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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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January 5, 2017

The President-elect
Trump Tower
725 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dear Mr. President-elect:

I am writing to draw your attention to the enclosed letter sent to you by the Center for a Free Cuba, a well-respected organization known for its commitment to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in Cuba. The letter requests your assistance in rolling back the damage done to our Cuba policy while laying out some important recommendations for your consideration.

Signed by five distinguished former U.S. diplomats, James Cason, Everett Briggs, Elliot Abrams, Jose Sorzano, and Otto Reich, the letter asks that you end the policy of U.S. intelligence agencies being forced to cooperate with Cuban state security and rescind any and all executive orders which have helped enrich the Castro dictatorship. The letter describes the Castro regime's increased repression of the Cuban people, the reduction in available food and basic necessities, and an increase in Cubans fleeing the island. The letter also asks that current U.S. law be enforced to prohibit tourism and financial collaboration with the regime and the need to prioritize outstanding matters such as payment for the billions of dollars in stolen U.S. private property, the unconditional return of all U.S. fugitives, and the need to advocate for the respect of human rights on the island by standing in solidarity alongside the people of Cuba.

In the last year, you have mentioned that your administration would reverse some of the damage inflicted by the current misguided Cuba policy and these outstanding American diplomats can assist to help achieve a better deal for our own national security interests and to help the people of Cuba achieve freedom, justice, and democracy. The Center for a Free Cuba has admirably outlined some of the most pressing issues in our currently broken policy towards Cuba, and as you look for ways to repair the damage done in the last few years, I ask that you please consider these recommendations carefully. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
Member of Congress



Manuel Jorge Cutillas
In Memoriam, Chairman

Ambassador James C. Cason
President

December 22, 2016

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Dear President-Elect Trump:

Consistent with your campaign promise to make a course correction on relations with Cuba, we would like to offer you some specific suggestions on how your administration may wish to proceed, once in office.

We are writing to request that you withdraw, as soon as possible after being sworn in, President Barack Obama's order to U.S. intelligence to begin cooperating with Cuban state security.

Furthermore, President Obama's ill-conceived and unlawful executive orders lifting restrictions on doing business with the Castro regime should be included among the other measures that your administration plans to rescind within the first 100 days. American policy toward Cuba and elsewhere should be consistent with U.S. law.

The Embargo

Instead of easing the lot of the Cuban people, Obama's violation of the terms of the embargo – established by Congress and signed into law – has had the effect of giving a new economic lease on life to the regime, emboldening it to curtail, not expand, private economic activity on the island while increasing its repression of the dissident movement. The large increase of food stuffs needed by the upsurge of tourists traveling to the island has reduced significantly the amount of food available for the Cuban people. In addition, President Obama's friendly gestures toward General Raul Castro and his statements indicating the United States does not seek regime change, that change would take years, and advising the Cubans to remain patient, have resulted in a substantial increase in the number of Cuban men, women and children fleeing the island trying to reach the United States.

The terms of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 should be enforced, starting immediately. Tourism, purchases of Cuban goods, and partnering with government entities should be prohibited, in accordance with current U.S. law.

The Conduct of Diplomatic Relations

Hostility toward the U.S. on the part of the Castro regime is unabated. Accepting its legitimacy and reopening our embassy in Havana were undertaken without resolving any of a long list of outstanding issues, including restitution of billions of dollars of private property stolen by the regime; the return of scores of wanted felons given asylum in Cuba, including one on the FBI's most-wanted list; ending Cuba's illicit military ties with North Korea; curtailing Cuba's outreach to Iran and its current attempts to reestablish a close military/intelligence relationship with Russia; and ending its support for anti-American governments in Latin America.

The Obama administration has sought to appease the Cuban regime by removing Cuba from the list of state sponsors of terrorism and for the most part ceasing any contacts with the democratic opposition.

The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations apologized to the world body for our country's supposed use of democracy promotion and human rights in the past as a "pretext" to meddle in the affairs of other countries. This year, for the first time, the United States abstained on a perennial Cuban resolution at the UN condemning the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act, saying the administration did not support this law.

All of this should be reversed, starting with instructing U.S. representatives to international bodies to defend U.S. law, as they are sworn to do.

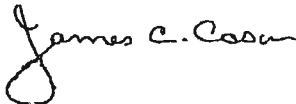
Mr. Obama has nominated the caretaker head of the U.S. embassy in Havana to be ambassador to Cuba. A diplomat who is more in tune with the new administration's world view-- ready to take on the outstanding issues between the two countries mentioned above and others that will likely arise as a result of this toughening of U.S.-Cuba policy-- should be sent to lead the American Embassy in Havana as the Charge d'Affaires.

There is no need to name an ambassador pending resolution of several key matters pertaining to embassy operations. The regime should no longer be allowed to select, and act as paymaster for, the embassy's local hires. This allows the regime to siphon off a major part of the employees' wages, and has serious security implications as well.

The U.S. should insist on strict reciprocity in how its embassy in Havana and Cuba's in Washington are run, based on international standards and practices.

Mr. President-elect, we wish you the best in the historic journey as President of the United States of America you are about to begin.

Sincerely,



James C. Cason, former U.S. Ambassador to Paraguay, former Chief of U.S. Mission, Havana, Cuba. Retired Foreign Service Officer. President, Center for a Free Cuba

Everett E. Briggs, Former U.S. Ambassador to Portugal, Honduras and Panama. Former director of Office of Hemispheric Affairs, National Security Council. Retired Foreign Service Officer.

Elliott Abrams, Former Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, and for Inter-American Affairs, Former Deputy National Security Advisor for Global Democracy Strategy.

Jose S. Sorzano, Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Former Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and Senior Director for Latin America, National Security Council, The White House.

Otto J. Reich, Former Assistant Secretary State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Former U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela.