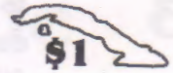


¡Baraguá!

publication of the National Network on Cuba



July 1994



End of the Blockade Near?

Freedom to Travelers Harassed

Cuban Leaders Discuss Present Situation

What Was the Baraguá Protest

Secret Memo Exposes U.S. Hypocrisy

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¡Baraguá!

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National Network on Cuba: The National Network on Cuba (NNOC) is a broad-based federation of Cuba-specific coalitions and projects that exist in numerous parts of the U.S., as well as organizations with Cuba programs or committees. The fundamental goals of NNOC are to end the U.S. government blockade of Cuba and to support that country's right to self-determination. NNOC also stands for full normalization of relations between the U.S. and Cuba.

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On The Cover: Getting ready for school. Photo by Brian Adams.

Is the end of the blockade around the corner?

by Nicanor León Cotayo
Granma International, April 6, 1994

The ending of the blockade against Vietnam, a country in which the United States lost nearly 60,000 men during the war, has increased many U.S. citizens' concern over the blockade policy the White House maintains toward Cuba. In my opinion, at this time the end of the blockade is neither in sight nor as far off as the greatest pessimists may think. The minority that publicly rejects this ineffective stance has been gradually swelling its ranks, while important forces inside and outside official circles are moving in the opposite direction. Commenting on the incipient but increasingly representative movement to change the handling of Cuban-U.S. relations, the newspaper *El Nuevo Herald* in Miami wrote in its March 7 edition:

"From religious and humanitarian agencies to conservative editorial writers, from civil rights groups to business directors, the different critics of the trade embargo claim that it is a relic from the cold war that affects U.S. business or contributes to Cuba's extreme poverty." A significant reflection of these opinions came with the beginning of discussions regarding the topic in two subcommittees of the House of Representatives, described by the EFE correspondent in Washington as "one of the most extensive and prolonged U.S. legislative debates on the embargo since the 60s."

Aside from the final results of the hearings, the most important is the fact that they are being held. Through these hearings we will see to what degree the country has begun to question a set of measures which has left the White House virtually alone in the international arena.

Another sign of change is the crusade against that policy organized by the Pastors for Peace in the United States, in which members of several social sectors within the United States work arm in arm with a growing number of U.S. religious people and are winning over supporters in other countries in the Americas and Europe.

The fact that influential U.S. newspapers, including the one most representative of the business world, *The Wall*

Street Journal, are questioning whether the blockade is the best way of dealing with Havana is another very telling indication of which tendency will get the upper hand in the course of time.

If, with the lifting of the economic embargo on Vietnam, U.S. business pragmatism manages to displace the ideology and bureaucratic laziness of a group of legislators and civil servants, I've no doubt as far as Cuba is concerned that these forces will be called upon to play an appreciable role. That, of course, is if they are not compelled to arrive far too late on the scene, where already businessmen from the American continent and Europe, among others, are occupying the space which they are legally permitted.

The proposal to lift the blockade must still face fierce opposition. Among the opponents are the electoral groups that hope to win Florida in the 1996 elections by tying their Cuba policy to the designs of the extreme right in Miami. They do this without taking into account that the right-wing in Miami doesn't have the same power it did before 1992 and that many residents of Cuban origin there don't have U.S. citizenship and therefore don't have the right to vote.

Also backing the right-wing's position are those in Washington who are still betting that Cuba won't be able to stand up to current economic difficulties; a Congress which—faced with elections next November, is watching its step with extreme care, and an overburdened official agenda which doesn't give the matter of Cuba priority. To this list one should add, as an ingredient that can't be overlooked, the complicated situation raised by the Whitewater scandal

for the current Democratic administration.

In my opinion, this process, driven by the extreme right current of the political and business spectrum in the United States with which President Bill Clinton has had run-ins since last year, will tend to favor, for the time being at least, tendencies in Washington that propose government action along conservative lines, including, as is to be expected, that which concerns Cuba.



Juventud Rebelde

Gov't moves to stop Americans from traveling to Cuba Freezes \$43,000 bank account of Freedom to Travel Campaign

On June 14, the Treasury Department Office of Foreign Assets Control blocked the bank account of the Freedom to Travel Campaign, a group that is organizing a trip of 200 people to Cuba from June 23-30 to challenge the U.S. government's ban on travel to Cuba. The government cited sections of the 1917 Trading with the Enemy Act and the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act as justification for its blocking of the \$43,000 account. In taking this drastic action, the Treasury Department is going against the wishes of Congress, which passed a joint resolution in May stating that the President should not restrict travel between the United States and any other country. "It's outrageous that just weeks after the United States renewed most favored nation status with China and opened diplomatic offices in Vietnam, our government is still trying to prevent us from traveling to Cuba," said campaign spokesperson Medea Benjamin. As the law is presently written, individuals traveling illegally to Cuba are subject to penalties of up to 10 years in jail and \$250,000 in fines.

The Freedom to Travel Campaign says the trip will go forward as planned. "Right now, hundreds of people around the country are helping raise money to replace the confiscated funds, and new people are joining the trip to protest the government's action," stated campaign coordinator Pam Montanaro. "I consider the Treasury Department's action to be arbitrary and illegal, and we are considering legal action to defend my clients' right to travel," said campaign lawyer Michael Krinsky, a member of the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee. ACLU lawyer Kate Martin, who is part of the campaign's legal team, asserted that whatever national security reasons existed during the Cold War for initially imposing the ban on travel to Cuba are now wholly inconsistent with the current U.S. foreign policy goal of promoting democracy and human rights in Cuba and around the world. "It is time to end the cold war at home by lifting the travel ban," said Martin. [Ed. Note: As we go to press, it has been reported that participants have returned and received minor harassment. Contact the Freedom to Travel Campaign for more info.]

U.S. Customs harasses Venceremos Brigade

by Holly Fincke

One hundred and fifty members of the 25th anniversary contingent of the Venceremos Brigade returned from two weeks in Cuba on May 5 and 6 to be greeted in three cities with harassment, detentions, and extended interrogation by U.S. Customs officials. Elisa Facio of Denver and Luther Richert of Boulder, Colorado were detained for three hours in Dallas, Texas; two credentialed journalists, Dianne Mathiowetz and Leslie Rockenbach of Buffalo, New York were held for three hours in Newark, New Jersey; Mariana Cruz was held for two hours in Newark; and 13 *brigadistas* from Chicago, Illinois and Madison, Wisconsin were detained for three hours in Chicago. 60 *brigadistas* destined for northern California, Portland, and Seattle and 30 *brigadistas* from different parts of New York passed customs in San Francisco and New York City without major incident.

The Brigade is protesting U.S. policy toward Cuba and the illegal treatment of *brigadistas* held in detention by Customs officials. 13 passports were seized in Chicago, including some without Cuban exit stamps. Elisa Facio was forced to pull her skirt up and lower her underwear in an unwarranted search while Customs agents snickered. The government is charged with violations such as looking at private diaries and postcards, refusing to permit lawyers to be present during questioning, and threatening freedom of the press by interrogating journalists.

The Venceremos Brigade is making three demands:

1. **End the blockade against Cuba, including the travel ban.**
2. **No persecution of *brigadistas*.**
3. **Return all seized passports.**

In spite of the harassment in three cities, the trip was a great success and a further demonstration that the U.S. travel ban makes no sense. There is simply no reason to forbid anyone from exercising their right to see Cuba for themselves and standing together with Cubans working to improve their society. While in Cuba the *brigadistas* worked in agriculture, visited Cuban workplaces, communities, daycare centers, and health clinics, and met with people ranging from government officials to people on the street.

We are asking you to call the following individuals to register our demands and protest against the treatment of Venceremos Brigade participants. Please let them know that it is time for the U.S. policy to change and for the travel ban to end!

Warren Christopher, Secretary of State 202-647-5498
John Shattuck, Ass't Sec. for Human Rights 202-647-2126
Anthony Lake, National Security Advisor 202-456-2256

Lloyd Bentsen, Secretary of the Treasury 202-662-1100
Your congressional representatives 202-224-3121
Local and national media.

Cuba action: News from the capital

Our work to end the Cold War against Cuba includes pressuring Congress & the Administration.

Make sure your elected officials hear from you:

organize a lobbying visit, write letters, make phone calls.

Free Trade with Cuba Bill — HR 2229

On March 17 the House Ways and Means Committee's hearing room was packed with people giving testimony and watching the first hearing on the Free Trade With Cuba Bill (HR 2229) introduced by Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) last year. If passed as written, this bill would end the U.S. economic blockade against Cuba.

The hearing was initially scheduled for 5 hours, but ended up running for almost 11! Over 35 people, representing a wide range of views, presented their testimony at this hearing jointly convened by the Select Revenue Measures and the Trade subcommittees of Ways and Means. The hearing was an impressive example of public debate and open exploration of a controversial issue.

It is not yet clear what the next step will be for the Free Trade With Cuba Bill. What is clear is that this bill must be supported and that the Cuba movement across the country has an important role to play in building that support. There are 33 Congressional sponsors on the bill, and many of those people signed on after hearing from voters in their districts.

We urge you to visit, write, and call your own representative. Ask them to become a sponsor of HR 2229.

Travel Policy

On Feb. 1, the Senate passed a sense of the Senate resolution introduced by Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) that the President should not restrict travel for educational, religious or humanitarian purposes or restrict informational or cultural exchanges. This sense of the Senate resolution was not binding, but there was some hope that its language would be attached to the State Dept. Authorization Bill when the conference committee met in mid-April.

While the conference committee did expand the definition of what is allowed in terms of the exchange of informational materials, they did not include the lifting of restrictions on travel to embargoed countries. Instead, the Administration has said they will handle the matter by having the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the Treasury Dept. change the regulations. The State Department will also have a say in the final wording.

In addition, the conference committee included the following language: "It is the sense of the Congress that the President should advocate and seek a mandatory United Nations Security Council embargo against the dictatorship of Cuba."

It is critical to make sure the State Department knows there is a growing constituency calling for an end to all travel restrictions to Cuba. The phone number for Secretary of State Warren Christopher is (202) 647-5298.

Bill to Repeal Cuban Adjustment Act

Rep. Kopetski (D-OR) has introduced HR 3854 which would repeal the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966. The Cuban Adjustment Act grants legal status to virtually all Cubans seeking asylum in the U.S., a process which is usually very difficult and slow for most non-Cubans seeking such status. This bill has been referred to the House Judiciary Committee but no further action has been scheduled.

TV Martí

By July 1st, U.S. Information Agency Director Joe Duffey has to make a recommendation to Congress as to whether TV Martí should continue to be funded. The recommendation is supposed to be based on issues of cost-effectiveness, technical feasibility and whether or not enough Cubans are watching its broadcasts to warrant its continuation. Duffey has already received two reports; one recommends continuing TV Martí funding while the other calls for cutting it off.

Make sure your representative knows that you do not want your tax dollars used to continue this arm of the propaganda war against Cuba.

Free and Independent Cuba Assistance Act — HR 2758

On March 25th the House Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs held a hearing on this bill introduced by Rep. Robert Menendez (D-NJ). This bill would authorize the President to lift the economic embargo after a "democratic government" is in place in Cuba. The idea is to offer U.S. aid and assistance to Cuba once Fidel Castro is out of power and other conditions have been met. There are 16 co-sponsors on the bill.

We need to watch the movement of this bill and insure that it does not gain support or pass.

Bill to End Embargo on Medicines — HR 2983

This bill, introduced by Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), would make an exception to the U.S. embargo on trade with Cuba for the export of medicines, medical supplies, instruments or equipment. It has been assigned to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, but there is nothing scheduled yet.

Contact your representative and urge her/his support of this bill.

If you want more information or help with lobbying efforts, contact: Cuba Information Project; 198 Broadway, Suite 800; New York, NY 10038; (212) 227-3422.

PHONE OR WRITE

Make your views on U.S. policy toward Cuba known

Secretary of State Warren Christopher	President Bill Clinton	U.S. Senate
U.S. Dept. of State	1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW	Washington, DC 20510
2201 C St., NW	Washington, DC 20500	(202) 224-3121
Washington, DC 20520	(202) 456-1111; FAX: (202) 456-2461	House of Representatives
(202) 647-5298	e-mail: president@whitehouse.gov	Washington, DC 20515
FAX: (202) 647-6434	National Security Advisor Anthony Lake	(202) 225-3121
Ass't Sec. for Inter-American Affairs	National Security Council	
Alexander Watson	Old Executive Office Bldg.	
(202) 647-7285; FAX: (202) 647-0791	Washington, DC 20506	
Cuba Desk	(202) 456-2256; FAX: (202) 456-2883	
(202) 647-9273; FAX: (202) 736-4476		

Cuban free trade bill launched

by Sharon Ayling

Over 200 people gathered in Washington, DC June 9 to rally support for the Free Trade with Cuba Act—HR 2229. The bill calls for lifting U.S. sanctions on trade, travel and communications with Cuba. Cuban-American participation was substantial, including 40 people from Miami who had traveled 24 hours by bus.

Rep. Charles Rangel, the sponsor of the bill, declared at a packed morning news conference, "This outpouring of support from across the country is evidence that this issue is growing in importance to many Americans, including a growing number of voices in the Cuban-American community." Rangel called on members of Congress to support HR 2229, which currently has 34 Congressional co-sponsors. Congressional co-sponsors speaking at the news conference included Henry Gonzalez of Texas, Donald Payne of New Jersey and Jose Serrano of New York. Andres Gomez, who led the Miami delegation, and former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark also spoke.

The June 9 National Education Day on Cuba was the result of efforts by a coalition of 45 groups. In addition to the news conference, meetings were held with 100 members of Congress and the Senate. International Peace for Cuba Appeal, a sponsoring group, distributed a statement to reporters and members of Congress calling the blockade "a war against the Cuban people" and pledging to "mobilize support for HR 2229." It also demanded that "President Clinton use his executive authority to change the U.S. policy of aggression against Cuba by lifting the blockade and establishing normal relations." (*Workers World Service*)

Co-Sponsors of the Free Trade With Cuba Bill, HR 2229

Thomas H. Andrews	D-ME	George Miller	D-CA
Xavier Becerra	D-CA	James P. Moran	D-VA
Anthony Beilsenson	D-CA	Jerrold Nadler	D-NY
William L. Clay	D-MO	James L. Oberstar	DFL-MN
William Coyne	D-PA	Ed Pastor	D-AZ
Ronald V. Dellums	D-CA	Donald M. Payne	D-NJ
Don Edwards	D-CA	Nancy Pelosi	D-CA
Sam Farr	D-CA	Barbara Rose-Collins	D-MI
Henry Gonzalez	D-TX	Martin O. Sabo	DFL-MN
Dan Hamburg	D-CA	Bernard Sanders	IND-VT
Maurice Hinchey	D-NY	Jose Serrano	D-NY
Gerald D. Kleczka	D-WI	Fortney H. Stark	D-CA
Michael Kopetski	D-OR	Esteban E. Torres	D-CA
John J. LaFalce	D-NY	Jolene Unsoeld	D-WA
Jim McDermott	D-WA	Nydia Velasquez	D-NY
Cynthia McKinney	D-GA	Lynn C. Woolsey	D-CA

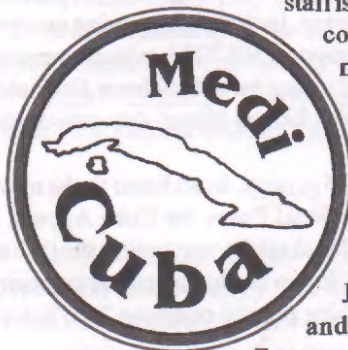
MediCuba delivers aid shipment

Medicines sent to Pinar del Rio

MediCuba has sent a shipment of pediatric antibiotics, insulin, asthma inhalers, and other medicines worth \$80,000 to Cuba. The aid was carried by MediCuba and Cuba Information Project delegations. The shipment brings the total amount of aid sent to the island by MediCuba in the past two and one half years to \$160,000.

A MediCuba delegation traveled to Pinar del Rio to deliver medicines to the "Pepe Portilla" Provincial Pediatric Hospital on April 28. The MediCuba representatives toured the hospital and spoke to an assembly of doctors, nurses, and hospital workers gathered to celebrate the May Day holiday. "Pepe Portilla" is the principal pediatric care facility in Pinar del Rio, Cuba's western-most province. The hospital has a capacity of 450 beds and a staff of 126 doctors, 74 specialists, 240 nurses, and 124 technicians.

As in most hospitals in Cuba, Pepe Portilla's staff is struggling to overcome shortages of



medicine, supplies, and equipment brought about by Cuba's current economic "special period."

Nonetheless, Drs. Jesús Lazo-Cabrera and José Lino Zumaquero Rios, who

showed the U.S. delegation around the facility, expressed pride in Pinar del Rio's low infant mortality rate of 9.2/1000 live births in 1993, achieved despite the economic difficulties. The doctors said that much of the medicine dispensed at the hospital now comes from foreign donations and expressed their appreciation for MediCuba's work.

MediCuba thanks all those who made this donation possible. Special thanks to the Cuba Information Project. We hope that you will continue to

support the efforts of the Cuban people to overcome their present economic difficulties without sacrificing their commitment to provide quality health care for everyone on the island.



Doctors at "Pepe Portillo" Pediatric Hospital in Pinar del Rio with some of the medical aid sent by MediCuba. Dr. Jose Lino Zumaquero Rios is third from left. Chief nurse Juana Lopez Gonzalez is fourth from left. Dr. Jesus Lazo-Cabrera is at right.



One of the patients at "Pepe Portillo" Hospital.

Here's my contribution of: \$100 \$50 \$25 \$15 other: \$
(Make check payable to MediCuba)

Enclosed is a donation of medical supplies. (All medicines must be sealed and unopened)

Send me more information on MediCuba.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ St _____ Zip _____

MediCuba; 1870 Wyoming Ave. NW, #604; Washington, DC 20009; (202) 319-1215 or (202) 234-2000.

Cuban leaders plan next step

by Bill Covington
Workers World Service

Trade unionists with the U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange were invited guests at a special session of the Cuban National Assembly on May 1-2. The body of 500 elected representatives was meeting to decide on measures to deal with the problems Cuba faces because of the current "special period"—a time of severe hardships caused by the U.S. blockade and the collapse of Cuba's socialist economic partners in the USSR and Eastern Europe. The assembly, unlike any capitalist parliament, was opened by the general secretary of the Confederation of Cuban Workers, Pedro Ross. He reviewed and summarized suggestions made in some 88,000 Workers' Parliaments convened over the past several months throughout Cuba. Ross said Cuba's working people agreed the most important task was to preserve free health care and education, "the most important gains of the Revolution." The question is how to pay for these universal services now that the economy has shrunk alarmingly. After years of great equality, some Cubans, especially those with links to tourism or other sources of U.S. currency, are now doing much better than others.

Many of the measures discussed were aimed at making them pay more for services that until now have been free or almost free for everyone. These include charging for higher education according to ability to pay and charging admission for sporting and cultural events. Many workers had advocated raising the price of alcohol and tobacco products, as well as ending tobacco rations for non-smokers to "eliminate the temptation to sell unused rations to underground marketeers." Ross said most workers favored such changes. However, most opposed charging for utilities such as water and power. Workers also discussed the possibility of imposing an income tax, especially on those now self-employed. The overwhelming majority spoke out strongly in favor of seizing the resources of any who have become illegally rich during the "special period."

Frank, Open Discussion

Finance Minister José Luis Rodríguez outlined measures to absorb excess currency in the market. He acknowledged that taxes are "very controversial." But, he said, taxing the self-employed could raise 126 million pesos annually. Such taxes are already being tested in some cities. Officials are also looking into taxing income from legitimately earned U.S. currency in areas like the tourist industry. Discussion from the floor was frank and wide ranging. One delegate estimated that, since the development of an underground economy and the decriminalization of the U.S. dollar, 1

percent of the population has stashed up to \$3 billion in private bank accounts. He suggested they be given three months to prove they got the money legitimately or see it confiscated.

Others talked about state property being misused or ripped off. Some farmers with private plots are selling their excess production to third-party brokers rather than the state, as was originally planned. Expanding a program of people's inspectors to keep track of private farmers and other self-employed individuals was proposed. An outline of how the revolutionary government plans to proceed was then presented. Leaders made it clear that while those who have profited illegally will

*Capitalism won't be Cuba's future
—because it was our sad and painful
past, and Cuba will never return to
its past.*

be hit hard, caution will be the watchword. For example, the cut-off point to confiscate bank accounts will have to be carefully determined so as not to hurt honest but thrifty workers. Many advocated changing the currency to expropriate underground marketeers, but emphasized the need to proceed cautiously to avoid destabilization.

National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcón presented several U.S. documents that showed the horrible conditions for most Cubans before the 1959 revolution. He said: "Capitalism won't be Cuba's future—because it was our sad and painful past, and Cuba will never return to its past. The socialist path is the only path out of the special period."

President Fidel Castro participated throughout the session, commenting on various points and then wrapping up with a summary of his own. He urged that all measures decided on be made public. "I am convinced the people will understand," said Castro. "We won't give in, but we have to adapt without giving up our ideals and our goals." The president pointed out that the measures cannot be instituted all at once. But he received a standing ovation when he said that steps would be taken "starting this week" to confiscate the assets of those who have become rich illegally.

The writer is an organizer for Service Employees Local 200C in Buffalo, N.Y.

What was the Baraguá Protest

by Raimundo Rodríguez

Granma Weekly Review, March 25, 1990

The motto of the 4th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, to be held in the first half of 1991, will be "The future of our country will be an eternal Baraguá." The convocation of this important event was issued on March 15, the date in 1878 of the Baraguá Protest. Why has the Baraguá Protest been made the motto for the meeting of Cuban Communists and as a reflection of the position of the Cuban Revolution? That important event was one of the most extraordinary feats of our wars of independence in the last century. Cuban National Hero José Martí described it as "the most glorious incident in our history."

Speaking on the centennial of the Protest, on March 15, 1978, Cuban President Fidel Castro said, "What can be stated here is that with the Baraguá Protest the patriotic and revolutionary spirit of our people reached its highest point, its climax, its peak; and that the flags of our country and of the Revolution, the true revolution with independence and social justice, were flown from the highest place."

The main protagonist of this historic event was Antonio Maceo Grajales, a general of our wars of independence from Spain. Maceo was a mulatto of humble origins noted for his courage, ability and exemplary conduct. He never fell prey to arrogance, ambition or prejudice. Because of his merits and military feats, he became known posthumously as The Bronze Titan.

Cuba began its armed struggle against Spain on October 10, 1868, when the landholder Carlos Manuel de Céspedes (who became known as the Father of the Country), took up arms and freed the slaves at his sugar mill called La Demajagua, in the town of Yara, now part of Granma province in the eastern part of the country. Céspedes was followed by other patriots in different parts of the country. For ten years — 1868-78 — landholders, artisans, peasants and slaves battled

...with the Baraguá Protest the patriotic and revolutionary spirit of our people reached its highest point, its climax, its peak; ... the flags of our country and of the Revolution, the true revolution with independence and social justice, were flown from the highest place.

heroically against an army which was superior to them in men and weapons. The Cubans fought mainly with machetes and often went hungry, but their love of freedom and their homeland led to military victories which amazed the whole world. Using irregular or guerrilla warfare, the Cubans completely disconcerted their more experienced opponents.

Spain spared neither efforts nor resources to defeat the

Cubans and its biggest overseas force was stationed in Cuba. Realizing that a military victory was out of the question, Spain changed tactics and dispatched General Arsenio Martínez Campos, who was given a mandate to achieve peace. The general resorted to maneuvers to politically undermine the Cuban forces by taking advantage of certain conflicts and personal ambitions among some officers. He offered pardons, bonuses for fighters who gave up and the return of confiscated property belonging to those who fought for their country. The majority of

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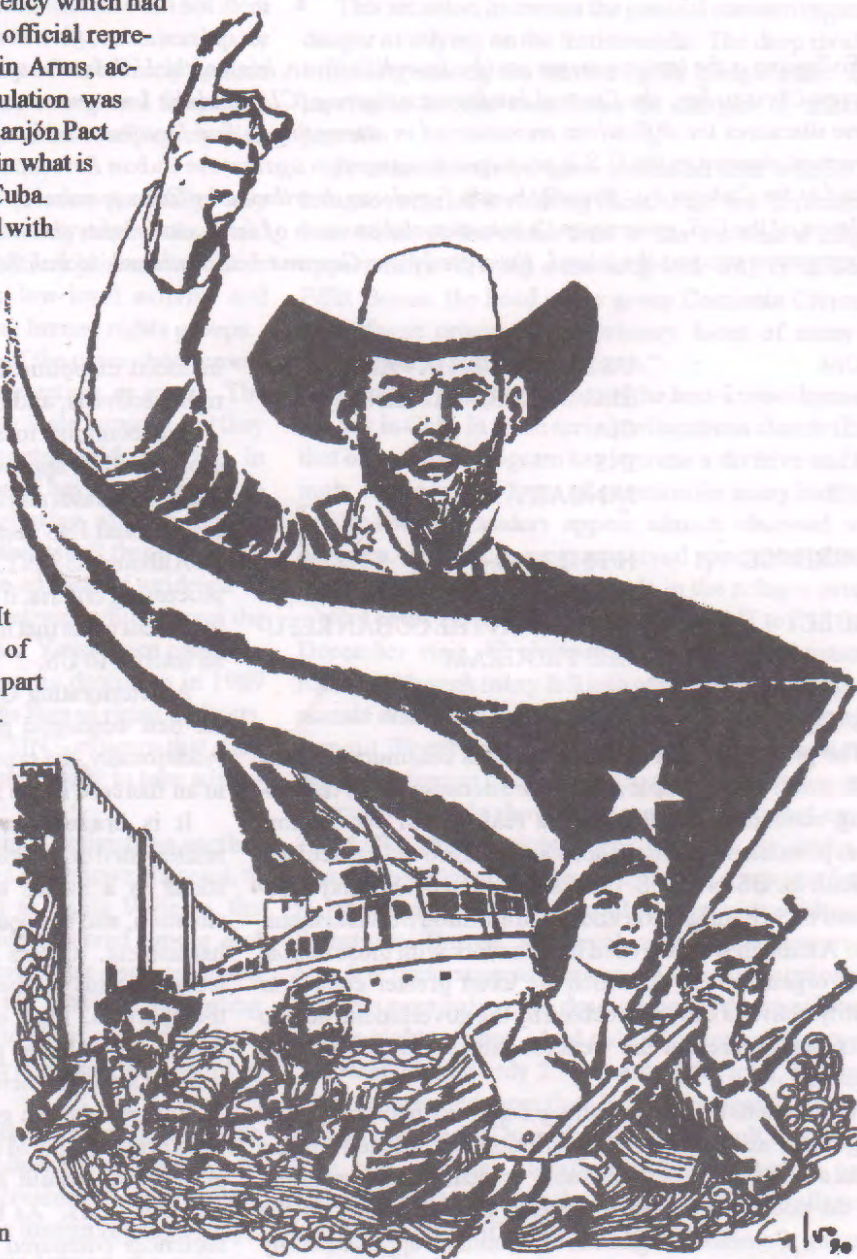
the House of Representatives, the agency which had the political leadership and was the official representative of the Republic of Cuba in Arms, accepted a peace agreement. Capitulation was decided on February 8, 1878 and the Zanjón Pact was signed on February 10 at a camp in what is now Camaguey province in eastern Cuba.

General Antonio Maceo disagreed with the Zanjón Pact because it did not provide for the independence of Cuba; it simply granted the same political and administrative conditions as for Puerto Rico. Nor did it provide the total abolition of slavery, but only for the slaves and Asian immigrants in the ranks of the Cuban forces. Thus it did not solve the two key problems at the time. There was no military reason why the war could not continue. It was a problem of will and a lack of political and military foresight on the part of those who advocated surrender. Even when capitulation was near, Maceo defeated one of the best units of the Spanish army, the famous San Quintín Battalion, in the battle at San Ulpiano Pass.

In spite of his determination to continue the struggle, Maceo requested a meeting with Martínez Campos, not to reach an agreement but to have him explain what Cuba could be expected to gain from peace without independence. Martínez Campos agreed to the meeting because he was determined to convince Maceo. They met at a spot known as Mangos de Baraguá on March 15, 1878. While they didn't agree, Maceo was able to express his opposition to the pact directly to the Spanish general. They agreed to an eight-day truce and at its conclusion, on the 23rd, fighting was resumed.

When fighting began again, the Spanish army would encounter Cuban forces shouting, "Long Live Cuba! Long Live Spain! We are brothers!" This was an attempt to convince the Cubans to accept peace. Maceo and his forces continued the struggle, but given the Spaniards' unwillingness to fight and in order to avoid Maceo's being killed in an ambush, the leaders of the revolution sent him to Jamaica. In May, 1878 the remaining Cuban forces surrendered and the Ten Years War was over.

Just 18 months after the Zanjón Pact, Cubans decided to begin a new armed movement led by Major General Calixto



García, called the Little War, which also failed shortly afterwards. On February 24, 1895, there was another independence war organized by José Martí, but it too was unable to achieve independence given U.S. intervention in 1902. This led to a government that made our country into a neocolony of the United States.

The economic, social and political liberation of Cuba was achieved on January 1, 1959, as a result of the Revolution led by now President Fidel Castro. The idea of the Baraguá Protest, the idea of not surrendering, not yielding to defeat, was present in the fighters at the Moncada garrison in 1953; the *Granma* expeditionaries in 1956; the members of the Rebel Army, the soldiers and members of the militia at Playa Girón and Cubans today.

Secret memo exposes U.S. hypocrisy

*Following is the text to a memo sent by Joseph Sullivan, head of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, to Secretary of State Warren Christopher, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The memo discusses the difficulties encountered in attempting to find legitimate cases of human rights violations in Cuba, an important element in the U.S.'s propaganda campaign against the Cuban Revolution for the last 35 years. The memo was leaked to the Cubans by "friendly hands," and was distributed by Cuba to member states of the United Nations to provide evidence of the U.S. government's intentional distortion of the human rights situation in Cuba in order to justify its policy of aggression against the island. Excerpted from *Granma International*, March 16, 1994.*

FROM : US INT. SECT. HAVANA
TO : SEC. STATE, WASHINGTON
CIA
INS
DATE : JANUARY 94
REFERENCE : H/18422/693-4
SUBJECT : UPDATE ON THE CUBAN REFUGEE PROGRAM

I. Overview

The processing of refugee applicants continues to show weak cases. Most people apply more because of the deteriorating economic situation than a real fear of persecution. Cases presented by human rights activists proved particularly difficult for USINT [U.S. Interests Section in Havana] officers and INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] members. Although we have tried hard to work with those human rights organizations on which we exert greater control to identify activists truly persecuted by the government, human rights cases represent the weakest category of the refugee program.

Applications by human rights groups members are marked by general and imprecise descriptions of alleged human rights activity, lack demonstrable evidence of persecution, and do not meet the basic criteria for processing in the program. Common allegations of fraudulent applications by activists and of the sale of testimonials by human rights leaders have continued in recent months. Due to the lack of verifiable documentary evidence, as a rule USINT officers and INS members have regarded human rights cases as the most susceptible to fraud.

II. Assessment

The decrease in the number of political prisoners led the State Department and the INS three years ago to work together in expanding the categories for processing in the Cuban Refugee Program. Professionals dismissed from their jobs, human rights activists, and members of religious faiths suffering persecution were introduced as new categories, with processing guidelines developed for each to ensure a fair consideration of cases.

During later INS visits, USINT made a deliberate effort to include cases from all of the categories. As an average, it

included ex-political prisoners, religious members, human rights activists, and other cases.

We continue to select for prescreening only cases of probable INS approval. The approvals reflect the careful analysis of cases and the good understanding between USINT officers and INS visiting members.

Although USINT has tried to cover cases in line with the processing criteria, it has nonetheless preserved its flexibility to present cases that may fall short in some areas but represent an interest to US.

A deteriorating Cuban economy has provided incentive for new economic migrants to seek the refugee program. Additionally, the expansion of the categories has contributed to an increase in the number of applicants.

It is brazenly acknowledged now by some of the reintegrated ex-political prisoners that they apply for refugee status as a means to escape the deteriorating economic situation, and not because of a current fear of persecution or harassment. Others seem to have been pressed to request refugee status by their adult children hoping to leave with their parents. Most of these adult children of elderly, often retired, ex-political prisoners do not meet the criteria for refugee status in their own capacity.

Regrettably, the general quality of many of the applications is poor. Few of the ex-political prisoners accepted now as refugees would have been accorded such a status in previous years. As a rule, they have served much shorter sentences compared to the early entrants in the program. Most played lesser roles in counterrevolutionary groups, accepted political reeducation in order to have their sentences reduced, and later abandoned political activity to reintegrate into Cuban society.

A significant number of applications have also been received from individuals charged with attempting to illegally exit the country. With the depolitization of "illegal exits" by the Cuban government, sentences for such charges were reduced. INS has generally regarded "illegal exits" as lacking political content.

The generally low quality of the cases, including those in the 1991 new categories, has not kept USINT from continuing to rely on documentary evidence (i.e., legal documents, dismissal notices, prison release letters) to determine the inclusion in the refugee program. Yet, this is not the case with most human rights applicants.

We have recorded an increase in the number of human rights cases since 1992. However, this increase did not stem from a higher level of human rights activity, membership, or government repression. The majority of cases rarely contain any demonstrable evidence of persecution and frequently give only minimal, hardly credible, evidence of participation in human rights activities.

The testimonials of human rights leaders generally carry vague descriptions of human rights activity, such as the moral support of family members of political prisoners. These descriptions accurately show the low-level activity and nonconfrontational attitudes of most human rights groups.

On the other hand, almost none of the cases show proofs of house searches, interrogations, detention, or arrest. The activists usually claim persecution by State Security, but they rarely can provide properly documented evidence of it. In some instances the applicant claims to have been subject to harassment without arrest. Interviewing officers end up having to rely virtually on what activists tell them.

The general trend has been one of lack of evidence to prove that the person is actually an activist, which leaves the category open for virtually everyone. Young men caught in illegal exit attempts since the economic downturn in 1989 have tended to submit applications as human rights activists. Human rights leaders have told USINT officers that they know that most of their members joined only to take advantage of the refugee program.

Since the inclusion of human rights activists as another category, we have kept a flexible and responsive approach to them. Human rights leaders such as Paula Valiente, the Aspillaga brothers, and others have received proper and quick consideration. A similar treatment has also been given to simple activists. In cases where the activist's supporting evidence is weak, but commitment to US is otherwise clear, prescreening officers have given the applicant the benefit of the doubt.

The leader of one group said that several people left his organization when they knew that it does not give testimonials to members. He complained of pressures from members to obtain strong testimonials of their human rights activity.

The latest INS visits have witnessed repeated incidences of fraud and allegations of fraud by human rights activists. USINT has attempted to address the problem through a revision of internal procedures to identify strong human rights cases. In addition, it met with heads of human rights organizations to determine the objectives, size and other aspects of the major human rights groups. USINT restricted as well the testimonials accepted from the groups to those from leaders we trust, aware that past divisions within human rights groups have produced allegations of unauthorized and fraudulent issuances of testimonials.

To our regret, not even these steps have prevented allegations of fraud and bitter recriminations among top human rights leaders. Shortly before the INS December visit, Gustavo Arcos and Jesús Yáñez of the Comité Cubano Pro-Derechos Humanos accused Aida Valdés of selling fraudulent avals. She, in turn, accuses Arcos and Yáñez of similar

practices for economic profits.

This situation increases the general concern regarding the danger of relying on the testimonials. The deep rivalries and infighting among the human rights groups make it simply inevitable for the recurrence of charges of fraud not to prevail.

Prominent activists have confessed their worries that the refugee program is robbing them of the few dedicated members while at the same time it has become a magnet for opportunists. During a meeting with USINT and the INS, Félix Bonne, the head of the group Corriente Cívica, called the refugee program "the primary focus of many human rights leaders and organizations."

The involvement by some of the best-known human rights leaders in Cuba in these serious allegations clearly illustrates that our refugee program has become a divisive and increasingly controversial focus of attention for many human rights groups, whose leaders appear almost obsessed with the program. USINT has even received appeals to give human rights organizations a formal role in the refugee program.

Out of the 225 cases presented by USINT to INS during its December visit, 47 claimed involvement in human rights activity although many fell into other categories, like professionals dismissed from their jobs and persons attempting to commit illegal exits. Although this was our best effort to work with human rights groups to present the strongest cases, interviews clearly showed the weakness of most cases.

Of all 47 human rights cases, only one claimed a total of more than 30 days detention over the last five years for human rights activity, and even he could not provide evidence of the detentions. The rest, in general, only claimed house searches or a few undocumented summons to police stations. Most activists gave only vague descriptions of their involvement in human rights groups. And only 19 were finally approved.

Despite being only 20 percent of the total, human rights cases represented more than half of the denials. The overall refusal rate for the December visit as a result was 22 percent. This rate, although significantly higher than in past INS visits, has on the sideline the advantage of hopefully resulting in a higher level of activity by the groups.

Considerations

In the face of a general decline in the quality of the cases, including those involving ex-political prisoners, USINT will need to work harder in identifying the best cases. With a view to help in this effort, it will introduce additional changes in the processing of cases.

The problems encountered in the processing of the bulk of the human rights cases point to the need for USINT to continue its close work with the INS to select strong cases.

However, the USINT will maintain the flexibility to present cases that may not meet all of the criteria but that given their nature may prove useful for US interests.

Given CIA's expressed interests in the subject of human rights, and its greater involvement with and better knowledge of the different groups, we suggest a closer cooperation with USINT in line with our common goals.

Sullivan

Pastors for Peace construction brigades to Cuba July 22-July 31, 1994

The people of Cuba are suffering a severe shortage of housing. As a direct result of the U.S. blockade of the island and the collapse of trade relations with the nations of eastern Europe, construction of housing in Cuba has come to a near stand-still the past three years. Often three generations are crowded into a single housing unit, and over-crowding has become a serious problem, especially in Havana.

You can help resolve this problem by joining a Pastors for Peace construction brigade to Cuba. *Brigadistas* will live and work in the working class barrio of Marianao in Havana. You will work alongside the same Cubans who will occupy the houses when they are finished. No construction experience is necessary.

The brigade will work from 8:00 until 2:00 each day, then spend the late afternoon and evening meeting with community, religious and political leaders. *Brigadistas* will stay at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Center in the heart of Marianao.

The U.S. government may decide that it is a violation of the U.S. embargo to assist in the construction of houses for our brothers and sisters in Cuba. Officials may decide to take legal action, including possible prosecutions. Convicted violators of the embargo are liable for fines of up to \$250,000 and ten years in prison.

The U.S. embargo is the center-piece of a policy that increases hunger and decreases health care for the Cuban people. Pastors for Peace believes that U.S. citizens have a duty to lead their government to a new and more humane policy through actions such as the construction brigades. In November of 1992 and again in July-August, 1993, hundreds of individuals stood up to the U.S. government as part of the U.S.-Cuba Friendshipment caravans, and won stunning victories by delivering humanitarian aid to Cuba without applying for or accepting a license under the terms of the embargo. It is time for us to lead our government to a new understanding and a more humane policy toward Cuba. Join the Pastors for Peace construction brigade and become "part of the solution."

The cost of \$990 includes: round trip air fare from Cancún, Mexico (chosen because inexpensive charter flights

are often available to Cancún); food, lodging, translation and transportation in Cuba; and \$250 for the purchase of construction materials and tools. Participants are encouraged to collect tools and electrical supplies that will be used in the construction project. For a complete list of needed items contact Pastors for Peace. (*Brigadistas* can carry up to 80 pounds per person on the flight to Cuba.)

Our flight to Cuba leaves Cancún at 12 noon so most participants will have to arrive the evening of July 21st. Lodging in Cancún will be provided the night of July 21st as part of the package. Our flight returns to Cancún on the evening of July 31. Return flights to your point of origin should be scheduled for the morning of August 1. Application deadline is June 24.

For more information, contact: Pastors for Peace; 331 17th Ave., SE; Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 378-0062; Fax: (612) 378-0134.

RADIO HAVANA CUBA

Where the Third World Still Comes First

Current Times and Frequencies:

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8 PM-1 AM ----- 6010 Khz (49 meter band)
10 PM-12 AM ----- 9820 Khz (31 meter band)
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Radio Havana Cuba — for a change

For information on how to start a RHC listeners' club, send name and address to:

Radio Havana Cuba
PO Box 6240
Havana, Cuba



International Trade Union Conference in Solidarity with Cuba

September 23-25

at

UAW Local 600; 10550 Dix Highway; Dearborn, Michigan 48120

After the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the U.S. has tightened the 33-year old blockade against Cuba, including putting pressure on third countries not to sell needed medicine and goods to Cuba. Despite such actions from the U.S. against Cuba, Cuban workers are playing a crucial role to preserve the gains of the revolution which included free health care, education, etc. and to defend their independence and socialism.

For more info, contact: U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange; PO Box 39188; Redford, MI 48239; Fax/Tel: (313) 836-3752; or Worker to Worker; Canada/Cuba Solidarity Committee; Sarah Shantal/UFCW; PO Box 407, Station P; Toronto, On. M5S 2S9; (416) 255-6824.

New Books on Cuba from Ocean Press

Che: A memoir by Fidel Castro

Edited by David Deutschmann

For the first time, Fidel Castro writes with candor and affection of his relationship with Ernesto Che Guevara, documenting the Argentinian-born doctor's extraordinary bond with Cuba from the revolution's early days to Che's final guerrilla expeditions to Africa and Bolivia. Castro vividly portrays Che, the man, the revolutionary and the thinker, and describes in detail his last days with Che in Cuba giving a remarkably frank assessment of the Bolivian mission. A preface by veteran Cuban leader Jesús Montané recalls the first encounter between Guevara and Castro in Mexico in 1955. Illuminated by many newly published photos, including the first and last of Guevara and Castro together, this is a revealing portrait not just of its subject but of its author as well.

David Deutschmann has edited several books by Che Guevara, including *A new society: Perspectives for today's world* (Ocean Press, 1990) and *Che Guevara and the Cuban revolution*.

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The greening of the revolution

Cuba's experiment with organic farming

Edited by Peter Rosset and Medea Benjamin

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by Roger Ricardo

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Cuba in brief • Cuba in brief • Cuba in brief • Cuba in brief • Cuba in brief

"The Nation and Emigration"

"It is not, as you can see, a society on its last legs that has invited you here," Cuban foreign minister Roberto Robaina told 225 representatives of the Cuban community living abroad at "The Nation and Emigration" conference held in Havana April 22-24. "The best evidence of its vitality is the fact that, in the midst of a crisis like the one we are experiencing, we are concerned about finding a solution to this problem... Those of us who live in Cuba look positively on normalizing relations with that part of the emigre community which respects the essential values of the nation," Robaina continued.

About 70 percent of the emigres attending the conference came from the U.S. with the remainder representing 29 other nations, including Canada, Spain, Mexico, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Brazil, Angola, Zimbabwe, Jordan, Australia, Germany, and Rumania. The gathering was open to emigres not supporting or involved in acts of aggression against Cuba.

In addition to Robaina, National Assembly president Ricardo Alarcón, Vice-President of the Council of State Carlos Lage, and Union of Writers and Artists president Abel Prieto presented papers to the meeting. The Cuban government announced the adoption of several measures aimed at easing travel to the island by the emigres and allowing the children of emigres to attend Cuban universities. Robaina told the participants that Cuba has proposed to the United States that Cuban consular services be established in the U.S. cities with the highest concentrations of Cuban-Americans in order to facilitate travel. Currently, these services are available only in Washington, DC.

In the closing speech, José Ramón Balaguer of the Political Bureau of the Cuban Communist Party called for a union of forces inside and outside the country to confront those who want to endanger the very existence of the nation, sovereignty, and the Cuban identity. "Cubans by birth and in your hearts: Maturity and prudence, unity in diversity, ... love and courage, honesty and rectitude, respect and understanding, wide-ranging exchanges of opinion, but above all a great deal of patriotism must and will always be the foundation for the continuity," Balaguer said. "Say what you will, this conference is already a part of our history, the new chapter which we have begun to write together."

Miami Right-Wing Attacks Conference Participants

Participants returning to Miami from "The Nation and Emigration" conference were greeted with bomb and death threats and acts of physical violence that began with a near

riot at Miami International Airport. Extreme right-wing Cuban exile forces took to the airwaves of Miami's Spanish language radio stations to call for vengeance against the "traitors" who attended the conference.

South Florida television stations repeatedly showed a video of Miami lawyer Magda Montiel Davis greeting Cuban president Fidel Castro at a reception that followed the conference. Montiel Davis, who unsuccessfully challenged Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) in 1992, immediately became the target of a flood of vicious threats. The frightened staff at her law practice resigned and she had to leave her office under police escort. Nonetheless, her car was surrounded by a mob which beat and rocked it.

Miami's other right-wing Cuban-American congressional representative, Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R), added to the atmosphere of hysteria by calling on U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno to list all conference attendees as agents of a foreign government under a McCarthy-era law.

Xiomara Almaguer Levy and her husband Eduardo Levy, who attended the conference as representatives of Jewish Solidarity, a Miami group that sends humanitarian aid to Cuba's Jewish community, came under special attack. The strong current of anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial that exists among the far-right Cuban exiles surfaced in the threats and insults left on the couple's telephone answering machine.

3rd Friendship Delivers Aid

The 3rd U.S.-Cuba Friendship Caravan organized by Pastors for Peace delivered over \$3 million worth of humanitarian aid to Cuba in mid-March including \$500,000 worth of prescription medicine, seven school busses, a fully equipped ambulance, \$10,000 in U.S. cash, and \$3,000 in Canadian currency. All of the aid crossed the U.S. border into Mexico at Laredo on March 10. Only a satellite communications dish destined for donation to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center in Havana was prevented by U.S. Customs from crossing. Medicines confiscated by U.S. authorities during the two previous caravans were returned to the group and sent to Cuba. Pastors for Peace Director Tom Hansen declared the crossing to be "nothing short of an incredible victory."

Some 5000 Cubans joined the 250 caravan participants at a rally in the Cuban port of Mariel to welcome the arrival of the cargo ship carrying the 140 tons of aid. Caravanistas visited the Cuban provinces of Matanzas, Pinar del Rio, Holguín, and Santiago, in addition to Havana and City of Havana as part of the aid delivery.

On March 21, caravan participants who had returned to Laredo, Texas from Cuba successfully drove the satellite dish across into Mexico that U.S. officials had prevented from

crossing on March 9. Later that day, however, U.S. Border Patrol agents and Laredo police stopped a van driven by Rev. Lucius Walker, Jr. of Pastors for Peace as it tried to cross the border carrying an eye examination machine, a replacement engine, and other humanitarian aid. About 75 *caravanistas* then surrounded the van and began a demonstration for its release. After about a half hour, police forcibly pulled Rev. Walker and Canadian Camilo Garcia from the van, beating Garcia. Walker was charged with assaulting a police officer and Garcia was charged with resisting arrest. Both were released on bond later that day.

Iberoamerican Summit Gets Underway

Brazilian President Itamar Franco and Colombian president Cesar Gaviria inaugurated the 4th Iberoamerican Summit this morning in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. As Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, was the site of the 3rd Summit, Franco gave the first address to the Iberoamerican heads of state and government. The Brazilian leader referred with enthusiasm to the regional integration efforts underway, particularly the signing of the Group of Three free trade zone comprising Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela. He also made reference to the Brazilian proposal of a South American Free Trade zone, known by its Spanish acronym ALCSA.

President Franco went on to express deep concern over the possible consequences of growing poverty, hunger and social marginalization now affecting more than 200 million Latin Americans. He said the Iberoamerican Summit should also be a forum for solidarity, peace and social justice. And Franco said the isolation of countries does not correspond to present-day reality, in what many observers interpreted as an indirect condemnation of Washington's blockade against Cuba. The Brazilian President explicitly condemned the blockade last week during the Organization of American State's annual gathering.

Colombian president Cesar Gaviria opened his address by thanking the many countries for their solidarity with Colombia in the wake of last week's natural disaster. Gaviria requested a moment of silence for the hundreds of indigenous Colombians who died in the floods and landslides following an intense earthquake. The Colombian leader then went on to say that the disappearance of the east-west conflict has not brought peace, stability and progress. Gaviria depicted the current international scenario as one of racism, xenophobia, fratricidal wars and territorial disputes, while freedom, justice and equality remain as mere promises.

The Colombian president then went on to express hope in the future of a new international order based on the free market reform model. He added, however, that model has not proven to be the best cure for poverty, nor has it promoted equality. Gaviria also admitted that economic adjustment programs haven't guaranteed growth or a more equitable distribution of wealth in all countries. He said that in some cases those reforms have weakened the state apparatus and lost credibility as a political platform. President Gaviria said

other Iberoamerican challenges are the greater promotion of human rights and the strengthening of democracy through the greater participation of the citizenry in the decision-making process. (*Radio Havana Cuba, June 14*)

Torrential Rains Hit Eastern Cuba

The Cuban eastern provinces of Guantánamo, Holguín, Granma, Las Tunas and Santiago are now recuperating from rainshowers that affected eastern Cuba for almost a week.

Although there are no final estimates of damages, agriculture, land transportation, communications and other services have been severely affected. In Guantánamo, one of the hardest hit provinces, several municipalities remain cut off, as floodings have interrupted railroads and highways. Construction contingents in that area are working around the clock to repair damages.

In Santiago de Cuba province some 5,000 homes were damaged; and the rain has provoked delays in the sugar harvest, which has been expanded beyond its usual duration. Granma province is reporting the flooding of some 15 thousand hectares of sugar cane and the loss of 9 thousand tons of already cut cane that could not be transported to sugar mills. 2400 homes were affected by the heavy rains.

Hundreds of persons who were evacuated to higher lands are gradually returning to their homes. (*Radio Havana Cuba, May 25*)

New Measures to Deal With Financial Crisis

The Cuban government has decreed price hikes for non-basic goods as well as services. The hikes will affect goods like cigarettes, alcoholic beverages and gasoline. Transportation costs will also go up, as well as the cost of postal services and electricity. Some subsidies will be eliminated, such as the government subsidy for workers' lunches.

An editorial in today's edition of the Cuban weekly *Trabajadores* points out that despite the price hikes, the Cuban state will continue subsidizing basic staples on the ration card to the tune of 365 million dollars a year. The editorial says some of the measures are designed to continue providing protection for low income families, and have not all been across-the-board price hikes. Those families, for example, that consume less than 100 kilowatts of electricity — that's 53 percent of Cuban families — will not have to pay more. Price increases in electricity applies to households consuming more than 100 kilowatts an hour.

The *Trabajadores* says that even with the price hikes, 43 percent of a 148 peso minimum wage will be sufficient to cover basic needs. Besides Cuba, Panama has the next lowest proportion, with 56 percent of Panamanians' minimum salary covering basic needs. The editorial also points out that 80 percent of Cuban families own their home, while rent absorbs between 6 and 10 percent of monthly wages. In other Latin American countries, rent usually consumes between 50 and 60 percent of a salary.

The announced measure comes as part of the Cuban government's efforts to balance the country's fiscal deficit and remove from circulation an excess of national currency estimated at 12 billion dollars. (*Radio Havana Cuba, May 23*)

U.S. Refuses Visa for Robaina

Washington has refused to grant an entry visa to Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina. Robaina had been invited by the CNN television network to participate in a TV panel on the situation in Cuba. The panel was to take place during CNN's annual conference slated for Atlanta, Georgia, May 1st to the 5th. The Cuban Foreign Ministry said that 25 days after requesting the visa at the US Interests Section in Havana, the US State Department informed Cuban authorities that Robaina's security while visiting Atlanta could not be guaranteed.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Miguel Alfonso said that was the first response to the visa request more than 3 weeks earlier. Alfonso said this is not the first time Cuban officials have been denied entry visas to the US, even when the visit was to participate in events of an international character and sponsorship. (*Radio Havana Cuba, May 4*)

Castro On Summit of the Americas

Cuban president Fidel Castro has blasted Cuba's exclusion from Washington's upcoming Summit of the Americas. During his address at the 4th Iberoamerican Summit, the Cuban leader said the US government's refusal to invite Cuba to the regional event, to be held in Miami next December, was a demonstration of cowardice, mediocrity and political poverty. The Cuban president asserted, however, that he did not oppose the gathering and that he was pleased that during the Summit of the Americas, Latin American and Caribbean nations will be able to defend the interests of the region's peoples. President Fidel Castro also said the Summit of the Americas will be an excellent occasion to call on the US government to comply with United Nations resolutions condemning the US blockade against Cuba and Washington's efforts to starve out the Cuban nation. (*Radio Havana Cuba, June 14*)

Mexico to Renovate Cuba's Telephone System

Cuba's antiquated telephone system, the bane of many generations of Cubans and visitors, should be getting a facelift in the near future thanks to an agreement signed between Mexico and Havana. During Monday's six hour visit to Cuba by Mexican president Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the two nations signed an accord that will allow a private Mexican communications company to revamp the Cuban telephone company. Cuban president Fidel Castro and the visiting Mexican leader were present Monday at the signing of the document between Cuba's Telecommunications Company and the private Mexican Interamerican Telecommuni-

cations Corporation. The Mexican company will improve both national and international telephone services, especially in the outlying areas. They will also computerize long-distance calls both inside and outside of Cuba. Other plans include modernization and expansion of the existing networks, gradually improving services. (*Radio Havana Cuba, June 14*)

Congress on Family Doctor Program

The first National Congress on Family Medicine will be held at Havana's Convention Center June 28th to the 30th, it was announced today in the Cuban capital.

Some 600 delegates will attend the event, and will elect the executive committee of the Cuban Society of Family Medicine. According to a spokesperson from the Cuban Ministry of Public Health, participants will be discussing 400 papers focussing on the work of family doctors under the current conditions of the special period.

The Family Doctor program, one of the greatest achievements of preventive medicine in Cuba, was launched more than a decade ago to provide close medical assistance to Cuban families, with the doctors living quarters and offices in the neighborhood where his or her patients reside. There are some 22 thousand family doctors on the island, covering 90 percent of the Cuban population. 5 thousand of these doctors have become specialists in various fields. (*Radio Havana Cuba, May 25*)

Chilean Doctors Launch Aid Campaign

Chilean doctors who received their medical training in Cuba are organizing a massive aid campaign to assist the island's hospitals. The first donations of medicines will go to Havana's Salvador Allende and Miguel Enriquez hospitals. Later the Chilean physicians will direct medications to workplaces and schools where numerous Chilean exiles were educated and worked when they were forced to leave Chile after the military coup in 1973. In the kick off of the medical donations campaign held at the Cuban consulate in Santiago de Chile, participants called for the re-establishing of full diplomatic relations with the island and an end to the United States blockade against Cuba. (*Radio Havana Cuba, June 13*)

Medical Journal Praises AIDS Policy

The October 16, 1993 issue of the prestigious British medical journal, *The Lancet*, carried an article praising Cuba's success in controlling the AIDS epidemic. "Cuba is the only nation that has incorporated elements of the classical public health tradition... in a national programme to contain AIDS," the article stated. "With only 927 cases of HIV seropositivity (as of May 31, 1993) and only 187 cases of AIDS (with 111 deaths) in a population of over 10 million the policy seems to have succeeded. ...Puerto Rico, with one-third the popula-

tion of Cuba, has over 8000 cases of AIDS, 208 of them in children. In Cuba only 1 child had died of AIDS; 3 more carry the virus. In New York City, with roughly the same population as Cuba, 43,000 patients have AIDS..."

Hearing-Aid for Cuba

Abe Golokow, coordinator of the U.S.-Cuba Friendship Society of San Diego, has launched a campaign to collect used hearing aids and hearing aid parts for delivery to Cuba. If you have a hearing aid or parts to donate, send them to: U.S.-Cuba Friendship Society; PO Box 2646; Spring Valley, CA 91979 or call (619) 660-0777.

UNICEF Aids Aqueduct Construction

Some 72 aqueducts have been built in rural areas of eastern Cuba's Guantánamo province, through the cooperation of the United Nations Children's Fund—UNICEF. The aqueducts' construction is included in a program of the World Summit in Favor of Children and Environmental Protection and their construction began in 1980.

These facilities benefit some 75 thousand people living in small mountainous communities, who can now have drinking water, thanks to the help of UNICEF and of Cuba's Turquino Plan, aimed at progressively changing social and economic conditions of people living in rural areas, particularly in mountainous regions.

UNICEF donated 5 million dollars for the financing of connections, chloride classifying equipment and water pumping. With the help of UNICEF, Cuba will build another 10 aqueducts in the Cuban eastern municipalities of Guantánamo, Niceto Perez, El Salvador and Yateras, which will benefit another 7650 Cubans. (*Radio Havana Cuba, May 9*)

"Lula" Opposes Blockade

Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva, leader of the Brazilian Workers Party and front running presidential candidate for Brazil's October 3 elections, stressed his opposition to the U.S. blockade of Cuba at a press conference in New York on May 9. "I don't see any reason for an embargo of Cuba," he said. "The end of the bipolar situation in the world should mean more flexibility from the United States and others towards Cuba. It is the people of Cuba who suffer from the embargo, not the government. I believe the sentiment is growing in Latin America to open relations with Cuba." Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Brazil has become one of Cuba's largest trading partners.

Russia Explores Resumption of Oil Agreement

Venezuela may resume oil shipments to Cuba. A Russian parliamentary delegation is currently in Venezuela to discuss resumption of a 4-year oil agreement between Caracas and

the former Soviet Union. According to the deal, Venezuela supplied oil to Cuba while the former Soviet Union supplied oil to Venezuelan refineries in Germany. In that way, both countries saved approximately a dollar per barrel of oil in transportation costs to supply their respective clients.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the agreement was suspended in 1991, and there remained an outstanding debt to Venezuela of some 40 million dollars—mostly in oil deliveries. During the agreement, Venezuela supplied Cuba with 60 thousand barrels of oil a day. (*Radio Havana Cuba, June 1*)

Electronic Summit?

Emily Coffey of the Denver-Havana Friendship/Sister Cities Project recently contacted Cable News Network and its president Ted Turner to propose that CNN sponsor an "electronic" meeting between President Castro and U.S. president Clinton. CNN responded favorably saying it "would be delighted to facilitate and televise such a link-up." CNN promised to make inquiries to determine whether the presidents would be willing to take part in such a dialogue.

Peace For Cuba

On February 12, more than 1200 people braved an intense snow storm to attend a rally to End the U.S. Blockade of Cuba at New York City's Symphony Space Theater. The rally was organized by former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark and the International Peace for Cuba Appeal.

Solidarity With Cuba in Germany

In mid-January, about 250 activists representing 42 local groups and organizations met in Berlin for their fourth Germany-wide conference. The conference resolved to support the 1994 "Pastors for Peace" caravan in the U.S. and to organize protests at U.S. embassies and consulates all over Europe if the U.S. authorities should attempt to stop the caravan at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Eugenio Maynegra, representative of the Cuban National Assembly addressed the Berlin conference and announced that construction of the nuclear power plant at Cienfuegos will soon be resumed. This caused some consternation and controversy at the conference, particularly among German solidarity groups who are focusing on material support for the development of alternative technologies (such as solar and wind power) in Cuba.

Among other groups, the solidarity committee "Cuba Sí" of the PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism, successor of the ruling party of East Germany) is organizing material support for the Cuban revolution. They are picking up the left-over machinery of factories in Eastern Germany which had been closed down after the take-over by West German capital and are sending it to Cuba. (*Die Tageszeitung, Berlin, Jan. 24, 1994*)

¡Baraguá!

¡Baraguá!, publication of the National Network on Cuba (NNOC), is named for Cuban revolutionary leader Antonio Maceo's immortal *Protest of Baraguá*, issued at the end of Cuba's 10 Years War for independence from Spain in 1878. At Baraguá, 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 homeland will be an eternal Baraguá!" expresses Cuba's determination to resist.



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