing circles in Washington.

Although the far-reaching changes carried out in Cuba during this period have enabled the people to achieve incomparably higher living standards in terms of social progress — as seen in the notable achievements in such fields as health, education, food, employment, housing and social protection for the entire population — these results have obviously been achieved through the people's efforts and sacrifices, which have been unjustly and excessively compounded by the embargo.

At the present stage in international relations, when an attempt is being made to restructure them on the basis of cooperation and reduction of tension, it is particularly unjust, anachronistic and irrational to maintain and even intensify against Cuba a policy based on the most flagrant violation

of the norms of coexistence among States, as set forth in the Charter and various General Assembly resolutions.

The United States Government is virtually alone in continuing to apply this policy against Cuba. The vast majority of those States which, in the past, joined in the embargo have gradually adjusted their position and today maintain normal relations with Cuba.

However, the decisive weight of the United States in the world economy and its renewed efforts to perpetuate and extend this policy have transformed the economic embargo into a serious obstacle for the independence and development of Cuba, causing continuing material damage and harm to the Cuban people.

The United States embargo against Cuba constitutes a flagrant violation of the principles of sovereign equality of States and non-intervention in their internal affairs, and is a constant source of tension that impairs the normal development of international relations.

Consequently, the Government of the Republic of Cuba deems it necessary for this question to be considered as a matter of priority by the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, so that decisions may be taken which will help to end this unjust and illegal situation.

August 16, 1991



News Shorts

The DC "Hands Off Cuba!" Coalition and the DC Venceremos Brigade held an enormously successful event on July 26 to commemorate the attack on Moncada which began the Cuban Revolution. More than 125 people packed the Washington Peace Center to hear Hugo Yedra, 1st Secretary of the Cuban Interests Section, and Phyllis Bennis of Pacifica News and WBAI radio in New York. There were musical performances by Luci Murphy and Peter Jones of DC New Song, Michele Costa, and the Spoken Word Poets and Malcolm X Park Drummers. Alicia Partnoy and Tony Ryan read poetry, including Cuban poet Nancy Morejon's poem, *Moncada*.

A National Planning Meeting on Cuba was held in New York from June 21-23. The meeting included delegates from Hands Off Cuba groups from around the country, the Venceremos Brigade, and the Antonio Maceo Brigade. The meeting established a National Organizing Committee for a National Network on Cuba co-chaired by Esmeralda Brown and Frank Velgara of the U.S. Hands Off Cuba Coalition in New York. The Committee seeks to establish ties, open communication, and coordinate work being undertaken by Cuba activists across the U.S. Interim Working Groups were set up to cover the areas of labor, video work, legislative, media, religious, student and youth, and medical aid. A second national meeting is scheduled for Washington DC, September 20-22. For more information on the National Organizing Committee for a National Network on Cuba, contact the New York U.S. Hands Off Cuba Coalition, PO Box 1132, NY, NY 10163, (212) 246-3811 ext. 890, or Esmeralda Brown, 860 Riverside Dr., #5-B, NY, NY 10032, (212) 927-3953.

The New York U.S. Hands Off Cuba Coalition has announced a demonstration on Tuesday, September 17 at 5:00 PM at the United Nations Plaza in New York to support Cuba's call for a U.N. General Assembly condemnation of the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba. We urge all those who can to come to New York for this important event.

The National Alliance of Third World Journalists is organizing a Press Tour to Havana and Santiago de Cuba, October 30-November 8, 1991. For more information contact NATWJ, PO Box 43208, Washington DC 20010, (202) 462-8197.

West Coast Cuba activists are publishing a monthly newsletter, *The Cuba Advocate*. Initial copies are free, although they would be grateful for contributions toward the cost of postage. To subscribe write: Maura Baird, Editor, *The Cuba Advocate*, PO Box 415, Santa Cruz, CA 95061.

A group of eleven students from Colorado University in Boulder spent last April's spring break in Cuba. The trip was the result of four years of efforts by student leaders at CU and is the first such U.S.-Cuba undergraduate exchange in recent memory. "It was pretty much our idea here in Colorado," organizer Robert Perkinson told the Colorado Daily. He hopes such exchanges can help to end the "censorship, stigmatization, and economic warfare that has been the U.S. government policy towards Cuba for 30 years."

An exchange visit by Cuban university students to Colorado and Washington DC is now being planned for late October. Student to Student, a project of the National Student Educational Foundation of the United States Student Association is currently trying to arrange visas for the Cubans from the U.S. State Dept. For information on the student exchange project contact: Brian Allen; Student To Student; 815 15th St., NW #838; Washington, DC 20005; (202) 347-4769.

The fourth National Convention of the Committee In Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), held in Chicago in May, passed a proposal on support of Cuba. The two main provisions of this proposal were: 1) to develop an internal education program on Cuba to increase members' knowledge of the Cuban Revolution, and, 2) for local CISPES chapters to increase relational work with coalitions formed against U.S. intervention in Cuba.

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¡BARAGUA!

¡Baragua!, a newsletter of the Cuba solidarity movement in the U.S., is named for Cuban revolutionary leader Antonio Maceo's immortal *Protest of Baragua*, issued in 1878 when Maceo refused to halt the struggle against Spain until Cuba was free and independent and slavery had been abolished. Today, on billboards and walls across the island, the slogan, "The future of our country will be an eternal Baragua!" is proclaimed.

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